

# THE PHENOMENON OF SELF IN THE CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

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**ABSTRACT--** *The current social transformations increase the importance of a responsible and active attitude of an individual to his personal and professional development thus making the research into the phenomenon of Self vital. The development **and** realization of Self as a mental phenomenon is, in turn, relevant for the present social situation as the education of the twenty first century relies on the ability of an individual to become the author of his own life. In this context, the paper analyzes the status of the problem of Self in contemporary research, reveals the theoretical basis for the modeling of Self, and proves that it can be viewed as a real complex mental phenomenon. The issue of Self, although not without a research basis, is still important and poses difficulties in defining its characteristics, dynamics and development patterns. The paper addresses Russian and international approaches to studying Self, defining its essence, category, and conceptual irregularities depending on its structure, interpretation of meaning, and psychological content. The analyzed concepts make up a sufficient basis for the modeling of Self, which acts as an integrating factor for all elements of the system of a personality and can be used as a unit of analysis of mental phenomena.*

**Key words--** *self, consciousness, personality, self-concept, mental object, development.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the research is to analyze and summarize the main trends in the contemporary research of the phenomenon of Self and reveal the theoretical and methodological approaches to studying it. We hypothesize that Self is a complex mental object with multiple components and multilayered structure which reflects the variety of factors determining personality development.

The research is based on the following psychological principles: psychic determinism, unity of consciousness and activity, systemic development, integrative approach to studying personality (B. G. Ananiev, K. A. Abulkhanova–Slavskaya, A. A. Bodalev, S. L. Rubinstein, etc.), anthropocentric standard and personal self-development (V. I. Slobodchikov, E. I. Isaev, etc.). The research is supported by the following fundamental concepts: the general methodology of contemporary human study viewing a personality as a self-regulating system (B. G. Ananiev, E. Berne, G. Allport), the unity of activity and personality (K. A. Abulkhanova–Slavskaya,

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A. G. Asmolov, V. P. Zinchenko, A. V. Petrovsky), the contemporary paradigm of subjectness with an emphasis on the active transformational function of a personality revealing self-actualization of individual abilities (K. A. Abulkhanova–Slavskaya, A. A. Bodalev, A. V. Brushlinsky, S. L. Rubinstein), the idea about the interconnection and interdependence between the potential and the actual (A. A. Derkach and others). Other research methodologies included: S. L. Rubinstein’s concept of the unity of consciousness and action and two ways of life; V. Rosin’s (1992) idea about a personality’s need to continuously change and transform oneself; the development of a ‘possible’ human being as ‘the measure of all things’ and his uniqueness (M. M. Bakhtin, L. S. Vygotsky, V. P. Zinchenko, D. A. Leontiev, M. K. Mamardashvili, V. S. Merlin, L. B. Orlov, V. A. Petrovsky, V. Frankl and others); the idea of higher (creative) Self containing the plenitude of possibilities that a personality can realize through its development within the space–time limits and a certain socio-cultural environment (O. S. Anisimov, E. Basin, A. A. Bodalev, O. Krivtsun, A. Maslow, A. A. Melik–Pashaev, L. M. Mitina, M. G. Seliuch); the research into activating the creative potential of personality (D. B. Bogoyavlenskaya, V. N. Druzhinin, Ya. A. Ponomarev, etc.). to test the hypothesis, we performed the theoretical analysis of publications based on the Russian and international research.

The status of studying Self in contemporary research witnesses that the meaning of this notion has no essential divergences in philosophy and psychology (in various trends of their schools).

The research of Self is based on the philosophic theories denoting it as a hypothetic object which exists in reality but, unlike other objects, cannot be observed by traditional methods of natural sciences.

In the contemporary research, the notion of Self is used, first, to denote an acting agent; second, to fix the center of initiative or essence of a personality, a source of its activity; third, to fix the mental representation of a personality, its self-awareness, and its representation of itself.

The self–concept of the modern psychological research encompasses: a cognitive component — Self-image that reflects sex, age, role and social identity; an image of one’s body (similar to and different from other people’s); an emotion–and–value component that reflects the attitude to oneself in general and to a particular component of one’s personality, character, and activity; a behavioral component that reflects mutual influence and manifestation of the first two components in behavior.

In the subjective paradigm of psychology, the mental system is represented by the notions of ‘core’ and ‘periphery’. Research (I. P. Volkov, L. S. Vygotsky, N. Ya. Grot, V. V. Zenkovskiy, I. S. Kon, A. N. Leontiev, etc.) denotes the existence of the essential core in the structure of personality by the notion of ‘Self’.

