

Duality of Categories or Dialectical Concepts?

Nikolai Veresov¹

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Abstract The paper explores that CHT contains at least three dialectical concepts and principles; (1) development as drama (dialectical contradiction) and the principle of dramatic construction of the personality, (2) the concept of mediating activity and the principle of qualitative transition and reorganisation and (3) the concept of perezhivanie and the principle of refraction. Rethinking the status of “the social” creates opportunities to overcome a dualism of two groups of factors (biological and social) and introduces the principle of dramatic construction of the personality, which is an intrapsychological result of overcoming social dramatical interpsychological collisions (dramas of life). Rethinking “the individual” in relation to mediating activity leads to the conclusion that by creating and using cultural signs an individual not only creates artificial stimuli-devices for mastering his psychological processes, but actively reorganizes the whole social situation. Dialectics of the individual and social is explained as interpsychological and intrapsychological are dimensions of one “social-individual” or “individual-social” continuum. Drama of real life refracted through the prism of perezhivanie becomes a drama of a personality; intrapsychological higher mental function develops, but remains quasi-social.

Keywords Dualism · Dialectics · Cultural-historical theory · Social · Individual · Perezhivanie

When the Buddha comes, you will welcome him; when the devil comes, you will welcome him.

Shunryu Suzuki, “No Dualism,” *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*

✉ Nikolai Veresov
nikolai.veresov@monash.edu

¹ Faculty of Education, Monash University, Room A3-22, Building A, Peninsula Campus, McMahons Road, Frankston, Victoria 3199, Australia

Intro: Theoretical Points of Departure

The space of my meditations is framed by two theoretical positions in relation to activity theory (AT) and dualism reflected in the article of Mammen and Mironenko.

The authors claim:

...theoretically the concept of activity is *bridging* the basic concepts of objectivity and subjectivity that have been separated in dualistic psychology and philosophy (Mammen and Mironenko 2015, p. 5).

This quotation brilliantly reflects and even somehow summarizes a theoretical position within the long-term discussion of the problem of overcoming dualism in relation to activity theory. Begun in the Soviet Union in the 1970s–1980s (see, for example, Davydov 1990) it was further developed and extended in Western academia. Thus, Holzman (2006) identifies AT as

...a non-dualistic approach to understanding and transforming human life that takes dialectical human activity as its ontology (Holzman 2006, p. 6)

Miettinen supports this by claiming that in AT the concept of transformative practical activity is a theoretical category that makes it possible to solve philosophical dilemmas that emerged from Cartesian subject-object (and mind-body) dualism (Miettinen 2006, p.389). Roth et al. (2012) put in a rather more radical way:

Activity theory... goes back to Benedict de Spinoza... whose philosophy inspired Vygotsky a lot. This is why Vygotsky and Vygotskian inspired scholars recognize themselves as working within a monistic tradition as opposed to the Western dualistic tradition (Roth et al. 2012, p. 31).

Let us now take a look at the second theoretical position. The fundamental weakness of the AT is that it

“...focuses in analyses on *activities* without taking into account the *individual* involved in the activity at the same time” (Toomela 2000, p.298),—it is all true as far as Leontiev’s theory is concerned. Leontiev consistently refused “to look inside the individual” (Mammen and Mironenko 2015, p 11.)

Again, this quotation reflects a long-term tradition of criticism of the activity theory where Toomela is not a lonely voice (see, for example, two recently published papers of Dafermos (2015a, b)). Yet, do we have grounds for the conclusion that the refusal to look inside the individual is the price paid for the transition from Cartesian dualism to activity monism? I do not think we do have strong reasons to support this viewpoint. However, we do have some reasons to reformulate the whole problem by asking: is monism the only possible alternative to dualism? Is this true that to be monistic is the only way to be non-dualistic? Are “non-dualistic” and “monistic” pure synonyms? At least in the realm of philosophy they are definitely not; as for psychology the answer remains uncertain mostly because of the very essence of this science, which

presupposes the subject and the object, subjectivity and objectivity, external and internal as basic categories. Is there any other way to overcome dualism rather than to create a monistic theory?

This point brings me to the aim of my paper. It will be focused on the transition from dualism to dialectics in the theoretical analysis of human development. My paper is to show that Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory (CHT) contains some non-dualistic *dialectical* ideas, which remain undeveloped in AT. My three meditations presented below are not about lost opportunities but rather about the unrealized potentials of cultural-historical theory. Putting it in more specific way, I will try to make a step forward in "unpacking" the dialectics of the social and the individual within Vygotsky's theory.

Meditation One: Rethinking the Social

The question "What is bad about dualism in psychology" might look ridiculous. However, in the historical circumstances of Vygotsky's time that was a methodological question: "Is it possible to investigate subjective psychological processes by objective scientific methods?". In physiology, this problem was a focus of discussion for Pavlov and Sechenov, Bekhterev and Uhtomsky. It seemed that reflexology as an objective science based on the objective stimulus-response method provided promising solutions. However, from the times of W. Wundt, psychology experienced another methodological problem—it became clear that higher (specifically human) mental functions (HMF) are not the results of the development of lower mental functions, and therefore objective methods relevant to the investigation of lower functions are not applicable to the study of higher functions.

