

Education as Reproduction – Education for Reproduction

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Abstract

This article examines the process of sociocultural reproduction as a fundamental alternative to the dominant paradigms of functioning and development. Reproduction is conceptualized as a structure comprising three inductive cycles, integrated by an over-arching constructive cycle, and this model is applied to the sphere of education. The analysis offers a sharp critique of the contemporary trend to employ artificial intelligence as a means of displacing human beings from the intellectual sphere.

Keywords: sociocultural reproduction, cultural transmission, education, reproduction cycles, artificial intelligence (AI), problems of reproduction

1. Introduction

Our reflection on education as a reproductive process is grounded in the methodological framework of "thought-activity" (Shchedrovitsky, 1996), a schema proposed in the early 1980s by the Irkutsk architect and methodologist M.G. Meerovich (see Figure 1).

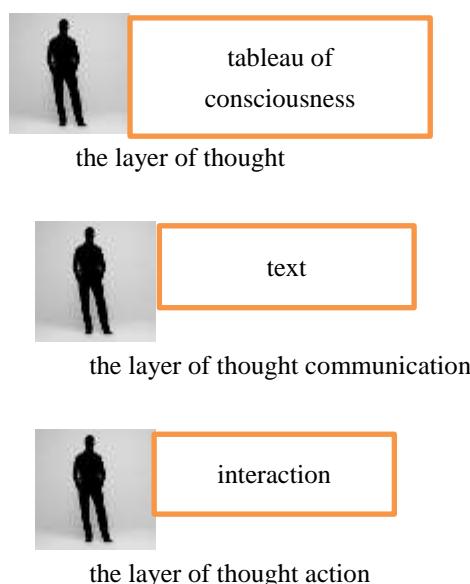


Figure 1. The schema of thought activity

For decades—no less than half a century—we labored under the spell of 'development,' envisioning it as a means of deliverance from the dominance of mere functioning and production. Development captivated not only our minds; in the 1980s and 1990s, it became the organizing principle of our entire reality. For those relegated to the margins, whether by choice or a lack of personal developmental potential, this era became a "time of troubles," a period of upheaval and disorder—all real characteristics of development, which the communist-anti-communist A.A. Zinoviev (Zinoviev, 1986) aptly termed "catastrophe."

Now, we are awakening to a new clarity: times have changed. There is no longer room for development, for dreams of a "new heaven and a new earth," when our very existence is at stake—a crisis of our own making.

Within education, the pseudomorphosis of "Development" was largely decorative and ideological. The foundation of education, particularly at the preschool and school levels, was and remains the process of *functioning*—characterized by the strict adherence to rules, norms, and prescriptions, and an endless cycle of repetition (e.g., routine mathematical exercises, grammar drills, memorization of geographical nomenclature, historical dates, and literary texts).

2. Theoretical Framework: Schemas of Reproduction

G.P. Shchedrovitsky proposed a version of the schema of sociocultural reproduction (Shchedrovitsky, 1987). A simplified version of this schema of reproduction and cultural transmission is also available (see Figure 2).

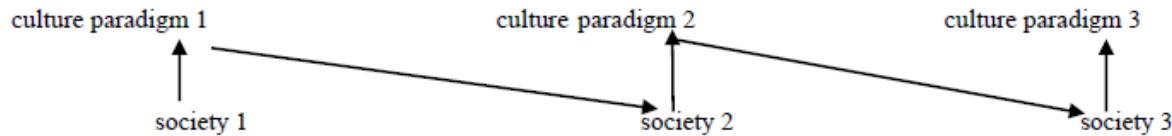


Figure 2. the schema of sociocultural reproduction

According to this (highly generalized) schema, the process of reproduction can be focused/oriented on:

- Culture itself (as Father Pavel Florensky (Florensky, 1977) saw the meaning of history in its sedimentation within culture).
- Culture in the function of a normative constraint (as T.I. Oizerman (Oizerman, 1996) functionally understood culture).
 - Society and its historically changing constructs (represented in the schema by changes in historical situations, which is non-essential).
 - The human as a person, not merely a unit of society (humanity is a set in which each element is equal to the entire set, and therefore, as F.M. Dostoevsky argued in *The Brothers Karamazov*, one cannot build world harmony on the tear of a single child).
 - The processes of society's formation by culture (in this schema, by its realizations), which we understand, in particular, as educational processes.
 - The processes of forming new cultural norms and paradigms (not shown in the schema at all): creative and project-based programming.

3. Reproductive Cycles in Key Spheres

We have selected five spheres as a representative example, covering over 90% of the entire management domain and, most importantly, accessible (actually or potentially) to human-AI organizations.

Each sphere represents a set of reproductive cycles/circles. Three of these are inductive (they provide the impulse for self-motion and carry the content of the sphere), and one, encompassing and orthogonal to them, is constructive—it forms, shapes, and organizes the inductive ones.