Placing Self (ego) in the center of the structure of personality as an active subject defines its role in managing the mental processes of personality’s internal world. In an absolute sense, Self is a personality. Psychologically, Self is the center of self-cognition (self-awareness) and self-regulation; its content is based on social memory and the mechanism of identification. Self acquires personal meaning in environmental phenomena and psychologically merges with them; therefore, Self reflects them in its content.

Certain provisions allow us to trace the genetic unity of Self and personality: “‘Self’, both for oneself and objectively, is primarily not an abstract subject of cognition but a particular reality of a person” (Rubinstein, 2003, 284); “if it is impossible to limit personality to its self–awareness, to ‘Self’, it is also impossible to tear one from the other... Self is formed in a personality, consequently, it is a personality. Self is a personality in general, in the unity of all parts of being, reflecting in self–awareness” (Rubinstein, 1997, 29); “a person realizes himself as a

personality throughout his life in activity and communication and manifests the qualities of an individual, a subject and an individuality (Abulkhanova–Slavskaya, 1991, 43); “pure personality is Self — the limit of everyone’s aspirations and self–building (Florensky, 1990, 27).

The conceptual variety in defining Self is explained by the peculiarities of the process of its structuring and is revealed in the following approaches: “the core of a personality with certain interconnection of basic trends genetically associated with personality and potencies genetically associated with the subject of activity, character and talent of a person with their uniqueness — all these are the latest products of human development” (Ananiev, 2004, 278); the centers of a subject’s activity, “their hierarchies form a mysterious ‘center of personality’ that we call ‘Self’” (Leontiev, 1975, 229); a mental form of self–identification — a person’s individualization against the background of the world around and other people (Erikson, 1964); a center of total, limitless mental personality that cannot be defined. Conscious Ego is subdued to or involved in the self, which has its own voice heard sometimes in the moments of intuitive feelings and dreams (Jung, 1968); a reserve of life energy discharged in spontaneous activities: an interest, attraction, various ‘impulses’, realization of abilities (Zelinichenko, 1996, 58); concentration of internal activity defining the establishment of a personality and its internal world, which are dialectically connected in a greater whole (Chudnovskiy, 1998, 112); an internal structure which can be described by meaningful emotional dimensions: sympathy, respect, proximity contained in different proportions in internal actions — mindsets expressing self–attitude to the processes of auto–communication or internal dialogue (Stolin, 1983, 220); a subjective core encompassing the system of substantial (self–reasoning and self–acting) intuitions: existential, intentional, potential, virtual, actual, reflexive, and experimental, which define a psychological possibility of a personality’s development (Tatenko, 1998, 13); a structure that drives orientation in the environment, course of thoughts and actions in everyday life (Chesnokova, 1977, 21); a spiritual layer of consciousness represented by two rows: an optimistic, inspiring one based on the power of self–manifestation: ‘Greatness of Spirit’ – Greatness of Self, and a tragic one including the disharmony of Self (Zinchenko, 2004, 98); a verbal–mental means of fixation of ascent (or descent) of true spiritual cosmic Self (cf. Russian *sam-os*’ — ‘self–axis’) along the mountainous vertical of consciousness (Ivanov, 1994, 91); a carrier of original reality, internal access to the states of one’s consciousness (Ogurtsov, 1977, 8).

V. Kuvakin (2006) presents a more detailed characteristic of Self as a center of a human being, whose features and needs become the features and potentials of a normal, healthy, free and infinitely rich personality. His approach states that, “Self is something existential, actual, existing and experiencing itself as a life unity that encompasses: (1) intuition and thinking toward oneself; (2) signs of its existence; (3) some basic needs including self–identity, non–reduction, uniqueness, non–absolute compatibility with and involvement in the external world, thinking, dialogism (ego alter and prima ego), monodualism (unity of two egos in one), givenness and, at the same time, non–givenness to oneself, self–obviousness and inconclusive certainty, obvious presence in us everywhere and always, mystery, ‘opacity’ etc.” (pp. 109–110).

Kuvakin (2006) refers ‘the ability to live, to exist’ to basic needs without which Self cannot exist. “Self is *optimistic*, though (unfortunately) it often forgets about it. It wants to be, to exist not only in itself, in its thinking, consciousness and the world, but also in all possible and impossible things. Self lives and exists, it is *a living Self, a reality*. Secondly, a need for preserving itself as self–identity ... for cognizing the authenticity and validity of oneself and the world ... a striving for truth, justice, goodness, beauty, freedom, activity, and communication”

(p. 111). “What else does our Self need?” asks the author, and answers, “almost everything ... and also what its flesh originally needs, its *embodiment as a physical-chemical-bio-mental being and a socio-cultural being*” (p. 110).

