

THE CONTENT AND ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF FIGURATIVE THINKING IN THE HUMAN MIND.

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Annotation: This article demonstrates that no matter how deep and extensive research dedicated to studying the human being may be, the phenomena of thinking, understanding, speech, imagination, and fantasy always possess an individual nature and therefore remain research objects with no clear boundaries.

Keywords: When translating the Russian word “*obraz*” into Uzbek, we can observe that it carries several meanings. For example: appearance, image, figure, form; mental image, symbol; method, manner, style, way.

No matter how profound and rigorously systematized the inquiry into self-knowledge may be, mental phenomena—such as thinking, perception, speech, imagination, fantasy, and reflection—intrinsically appear as singular, autonomous entities, never entirely circumscribed, fully measurable, or wholly subordinated to universal principles. In today’s epoch of accelerated globalization, deep-seated cultural and spiritual transformations, and unprecedented flows of information, the endeavor to cultivate an individual of elevated moral and intellectual stature has grown both increasingly complex and profoundly consequential.

In this context, the analysis of gnoseological phenomena—thinking, perception, imagination, and the creation of mental images—within various historical, cultural, and social frameworks acquires exceptional significance. These phenomena constitute the fundamental basis for the formation of human consciousness, the modes of understanding the world, and the deepening of the spiritual realm.

Therefore, to gain a deeper understanding of the content and essence of figurative thinking, it is essential first to explore the philosophical and gnoseological roots of the concept of “image.” The metaphysical meaning of any scientific concept is often reflected even at its simplest lexical layer. Examining the lexical meanings of the term “image” thus helps to illuminate its philosophical semantics more profoundly.

When translating this term from Russian into Uzbek, it becomes evident that it possesses a multi-layered semantic structure encompassing multiple meanings. This confirms that the

concept of “image” is not merely linguistic but also intrinsically multidimensional, symbolic, creative, and gnoseological within the human mind.

Consequently, an image is not simply the external appearance or depiction of an object; it represents a complex moral-cognitive model formed in human consciousness. It not only reflects reality directly but also allows for its reinterpretation, reconstruction, symbolic representation, and enrichment with meaning.

Thus, the lexical roots of the term “*image*” reveal the extraordinary complexity of its philosophical meaning: it simultaneously represents the reflection of reality, the product of thought, the symbol of imagination, and a distinctive form of knowledge. For instance: 1) appearance, figure, visage, form; 2) mental image, symbol; 3) method, manner, style, approach, and so on. However, it should be emphasized that, at times, these meanings do not fully capture the true essence of the word “*image*.” Therefore, we deemed it appropriate to use this term untranslated. Overall, an image can be understood as “the representation or re-presentation of something, manifested in a particular form or figure.” Thus, the lexical roots of the term “*obraz*” reveal the extraordinary complexity of its philosophical meaning: it simultaneously represents the reflection of reality, the product of thought, the symbol of imagination, and a distinctive form of knowledge. For example: 1) appearance, figure, visage, form; 2) mental image, symbol; 3) method, manner, style, approach, and so on. However, it should be emphasized that these meanings sometimes do not fully convey the true essence of the word “*obraz*.” Therefore, we deemed it appropriate to use the term untranslated. Broadly speaking, an *obraz* can be understood as “the representation or re-presentation of something, manifested in a particular form or figure.” In philosophy, the term *obraz* is employed in several senses, depending on the characteristics of the philosophical doctrine or idea under consideration. As noted above, it can denote the appearance or form of a particular object or phenomenon, the symbol or figure of an event or occurrence in memory and imagination, or, alternatively, it may express the way of thinking, lifestyle, or other attributes of an individual or a people. The material manifestation of an *obraz* is realized through action, language, speech, and other sign systems.

The origin of the concept derives from the Russian word “*obrazovivat*,” meaning to emerge, to take shape, to be educated, or to be perfected. It also carries the sense of “to create,” which aligns with the ancient Greek philosophical notions of *idea*, *eidos*, and *form*, as well as the German tradition of *Gestalt*. In medieval philosophical theology, the phrase “the image of God” (Latin *imaginem Dei*, German *Bild Gottes*) was used to signify the representation of human essence. In contemporary European philosophy, *obraz* (English *image*) is considered a

gnoseological concept, comprising elements that constitute thought, imagination, and mental representation. For instance, Kant, when critiquing the faculty of judgment, described artistic images (*Gestalten*) as the spatial manifestation of aesthetic ideas. Here, the idea is reflected as a prototype or archetype (*Urbild*), while its expression is termed *Nachbild*. Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev juxtaposes the *obraz* and the object: either the *obraz* is formed on the basis of the object, or the *obraz* serves as the basis for the creation of the object. In any case, the relationship between the image and the object follows an isomorphic pattern.

