

Lecture № 3 Consciousness

The main issues of the lecture:

1. Methodological difficulties of the study of consciousness.
2. Consciousness and its origin
3. Consciousness and its structure

1. The existence of consciousness, or rather, of his own consciousness, so natural and direct human experience that does not cause any problems and doubts. But when science and philosophy try to answer the question: "**What is consciousness?**", it is found that the essence of this phenomenon constantly eludes researchers. Why?

- **First**, the paradox in the understanding of consciousness is that we must define the boundaries and essence of consciousness by means of consciousness. It turns out that consciousness has adequate means to any rational definition of any physical, biological and social reality, any mental object (even a God), except that the subjectivity of consciousness.

- **Second**, the biggest problem is finding objective methods of studying consciousness. Despite the use of sophisticated instruments and rigorous methodologies, will never be able to eliminate the effect of features of inner world of the scientist – his emotional and mental states, features his biography, the base of values and intellectual preferences and the specifics of the national-cultural environment.

- **Thirdly**, the difficulty in the study of consciousness is the "absence" of appropriate images, concepts and even words to characterize and clarify the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is a continuum (continuous), and the language is discrete (intermittent) and are therefore unsuitable for describing the continuous flow of experiences.
- Added to this is the inadequacy of language means for an external and impartial descriptions of the holistic system, an organic part of the inner being of which they themselves are.

- These difficulties are a reflection of the real contradictions inherent in the human consciousness.

2. Consciousness and its origin.

- There are many explanations of the origin of consciousness. We consider **the materialistic explanation of the nature of consciousness** through the theory of reflection.
- From the standpoint of materialistic science, consciousness is a property of highly organized matter reflect the matter. Reflection is the ability of material objects to leave a trace of other material objects when interacting with them.

- **There are 4 forms of reflection:**

- 1) mechanical

- 2) physical

- 3) chemical

- 4) biological.

- **Irritability** – the simplest form of **biological** reflection – response of living organisms to the objects and phenomena of the surrounding world (living and nonliving).
Example: folding of the leaves in the heat, the movement of the sunflower towards the Sun.

- **Sensitivity** – the higher form of biological reflection is the ability of living organisms to reflect the surrounding world in the form of sensations.
- **Mental reflection** – the ability of living organisms (animals, especially higher animals) to simulate the behavior in order to adapt to the environment.
- **Consciousness** is the **highest form of biological reflection**, which is inherent in man is the most complete representation of the world and its understanding, the capacity for abstraction, reflection (selfconsciousness), the ability to subject practical activities.

- The origin of human consciousness was due to such social factors as the invention of instruments of labour, objects of culture, language and sign systems. Of these, the most important condition for the origin and development of human consciousness was **the joint productive activity of people using the instruments of labor and a speech**. This activity requires cooperation, communication and interaction of people with each other. It is impossible without a common goal, which is the expected product of a cooperative labor.

The basic properties of consciousness:

- 1) **Ideality** is a special, non-material essence of consciousness.
- 2) **Intentionality** refers to the availability of subject of consciousness (what is consciousness "sees") and how it perceives the subject (forms of consciousness: perception, comprehension, evaluation, memory, fantasy, experience of reality).
- 3) **Ideatory** of consciousness, which means the ability to create and perceive ideas.

3. Consciousness and its structure

- The complexity and diversity of the phenomenon of consciousness make it the object of research by many Sciences, including philosophy, psychology, Biophysics, computer science, Cybernetics, law, psychiatry.
- Among the philosophical-gnoseological concepts of consciousness it is noteworthy two concepts: Alexander Georgievich Spirkin and Andrei Vladimirovich Ivanov.

- For *Spirkin*, consciousness is the highest function of the brain characteristic only of man and connected with speech, which consists in the generalized, evaluation and purposeful reflection and constructive-creative transformation of reality, in preliminary mental construction of actions and foreseeing the results of these actions, reasonable regulation and self-control of human behavior.

- According to *Ivanov* consciousness should be understood structurally. For this, **he devided consciousness into 4 parts:**
- **Sector 1** — it is the area of bodily-perceptual abilities and the knowledge obtained on the basis of these abilities. These abilities include sensation, perception and the specific submission by which man receives initial information about the outside world. The primary objective and the regulator of this sector are the utility and practicability.

- **Sector 2** — it is logical-conceptual components of consciousness, thinking, the scope of the General concepts, the analytic-synthetic mental operations and the hard logical evidence. The primary objective and the regulator of this sector is the truth.

- **Sector 3** — the emotional component of consciousness. It is the sphere of personal, subjective psychological experiences, memories, foreknowledge about situations and events. These include: instinctive-affective state (indistinct feelings, premonitions, obscure vision), emotions (anger, fear, joy), distinct feelings (pleasure, disgust, love, hate, sympathy, antipathy). The primary objective and the regulator of this sector is Freud's "pleasure principle".

- **Sector 4** — the value-motivational (value-semantic) component. It's higher motives and spiritual ideals of the individual, and the ability to their formation and creative understanding in the form of imagination, productive imagination, of intuition, of various types. The purpose and the regulators of this sector of the beauty, truth and justice, i.e. values.

- **Sectors 1 and 2** form the outwardly cognitive (or externally-substantive) component of consciousness, which corresponds to the activity of the left, the "language", analytic-discourse of the left hemisphere of the brain.
- **Sectors 3 and 4** form the value-emotional component of our consciousness, which corresponds to the integrative- intuitive function of the right hemisphere.
- We can distinguish two segments in this scheme: the lower one, which corresponds to the unconscious, and the upper segment - is the superconsciousness.

Topics for short reports:

1. The problem of artificial intelligence
2. Altered states of consciousness
3. Animal intelligence
4. Origin of language
5. Animal language

Thank you for attention!