These characteristics of Self imply that one of important “though poorly realized internal, free and responsible (but not imposed from outside) duties of a man ... is to clarify the architectonics of his internal world as much as possible, to establish optimal relations between his personal source and supra-personal beliefs, between basic needs and decent ways to realize them using beliefs and knowledge. The acquisition of this dynamic harmony is the best platform for a wealthy, happy and creative life” (Kuvakin, 2006, 112).

Each of these notions has a psychological state which, according to F. Barron, arises from the movement from the unknown (darkness) to the known (light) and is followed by delving into the unknown and dangerous darkness forced by the immense powers concentrated in Self (Barron, 1968).

The analysis of psychological research shows that Self is structurally and processually associated with self-awareness which performs a crucial function of “movement of consciousness along the vertical”, as metaphorically described by A. N. Leontiev (1975, 204), who refers to the space of personality’s own motives.

Self-awareness provides the unity and wholeness of the structure of personality through a “very complicated synthetic formation” (Merlin, 1996): (a) consciousness; (b) awareness of identity (self); (c) awareness of mental properties and self-esteem of personality; (d) social and moral self-esteem. Merlin sees the condition for becoming aware of one’s Self in voluntary actions, successful and active coping with competing motives and tendencies as well as external and internal actions. Coping with contradictions by taking action is a condition for clear awareness of Self.

L. P. Grimak (1989, 293) emphasizes that “the notion of Self as a subjective mental phenomenon is closely associated with the notion of self-awareness. Both of them are formed and developed by the function of long-term memory, which provides a pivotal property of a personality — continuity of consciousness. This is the only reason why Self is manifested as a chain of continuous oppositions of itself to any other non-self.”

Self-awareness is aimed at not just becoming aware of the leading motives, but also at full integration and coordination of the motivational sphere of personality including the creative Self. The realization of a “self-unfolding prophecy” in the sense that “a person as a creature that has a project, a plot, a task, a goal” as a “reason in oneself” involves both self-awareness and realization of “the universal Self” (Rubinstein, 1997, 49).

I. Kon (1978) defined three components of Self in the structure of self-awareness that have their hierarchy: (1) the active Self is a regulative organizing principle of being, which corresponds to such psychological mechanisms as self-regulation and self-control; (2) the reflexive, categorical Self is an individual’s representation of himself arranged in the Self-concept performing the function of internal mechanisms of self-cognition and self-esteem; (3) the non-verbalized, non-categorical and often unconscious Self representing the sense of self (p. 71).

V. V. Stolin’s (1983) states that personality can be defined as a functional mental ‘organ’ enabling an individual to integrate his Self and activity in the system of multiple relations with the world, or a special means of integrating mental life. He writes, “It is clear that the phenomenological Self does not appear immediately, automatically at a person’s birth, it grows in a complex process of the person’s development” (p. 24). Stolin treats the process of development of the phenomenal Self as the process of development of self-consciousness. The notion of Self is treated as one of the components of the Self-concept of personality including: (a) a representation of one’s

individuality (identity); (b) some unity of interests, aptitudes, and value orientations; (c) self-esteem and self-respect.

It is self-awareness that helps a person to (a) regulate the system of interactions of the structural components of the creative Self among each other and with the environment, retaining individuality of Self; (b) demonstrate the unity of Self through self-distinction and realization which, in return, increase self-awareness (Soloviev, 1989, 87).

The essence of Self is closely linked to self-awareness as understanding oneself in the variety of individual features. The changeableness and lability of Self do not imply the presence of several Selves. Not all components in the structure of Self are changeable; the most unstable part is the one which is not connected with the core, basic properties of personality. Yet, these properties, too, are finessed, deepened, and enriched throughout life. At the same time, they retain a certain identity, which creates individual uniqueness and originality of a personality.

The research on this issue mostly identifies Self with consciousness and self-awareness of personality on the ground that functioning of consciousness and addressing of consciousness to itself represent Self as a 'reason' in itself.

N. A. Berdyaev (1993) considers Self from the standpoint of person's destiny in the world. He assumed that "consciousness is an intuitive act of human Self toward itself, after which the experience enters memory, and, at the same time, the difference of Self from 'non-Self', from the world around. Consciousness is a unity of Self and its difference from 'non-Self'. Consciousness is not identical to knowledge; however, it always means the relationship with a logical element rising above the spiritual world. Self becomes aware of itself only through what is above Self. Consciousness is personal and produces personality; however, it is also collective, supra-personal and social" (p. 77).

However, A. A. Bodalev (1998) assumes that "deeper penetration into the essence of the phenomenon of Self, on the one hand, and the phenomena of consciousness and self-awareness, on the other hand, proves that they rather represent unity than identity. It is obvious that consciousness is manifested in Self, while Self is manifested through consciousness" (p. 14).