The uniqueness of an *obraz* lies in its subjective and ideal nature: it cannot exist independently (i.e., it is not the primary source or the original). An *obraz* can only be considered objective insofar as it accurately represents the object. Nevertheless, it should always be remembered that the original object is always richer and more profound in meaning than its representation.

The *obraz* is an integral part of a symbol. According to Hegel, a symbol consists of two fundamental elements—*obraz* and meaning—and if either is absent, the symbol itself cannot exist.

In the arts, *obraz* holds a special place. For instance, in visual arts, an image or painting expresses itself through particular *obrazs*. However, the relationship between *obraz* and depiction is not entirely dependent on the medium: we can tear or discard a painting, yet the *obrazs* it conveys continue to affect us. In other words, a work of art can inspire or move us every time we contemplate it. In our view, the spiritual impact of an *obraz* is constant, whereas the depiction is transient, existing only for a limited period. An *obraz* is the reflection of an object in the human mind. In the sensory stage of cognition, it appears as perception, awareness, or imagination; at the stage of thought, it manifests as concepts, reasoning, and conclusions. The character and degree of an *obraz* vary throughout the process of knowledge. At the level of sensory cognition, simple and singular objects are represented in the mind as basic *obrazs*. At the emotional stage, these objects take on a more complex structure, manifesting as a combination of imagination, memory, and fantasy, related to past or future experiences. When conveyed through language and explained, *obrazs* in the mind determine the level of understanding. At the level of abstract thinking, the image of thought exists solely through concepts—representing the highest stage of figurative thinking. Overall, *obraz* profoundly influences the processes of reasoning, reflection, and conclusion drawing. The richness of images in the human mind deepens thinking, strengthens reasoning abilities, and provides a foundation for correct judgments. Notably, even a young child perceives and interacts with the world based on images. From the very first days, we engage infants through toys that embody distinct “images” of the world. Through such toys, children gradually

form mental representations of reality, such as animals, vehicles, and other objects. Observing these images later in reality often fills them with wonder and delight. The same phenomenon applies to adults; for instance, when driving a car for the first time that one has long dreamed of, the experience evokes joy and amazement. In gnoseological processes, the hypothetical nature of *obraz* is also significant. Images support long-term memory retention of knowledge and allow individuals to foresee the potential consequences of their decisions. For example, the influence of mass culture, now one of the most pressing societal threats, can be mitigated among youth who possess well-developed figurative thinking. By visualizing the consequences of certain actions through mental images, thoughtful individuals avoid destructive paths. Similarly, understanding future social phenomena, such as the increasing legalization of same-sex marriages in some European countries, can be approached through figurative thinking: one can anticipate the broader societal implications and moral consequences. In sum, an *obraz* enriches human thought from the beginning of conscious activity until the end of life. The richer and more diverse the *obrazs*, the deeper the reasoning and the more meaningful the interpretation of life through thought and language. Based on the above, we can assert that the style of figurative thinking plays a crucial role in shaping human aesthetic, moral, axiological, and praxiological orientations. The manifestation of meaning in specific forms enriches the “ocean” of thought and provides diverse perspectives. Typically, we consider it extraordinary for artists, musicians, sculptors, or craftsmen to commit crimes or engage in extremely negative behavior, as they perceive life differently, are inspired by its beauty, and tend to empathize with others. Consequently, cultivating figurative thinking in the younger generation—through early education in painting, craftsmanship, music, and gymnastics—is increasingly recognized as a national policy priority. Several state programs in Uzbekistan, initiated by the First President I. Karimov, have been developed to support this. The style of figurative thinking enriches not only children and youth but also the spiritual world of adults. The creation of great works of art and masterpieces of music and art has often involved active participation by mature individuals. The state has also established a strong legal framework supporting activities in all areas of arts and culture. The high achievements of young artists and gymnasts in international competitions demonstrate the practical results of these efforts, reflecting the well-developed figurative thinking among the youth. In short, an *obraz* is the form of our thoughts. The more diverse and vivid they are, the richer and broader our worldview becomes. Figurative thinking is the ability to mentally represent events and phenomena in specific forms and colorful images, enhancing cognitive, aesthetic, and moral understanding.