In this respect, Vygotsky's theory was a methodological alternative to existing discourses:

The one-sidedness and erroneousness of the traditional view ...on higher mental functions consist primarily and mainly in an inability to look at these facts as facts of historical development, in the one-sided consideration of them as natural processes and formations, in merging and not distinguishing the natural and the cultural, the essential and the historical, the biological and the social in the mental development...; in short—in an incorrect basic understanding of the nature of the phenomena being studied...Putting it more simply, with this state of the matter, the very process of development of complex and higher forms of behaviour remained unexplained and unrealised methodologically. (Vygotsky 1997, p. 2)

In Vygotsky's view, the very process of development (sociocultural genesis) of HMF should be taken as the subject-matter of a new theory. To overcome the one-sidedness of "classical" psychology means to create a kind of theory and methods, which are able to investigate the *process* of development, both theoretically and experimentally, in its whole complexity and dynamics. In other words, the methodological requirement was a transition from objects (phenomena) under study to the process (of development) under study. However, development is a very complex and contradictory process including collisions, contradictions and qualitative transitions. Development, as Vygotsky puts it

...is not confined to the scheme “more-less,” but is characterized primarily and specifically by the presence of qualitative neoformations that are subject to their own rhythm and require a special measure each time. (Vygotsky 1998, p. 190)

Complex qualitative neoformations require a dialectical approach, as dialectics is the logic of investigation of live developing systems; mechanical systems per se (including reflexes) do not need dialectical analysis.

Higher mental functions are not built up as a second story over elementary processes, but are new psychological systems that include a complex merging of elementary functions that will be included in the new system, and themselves begin to act according to new laws; each higher mental function is, thus, a unit of a higher order determined basically by a unique combination of a series of more elementary functions in the new whole. (Vygotsky 1999, p. 43)

New complex wholes, psychological systems are results of development, which is a “path along which the social becomes the individual” (Vygotsky 1998, p.198). Social interactions therefore are not considered as factors in development, but as *a source of development* of HMF (Vygotsky 1998, p. 203).

The methodological transition, suggested by CHT in rethinking the status of “the social”, not only creates a pathway of “distinguishing the natural and the cultural, the essential and the historical, the biological and the social in the mental development”, but creates opportunities to overcome a dualism of two groups of factors (biological and social) existing in a traditional psychological theoretical framework.

. . .development is not simply a function which can be determined entirely by X units of heredity and Y units of environment. It is an historical complex, which at any stage reflects its past content. In other words, the artificial separation of heredity and environment points us in a fallacious direction; it obscures the fact that development is an uninterrupted process which feeds upon itself; that it is not a puppet which can be controlled by jerking two strings. (Vygotsky 1993, p. 253)

The task of analysis, therefore is not the empirical (phenomenological) description of HMF in their developed forms; what must be analyzed are *processes*, “and through analysis, the true relation that lies at the base of these processes, behind the external form of their manifestation, must be disclosed” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 70). The keywords here are “the true relation”. Yet, what does it mean to disclose the “true relation”, and what kind of relation is this “true relation”? The answer is in the general law of cultural development:

...every function in the cultural development of the child appears on the stage twice, in two planes, first, the social, then the psychological, first between the people as an intermental category, then within the child as a intramental¹ category...Genetically, social relations, real relations of people, stand behind all the higher mental functions and their relations. (Vygotsky 1997, p. 106)

¹ In Russian original it is interpsychological (интерпсихическая) and intrapsychological (интрапсихическая) (Vygotsky 1983, p. 145)

Three points are important here: First, HMF do not appear IN social relations, but AS social relations; “every higher mental function was external because it was social before it became an internal strictly mental function; it was formerly a social relation” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 105). Second, even in being transformed from interpsychological to intrapsychological “they remain quasisocial” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 106). So, “intrapsychological” is social by its origin and construction. However, there is one more aspect in the relations of “intropsychological” and “intrapsychological” which highlights a complex and dialectical character in the process of development. “The basic principle of the functioning of higher functions (personality) is social, entailing *interaction* of functions, in place of interaction between people. They can be most fully developed in the form of *drama*” (Vygotsky 1929/1989, p.59). The social, interpsychological form of HMF is a *dramatic* interaction between people; it is an (interpsychological) drama of the personality as a participant in an (interpsychological) drama (Vygotsky 1989, p, 69).

The dramatic frame of the personality as the unique organization and hierarchy of HMF is the result of unique dramatic interpsychological collisions that have happened in the life of the human being and their overcoming by a human being, the intrapsychological result of the individual’s unique developmental trajectory. Therefore, the psychology “must be developed in the concepts of drama, not in the concepts of processes” (Vygotsky 1929/1989 p.71). Overcoming social dramatical collisions (dramas of life) human being creates his/her unique personality.

The drama of the personality as a participant in the drama of life is the essential contradiction and the moving force for development. Thus, the intrapsychological consists of internalized dramatic social interactions: “the dynamic of the personality is drama” (Vygotsky 1989 p.67). Here an abstract dialectical idea of a contradiction as a moving force of development obtains its concrete *psychological content* in the concept of the drama of life as a moving force in the development of human personality. This introduces a theoretical perspective of rethinking human psychology in terms of drama.