V. N. Myasishev's research (1996) states that Self objectifies the uniqueness and originality of each particular person. Self is objectified in the originality of body and soul, and, certainly, in the peculiarities of its awareness of them, its attitude to them and dealing with them.

We support the position of A. A. Derkach (2002) who treats Self as an integral expression of self-cognition and self-consciousness. "Psychologically, 'Self' is the center of self-cognition (self-awareness) and self-regulation. The content of Self is based on social memory and the mechanism of identification. As a result, there is a discovery of personal meaning in environmental phenomena and psychological identification with them (personification). What a person has experienced as 'his' enters the content of his Self. The more developed a personality (as a type of sociality and individuality) is, the brighter and more prominently formed and expressed its core — Self — is. This implies that Self is a social quality of an individual with a psychological status of 'We'" (p. 334).

The following concepts are useful in describing the structure of the creative Self and its essential characteristic:

- S. L. Rubinstein's (1997) idea that the qualities of a personality do not come down to its individual peculiarities; there is subordination between the individual peculiarities and personal qualities;

- V. S. Merlin's (1996) understanding of a combination of individual peculiarities as a large hierarchical self-regulating system, or integral individuality. Its biochemical properties, the properties of the nervous system, temperament, personal qualities, and personal states represent various hierarchical levels;

- B. G. Ananiev's (2001) view about the intra-individual structure of personality: (1) its functioning is possible only through interaction of various properties of personality's structural components and establishing the types of interactions between the components themselves; (2) this relatively closed system is 'built' into the open system of interactions with the world, which brings about parallelism in the tendencies and potencies of an individual, his self-awareness and Self;

- V. Brushlinskiy's (1996) approach to separating personal qualities into formal and meaningful, non-disjunctive, mediating, interpenetrating, and interconditioning each other, joining in one mental process;

- K. K. Platonov's (1986) methodological principle stating that no single mental phenomenon (be it a process, state, or quality of personality) realized in activity can be understood without interpretation through the personality framework (p. 187);

- V. N. Myasishchev's (1996) relationship concept stating that there are no boundaries between the inner and the outer; they are a unity joining Self with the world.

I. S. Kon (1981, 28) considers the following most important aspects of the issue:

1. Self-identity. With changes in the environment, an individual retains certain identity, sustaining and reproducing its structure. Studying identity, psychologists focus on the sustainable and changeable components of personality.

2. Ego (subjectness). The phenomena of consciousness are subjective; the observer is called Self. The study of this aspect is focused on the processes and mechanisms of conscious self-regulation of behavior.

3. Self-image. The study of self-images addresses the concrete processes and mechanisms of self-awareness, the adequacy of self-assessments, structural components of self-images and their dynamics, the role of self-awareness in the overall balance of mental activity.

These aspects of the problem of Self are interconnected and presuppose each other. The identity of the psyche and behavior of an individual is impossible without a general regulator which requires the presence of self-awareness. 'Ego' as a regulative mechanism supposes the continuity of mental activity and information about Self. The image of Self completes the identity and subjectness of a personality and at the same time regulates its behavior.

A. N. Slavskaya (1999) considers the internal world of a personality as a generalized interpretation of one's Self, identity and changeability of life, circumstances and situations (p. 17). First, she combines the different levels of Self — unconscious and conscious (projective). Second, she integrates the internal Self and its multiple manifestations, self-expressions and self-realizations, and establishes direct and inverse associations between them. The first interpretation expresses the unity of a personality, the concordance, coordination of its levels and way of existence and self-realization or states contradiction and misunderstanding of Self in its inconsistency and dissonances.

Many researches (I. I. Rezvitskiy, L. A. Rudkevich, M. P. Pikelnikova, I. V. Strakhov and others) address the analysis of peculiarities and characteristics of Self as an independent phenomenon which forms autonomy from the environment and distancing from it.

We can definitely judge about many properties of Self in all its simple and complex manifestations by the character of content and forms of functioning of the internal world of a personality; we can also judge about the prevailing interests and needs, level of social intelligence and peculiarities of emotional sphere by its activity.

In the meaningful characteristics of Self, we distinguish between the real Self, the actual Self, and the ideal Self. There is always mismatch in their content. Bearing in mind that it is natural for a person to have and build not only a theory of himself as he actually is today, but also a theory of his ideal future Self, this concept of the ideal Self is supposed to be a crucial motivating factor, which stimulates a person to perform actions aimed at self-development, self-realization and self-actualization.

A number of researches (L. V. Borozdina, A. P. Okoneshnikova and others) present Self as self-image and understanding oneself as a personality and a subject of an activity; this understanding changes with age and depends on gender, occupation, ethnic traditions and culture. There is a correlation between focusing attention on the features of appearance complying with gender and age standard and the mental qualities that are important in the community and relevant for the individual. A large gap between the individual's expectations about his appearance and its assessment by significant others causes psychological discomfort sometimes growing into neuroses.