Table 1. Reproductive Constructive and Inductive Cycles in Major Spheres

Spheres	Constructive Cycle/Circle	Inductive Cycles/Circles
Biological	Reproduction	Conception
		Gestation
		Nurturing (Fathering)
Intellectual	Thought-Activity	Thinking
		Thought-Communication
		Thought-Action
Life-Activity	Property, Economy	Spiritual
		Communal
		Affairs (Deeds)
Cultural	Education	Enlightenment
		Uphrining
		Training
Economic	Finance	Investment Market
		Labor Market
		Commodity-Money Market
...

In our reflections and constructions, each sphere is represented by only one constructive reproductive cycle. However, it is clear that in some spheres, several must be distinguished. For example, in the intellectual sphere, alongside thinking, we should also distinguish:

- Consciousness
- Subconscious
- Understanding
- Memory
- Conscience
- Reflection
- Intuition
- Creativity

A distinctive feature of reproductive processes is the presence of two directions of movement:

- Society / The Individual
- The Sphere (intellect, life support/life-activity, culture, economy)

Hence, for example:

- Socio-financial (society as a means of financial growth) and financial-social technologies (finance as a means of social well-being and prosperity).
- Personnel training (reproduction of professional activities) and the humanization of humanity (education proper).
- Wealth as treasure (the intrinsic value of money) and wealth as well-being (the intrinsic value of life-activity).

We are interested not so much in these spheres themselves and their structural content, but in the channels of connection, interpenetration, and interaction between them: in other words, we are interested not in the notes and words, but in the melodies, poems, and thoughts formed from them.

4. Managing Reproduction: The Hamletian Dichotomy

No matter what happens in reproduction, four questions invariably arise in its management:

- What must be preserved?
- What must be abandoned?
- What requires change?
- What new must be introduced?

This alone is sufficient to understand reproduction management as a collective endeavor—these questions cannot be resolved individually, in isolation. Even passive participation in reproduction management is a form of participation: through understanding, sympathy, empathy, and solidarity.

Since reproduction is primarily oriented toward values rather than the achievement of goals, each of the necessary directions of reproduction management bears a Hamletian dichotomy:

Table 2. The "Hamletian Dichotomy"

Motivational "To Be"	Tabooed "Not To Be"
What must be preserved	What must not be preserved
What must be abandoned	What must not be abandoned
What requires change	What changes are forbidden
What new must be introduced	What new cannot be introduced

The orientation toward values, rather than norms and models, is ensured by the fact that values are timeless and unchanging (the Tablets of Moses and the Sermon on the Mount are proof of this).

It is clear that the more secluded and intimate a particular sphere or its hidden spaces, boudoirs, and nooks, the less manageable and accessible it is for management.

The most significant sociocultural reproductive processes are:

- Economy (Householding)
- Education
- Design (Projection).

This article primarily examines education.

5. Education as a Reproductive Process

The entire sphere of education fits into the schema of thought-activity:

In the layer of thinking – enlightenment (mastery of knowledge, thinking, worldview).

In the layer of thought-communication – upbringing (mastery of norms and rules of behavior and communication).

In the layer of thought-action – training (mastery of skills, abilities, competencies).

The encompassing process is **education** itself, understood as the development of the human in man, the process of "becoming human."

According to M. Bakhtin (Bakhtin, 2008), man is a becoming being, eternally becoming. Working with the elderly in the "Silver University" I conceived and we implemented, I see firsthand that even in old age, especially in old age, students desperately strive to "finalize" themselves and their education, to leave this world with their heads held high, as beings who have come as close as possible to the human ideal.

6. The Challenge of Artificial Intelligence and the Path Forward

In discussing education for reproduction, I am aware of the apparent inappropriateness of this discussion in the current situation of panicked adulation of AI. In essence, modern education and, more broadly, modern society are gripped by the self-erasure of man from the intellectual environment.

Virtually the entire educational process, especially in higher education, is consumed by requests to AI to solve

academic tasks, create projects, texts, and accompanying presentations. In the very near future, this will be compounded by the "dumbing down" of these projects, texts, and presentations to the level of:

- A high school student
- A first-year student
- A bachelor's student
- A master's student
- A Ph.D.
- An academician
- A specialized research institute

Strictly speaking, education for the needs, demands, and requirements of reproduction (economy, design, etc.) should be built according to the proposed schema, but not in a fragmented way, not as separate, independent jets (as the modern multi-subject, class-lesson system is structured), but as a single integrative flow. This means the dominance of problem-oriented (i.e., those without ready-made solutions) game-like, simulation-based group and individual activities, in which the participation of AI is impossible and inappropriate.

Such problems could include:

- The problems of urban slums in modern Russian cities.
- The problems of abandoned cities and industries in the North, Siberia, and the Far East.
- Problems of legalizing life in ZATOs (Closed Administrative-Territorial Formations – secret cities of the military-industrial and military-scientific complex).
- Problems of local and municipal self-government within the framework of current legislation, which de facto prohibits local and municipal self-government.
- Moral and political problems of peacefulness and peacemaking.
- Problems of humanizing the activities and atmosphere of the Federal Penitentiary Service (the modern version of the Gulag).
- Problems of voluntarily renouncing the phantom of the "future."

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