The multiple definitions of Self influence the development of the Self-concept. Before turning to the understanding of Self and its interrelations in the integrated system of the Self-concept, let us study the views on this mental object.

Russian psychology gave rise to various approaches to the description and study of the Self-concept, which define its specifics, essence and components. The contemporary works on research methodology view the Self-concept as a structured and hierarchical system representing the relevance of oneself and the objects and phenomena of the environment in consciousness and self-consciousness. It is "a complex integral object of psyche, the inner existential core of personality, the product of representation of the system of attitudes of individual to oneself and the environment, the element of personality coordinating all actions, emotions, feelings, behavior, mental health and practical success" (Agapov, 1999, 19); "a united mental ensemble which is the essence of a man as a personality, a subject and individuality" (Volkov, 1989, 23); the center of spiritual life (Zenkovsky, 1993, 94), "the starting point of personality" (Levitsky, 1995, 117), "organizing behavior" (Vygotsky, 2000, 361).

It is important to note that the change and development of the Self-concept reflect to a certain extent the changes happening in the individual, his own development. The Self-concept as a complex hierarchical system contains inner contradictions which, according to E. E. Vakhramov (2001) are connected with the fact that during his life, an individual creates a theory of himself which is always incomplete: as long as he is alive, something can occur to him, he can do something or change himself, at least inside, reinterpreting his way. The Self-concept has a certain degree of compliance with the real world, which can be defined only indirectly through comparing it with the You-concepts — other people's opinions about him — and through the analysis of the results of his activity, planned with his potential abilities in mind (pp. 33–51).

The common denominator in the approaches of the domestic researchers is the understanding of the Self-concept as a system of self-representations including multiple Self, having various aspects and developing in the process of self-actualization on the basis of positive attitude to the self from others. Each methodology has its system of essential features of the Self-concept. As the notion of Self-concept has multiple dimensions and meanings, it is closely connected with the ideas of personality, individuality, actualization, consciousness, self-consciousness, unconscious, Self-phenomenon. The man objectifies himself in various forms of life, recognizes himself in new forms and roles, finds his identity, and enters into a dialogue with the life itself (Abulkhanova–Slavskaya, 1999). The introduction of Self into new relations and interactions fills Self with new content emphasizing the processual aspect, as the Self-concept has an intrinsic ability to develop and self-develop, control and self-control, and, therefore, renewal.

One of the components of the Self-concept is Self-consciousness as a complicated process of mediated self-cognition. It happens over time and is revealed in the unity of inner processes of self-understanding, emotional and value-driven attitude to oneself, and behavioral self-regulation. On this basis, a changeable component of the Self-concept is formed — the Self-image.

V. A. Petrovsky (1996) shows that Self is a form of existence of individual subjectness: Self is the reason for itself in four aspects — material, formal, active and finite (p. 136). The definitive feature of Self is its uniqueness. The four manifestations of Self include: ‘the immanent Self’ (the unity of the moving and moved — Self in the spontaneous dynamics of being), ‘the ideal Self’ (the unity of the representing and represented — Self in introspection), ‘the transcendental Self’ (the unity of the thinking and thought — the thoughts of oneself), ‘the transfinite Self’ (the unity of the experiencing the experienced — self-experience).

The study of Self can be analyzed through the cognitive component of the Self-concept, which is described in terms of cognitive mental process — intellectual, rational, mental, reflexive. The cognitive component of the Self-concept consists of content (knowledge about oneself) and structure of the Self-image (Self-object, cognizable Self); it is expressed in self-awareness and self-cognition reflecting the processual side of self-cognition (self-development, self-improvement, self-actualization).

According to the degree of creativity, Russian psychology defines the following modalities: the higher Self, the creative Self, the unique Self, the essential Self, the true Self, the real Self, the deep Self, the spiritual Self, the ‘big’ Self.

The creative Self is studied in the works of A. A. Bodalev (1997, 1998), L. M. Mitina and O. V. Kuzmenkova (1998), M. G. Seljuch (2008). Generally, the creative Self is realized in the destruction of stereotypes, actualization of individual abilities, existing in time and above time. The phenomenon of the creative Self functions as the creative power of the unity of form and content (image and meaning). The contradiction between the real Self and ideal Self functions as the driver of self-development and self-improvement: the ideal Self becomes a guideline of personal growth through correction and correlation with the real Self; the understanding of ‘real vs. other’, ‘idea vs. reality’ create ideal form as a special reality. Creative activity of a person in the frameworks of culture leads to uniqueness on the cultural and historical scale, to realization of individual existence in the common culture of the humankind, to actualization of Self-image.

According to A. A. Bodalev (1998), the personal, professional and creative abilities in which an individual becomes ‘bigger than oneself’ reflect the higher Self. To Bodalev, the higher Self is social and professional creative



potential which can be objectified in individually important situations, in the images of significant others, in historic or literary figures, in God with whom we 'converse'. In his everyday life and professional activity, an individual very seldom realizes his potential to the full. Only in rare special cases of subjective or objective circumstances can the transition happen from the trivial everyday 'ego' level to the level of the higher Self.

L. M. Mitina and O. V. Kuzmenkova in their 1998 study of the peculiarities of intrapersonal contradictions between the active Self and reflexive Self found out that for the development and realization of the creative Self, a constructive way of solving contradictions is necessary, which can be done through reflexive skills, self-actualization value, self-respect, independence, non-aggressive behavior and strive for self-perfection.

The fusion of Self with personality, the dissolution of Self and dominance of personality are studied by A. B. Orlov (1995). Basing on the definition of personality as a set of motivational attitudes of individual to the reality, he presents it as a sheath covering subjective content. Depending on the type of the motivational attitudes comprising a personality, it can be made of outer (affective, cognitive) and inner (harmonious) motivations. The author proposes to view the personality 'sheath' as the area of potential personal development. Overcoming the obstacles on the way of self-study and self-improvement is the result of formation of personality; the original potential human essence — Self — thus becomes imprisoned inside its 'sheath'. Every 'empiric' (really existing) personality represents a concrete actualization of this general potential and has an exact location and configuration within the given area.

The ideas of A. A. Melik-Pashaev (2001) are of special interest for our research. Basing on the humanistic paradigm of personality studies, the author defines the freedom of Self, responsibility and creativity as the inherent features of human existence. Drawing on the structural components of the Self-concept, he defines the empiric self (everyday self-awareness with its limited psychological characteristics) and the higher Self that contains the plenitude of possibilities for the future development of personality in the time, space and socio-cultural conditions (p. 151).

Melik-Pashaev believes that the higher Self has a universal character and possesses the 'intense and loving find-it-all' opportunity which is the necessary condition for creative process. The process of 'creating oneself' is the realization of the higher creative Self in the self-awareness and activity of individual. A significant role in the realization of the creative Self is played by the psychological phenomenon called 'meeting oneself' — the acknowledged breakthroughs of the creative Self into everyday consciousness and perception that give the feeling of anticipation of real capabilities or even the general direction of future creative activity.

Therefore, Self plays an important role in regulating behavior and activity of individual. An individual can organize his behavior on the level of his everyday Self, but he also can act on the level of the higher Self. In most people, their everyday behavior is defined by their ordinary Self, which, according to A. Maslow (1967), is initiated by deficiency needs. However, in critical or extreme situations, sometimes the regulation of behavior is taken over by the higher Self. If the main values of life and culture become subjectively important for a person, his activity is regulated by the higher Self.

The higher (creative, authorial) Self differs from the ordinary and has two meanings: (1) in creative activity man becomes 'bigger than himself' and synergistically creates something exceeding his ordinary capabilities; (2) in creative activity man becomes 'different', he is "not like himself in everyday life" (Melik-Pashaev, 1999, 104).

N. A. Berdyaev (1989) believes that the deep Self of a person is connected with spirituality. Spirit is a synthesizing source sustaining the unity of personality. A man should be continuously creative towards himself. This creative process forms personality. It is an endless fight with multiple false Selves in a person (p. 53).

We studied various approaches to different aspects of the Self-concept in Russian psychology: general issues (Abulkhanova, 1994; Agapov, 1996; Derkach, 2000; Kon, 1978; Stolin, 1983; Chesnokova, 1977), the creative Self (Basin, 1996; Bodalev, 1998, 1999; Melik-Pashaev, 2001; Mitina, 1999; Seljuch, 2008), the leader's Self (Zhuravlev, 1982), the emotional Self (Yakovleva 1997), productive thinking (Brushlinsky, 1996, Matyushkin, 1991; Rubinstein, 1997). It is stated that the notion of Self has several main and multiple additional meanings. Depending on the school of thought, it is viewed as (a) an independent active mental formation; (b) a mental construct — the Self-concept; (c) specific processes and structures; or (d) has other meanings.

The foreign psychology analyzes Self on the basis of individual Self-concept. Individual consciousness is presented in two aspects: (1) an experienced element of consciousness — the empiric Ego and (2) an experiencing element of consciousness — the absolute Ego. The absolute Self is the reasoning individual — the one that remains conscious at every given moment. This distinction is arbitrary — in the reality of the mind these two aspects are combined in one inseparable unity of Self.

Self as an object exists only in the processes of gaining self-awareness and it forms the content of these processes only to the limits of an individual's ability to cognize himself. The separation of the result and the process of self-cognition can be done only arbitrarily as in each case it is defined by individual evolution and reorganization of potential abilities and invested efforts (James, 1961).

In the theory of symbolic interactionism an individual is viewed as an object of other people's attitudes and an object of his own actions. Self is divided into 'I' and 'We'. The 'I' is the active, non-reflexive, creative element of Self. The 'We' is the social, reflexive Self internalizing the norms of the community and attitudes of others. The 'Me' is the norm that controls the 'I' being the result of awareness of one's relationships with others. These ideas are based on the analysis of Self as a structural change in the attitude to the world which is gained by an individual in the processes of learning, communicating, social activity and behavior (Cooley, 1962; Mead, 1926).

C. Benson's school of thought studies self as a relatively independent and active integral object whose aim is to orient, navigate and search for paths in the physical and social environment (Benson 2001). An important feature of Self is its ability to purposefully and consciously expand its space thus creating the basis for creativity and infinite changeability of an individual. Since Self is always a project in the making, the realization of unpredictable creativity is limited by the morality and responsibility of society. Therefore, Benson brings forth the problem of developing responsibility and competency.

Self is immanent with its existence. It develops in the course of life but it exists from the beginning of mental activity. It does not emerge from the distinction against non-Self. On the contrary, it forms the essential prerequisite for any process of distinction of Self as a mental subject, and it reveals itself as an active source that organizes and regulates all experiences. Without a basic Self there is no inner connection between experiences. Therefore, it can be concluded that the creative Self has an emotional component in its structure.

According to A. Pfänder (1900), an individual develops his understanding of himself, which he defines as Self. It has a core which includes an individual's past life, his actions, his awareness of his own abilities, and periphery

— all that is outside his mental body. Self-consciousness registers the knowledge about Self, its values and products, and exists as a function of the spiritual ideal Self.

E. Erickson (1964) views Self as a conscious and essential factor of emotional maturity including openness, ability to understand problems, confidence, freedom and courage to deal with the problems and solve them. The conscious Self functions as a mature personality in dialogical relations with the environment. Self, therefore, is an important element of consciousness with the function of integrating the intra- and interpersonal experience of an individual.

E. Landau considers that Self regulates the flow of mental energy which links the mental content to aims. The aims, in turn, direct mental energy to Self, thus forming a spiral. This system creates Self and is simultaneously created by Self. This flow roots us in the here-and-now moment of thought, imagination and action (Landau, 1984).

R. Assagioli's (1965) concept of psychosynthesis distinguishes between the conscious Self and pure self-awareness as the higher transcendental Self. He views Self as the center of self-awareness and self-realization which provides inner balance of personality in the constantly changing environment.

The individual psychology proposed the concept of the creative Self. The creative Self exists on the boundary between stimulating influence on a person and the person's response to this stimulus, which cannot be described but it is created by the person.

According to the creative Self concept, an individual creates his personality from raw material, heredity and experience. Heredity gives him certain abilities. The environment provides experience. Abilities, experience and the way of interpreting experience build up the attitude to life which defines the interrelation with the world.

The main idea of individual psychology is that individual lifestyle is formed under the influence of creative abilities of the individual, who is responsible for what he becomes and how he behaves. The creative Self's domain is the individual's aim in life; it defines the method of achieving the aim, develops social interest, influences perception, memory, fantasies and dreams making each person free to identify himself. The concept of the creative Self emphasizes that people are architects of their destiny actively creating their own personality.

Jungian analytical psychology sees the main feature of the creative Self in the courage of mind, spirit and imagination that can conceive the unconceivable and try to attain it, doubt the conventional (destroy to create something better), think in an original way, experience life to the full, follow intuition in contrast to logic, oppose the majority and stay true to oneself (Jung, 1968).

In Gestalt psychology (Köhler, 1947) Self is not something that can be statistically objectified but simply symbols for the function of identification. Self is identified with something emerging as a figure; all aspects of a healthy organism (senses, motor activity, psyche, etc.) are temporarily associated with the emerging Gestalt; the experience of Self represents total identification where function identifies with structure.

Cognitive psychology (Solso, 1995) presents the development of Self as consecutive stages in an individual's understanding and assessing oneself and the environment. Therefore, development depends on the mode of cognitive representation of oneself and the world. The more differentiated an individual is, the more elements and sources it can process simultaneously and integrate into a meaningful structure. On the highest levels, the elements can be represented by whole knowledge or experience structures which are interconnected and form a new unity. Inside the unity, Self interacts dynamically with the environment.

Humanistic psychology (R. Burns, M. Bowen, G. Allport, C. Rogers, A. Maslow, V. Frankl and others) approaches the study of the creative Self from the principle of maximum use of a personality's needs and abilities. The basic ideas of this school of thought are the following: (1) a personality strives for self-actualization and develops towards increased complexity, self-sufficiency, maturity, and competency; (2) the functional organization of a personality's (Self's) mental systems is the most important aspect; (3) the creative Self is an impulse to self-actualization and complete realization of talents and abilities; it is the self-efficiency realized in every concrete situation of achievement. According to A. Maslow (1967), in creative people the mental Self becomes bigger than the bodily Self. The modes of growth are represented in an individual's abilities, which direct growth.

A. Maslow (1971) considered that the actualizing Self is the inner original nature which any person possesses at birth. This nature includes needs, abilities, talents, anatomy, physiological balance and balanced temperament. This core is manifested in natural inclinations, preferences or inner convictions, and this material turns into Self very quickly in contact with the real world. These potential abilities are observed in development and are formed or suppressed by external factors. The world is one and whole, and the degree to which a person can combine the everyday the greater things depends on his ability to dialectically perceive the world in its commonness and originality at once.

G. Allport (1937) sees personality as a developing open psychophysiological system whose core is formed by Self. The specific feature of this system is its strive for self-realization and self-actualization.

V. Frankl (1966) considers Self as an objective and significant force which is manifested in human existence. Existence is, in fact, the feature of structural components of the creative Self in individual world picture which becomes the criterion for assessment, experiencing and transformation of the reality and the Self in the context of this reality.

The sociocultural theory of personality (K. Horney, G. Sullivan, E. Fromm and others) views Self through two main questions: (1) why is Self so stable? and (2) if it changes, how and why does it happen?

According to K. Horney (1947), a mentally healthy personality always realizes its potential; in case of neurotic development, it is alienated from its real Self. The distance between the actual Self (strengths and weaknesses, health and neurosis, current thoughts) and the real Self (temperament, abilities, gifts, which are hereditary and need favorable conditions to be developed) depends on whether personal development proceeds as self-actualization or self-alienation.

E. Fromm (1992) believes that the development of Self is promoted by creative activity with the realization of emotional and intellectual abilities and maximal self-understanding.

K. Jaspers (1913), being a representative of the existential psychology school, believed that self-awareness is awoken in reflection. As self-awareness consists of two components: self-assessment and awareness of one's own unique being, the latter becomes very important. Jaspers opposes the idealization of any concepts of Self as they do not address the existential core of personality. According to him, self-awareness is present in all events of a person's mental life, it accompanies all perceptions, ideas, thoughts, and is realized in the following formal signs of self-awareness (Jaspers, 1964): (a) awareness of oneself as an active being; (b) awareness of one's unity; (c) awareness of one's identity; (d) awareness of one's difference from the rest of the world.

R. May (1983) studies the phenomenon of Self as an active being and distinguishes the following aspects: (1) centration of most mental functions — a person understands himself as a subject of his own actions, perceptions,

thoughts, feelings, and is aware of his identity with his previous self; (2) the field of Self is defined by a meaningful set of objects; (3) a set of non-biological motives is directed to protection and strengthening of one's power and value.

The studies in existential psychology view Self as a spontaneous natural phenomenon, a source of creativity.

The analysis of various theoretical and experimental approaches to the study of Self in contemporary science marks a number of methodological contradictions and leads to the following conclusions. The variety of psychological concepts directly or indirectly addressing the study of Self leads to inconsistencies in definitions of its essence and category. This diversity of definitions depends on the processes of structuring and interpretation of the meaning and psychological content of the concept of Self.

The overview of psychological studies shows that Self is structurally and processually connected with self-consciousness. Consciousness is realized in Self, and Self is revealed in consciousness (N. A. Berdyaev); Self is objectified in original and unique personality (V. N. Myasishchev). The definitions of the essential features of self are based on the studies of the Self-concept of personality as a structured and hierarchical system.

The contemporary research has developed a number of ideas for the modeling of Self; it is seen as an integrating factor for all functional elements of the system of personality; as a unit of analysis of mental phenomena it represents a systemic multicomponent object.

The process of the development of Self includes the models, forms and other mental elements that direct this self-creation. The process is continuous; only in development does Self become what it is (Kierkegaard). The process of self-development is not only determined but also driven by self-control and self-creation. It becomes evident when an individual advances in his development and realizes his images of his own future (May, 1969).

Thus, in psychological research the phenomenon of Self is represented as an active subject, a carrier of reality, an object of self-cognition, a form of subjective individual existence, a multimodal structure, a psychological source of creative energy, a binding element of personality.

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