Summarising this meditation I would say that the reconceptualization of the social in CHT opens up the possibility of a non-dualistic *dialectical* approach to mental development. Introducing the interpsychological form of existence of HMF makes possible a dialectical view of the complexity and dynamics of development. Development as drama and the dramatic frame of a personality are ideas which open the way to a non-dualistic dialectical approach to the relations between the social and the individual.

Meditation Two: Rethinking the Individual

The concept of sign mediation developed in CHT is considered as a kind of methodological solution overcoming the dualism of the internal and external, the social and the individual. Thus, and this is only one of many examples, Miettinen defines this concept as “anti-dualist solution to the crisis in psychology” (Miettinen 2006, p. 392). On the other hand, some researchers follow a more cautionary position. Thus, Yamagata-Lynch (and again this is only one example of many others) says that mediated action “was Vygotsky’s attempt to explain human consciousness development in a manner that did not rely on dualistic stimulus–response associations”. However, Vygotsky’s

“arguments themselves were not free from binding dualistic language” (Yamagata-Lynch 2010, p.16).

I would agree that “current researchers and practitioners need to be aware of this and be honest about how CHAT as a field has not eliminated dualistic language in its theory development and we are still working to identify how to better explain human activity with a nondualist framework” (Yamagata-Lynch 2010, p.18). However, I think that the problem is not the dualistic language in CHAT; the problem is the dualistic approach, which will not disappear automatically when dualistic language is eliminated. In my opinion, there are several *dialectical* aspects of the concept of sign mediation in CHT which were not developed in Leontiev’s version of AT or in CHAT’s searching for a consistent monistic theory.

The following quotation might be a good starting point:

...the basic and most general activity of man that differentiates man from animals in the first place, from the aspect of psychology, is signification, that is, creation and use of signs (Vygotsky 1997, p. 55).

Vygotsky speaks about activity and this might look like evidence for the view of Vygotsky as an activity theorist. On the other hand, this might look like an example of dualistic language, as signals (even artificial signals) are Pavlovian reflexological and therefore dualistic terms. However, what is the activity Vygotsky is speaking about here? He refers to the ...“unique activity consisting in creating artificial stimuli and in mastering his own processes” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 51). This is far from Leont’ev’s concept of activity developed in AT. Vygotsky means a unique *mediating* activity (the creation and use of signs), not *mediated activity* as developed in CHAT (the triangle of activity).

In my opinion by introducing the idea of mediation (mediating activity), CHT opens the perspective of overcoming dualism. Yes, it is one of the most important of Vygotsky’s contributions to psychology and it opened the path to overcoming the postulate of immediacy, which dominated and continues to dominate in psychology. Looking from the developmental perspective, the point does not lie in creating and using signs as artificial stimuli, but in the “transition from direct, innate, natural forms and methods of behaviour to mediated, artificial mental functions” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 168). And more,

...cultural signs and sign mediation are essential for the process of qualitative reorganisation of the psychological functions in a course of development: The sign as a tool reorganizes the whole structure of psychological functions. It forms a structural centre, which determines the composition of the functions and the relative importance of each separate process. The inclusion in any process of a sign remodels the whole structure of psychological operations. (Vygotsky 1929, p. 421)

Hence, two *dialectical moments* are of the most importance in this respect—1) the dialectical transitions in the process of development and 2) the qualitative reorganization of the whole system of mental functions as a result of such transitions.

It is true that some of these arguments might look completely dualistic; however, using the old terminology of the dualistic logic of stimulus–response, Vygotsky introduces a new *dialectical* principle, which opens up a perspective of rethinking the individual in relation to sign mediation. Direct criticism of the “stimulus–response” approach is that it is “overlooking the fact that behind the play of stimuli-responses what really occurred was the active intervention of man in the situation, his active role, his behavior which consisted in introducing new stimuli” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 49). Yet, this is not just a fact:

And this is exactly what comprises the new principle, the new unique relation between behavior and stimulation of which we spoke. In dissolving the operation into components, you lost its most important part: the unique activity of the man directed toward mastery of his own behavior. To say that in this case stimulus *a* determined the behavior is the same as saying that the stick got the fruit for the chimpanzee (in Kohler's experiments)... The appearance itself of new stimuli was the result of the active participation of man. You have forgotten the man; that is where your error lies (Vygotsky 1997, p. 49).

The creation and use of signs is an activity of an individual who creates artificial stimuli-devices for mastering his psychological processes (Vygotsky 1997, p. 49–50). Analyzing Levy-Bruhl's story of a Kaffir he highlights the principal difference between two cases:

“...in the first case, remembering was wholly determined by the principle of stimulus–response, then in the second case, the activity of the man hearing the speech and memorizing it by means of notches on wood is a unique activity consisting in creating artificial stimuli and in mastering his own processes by means of the notches; it is based on a completely different principle... Man himself determines his behavior with the help of artificially created stimuli-devices” (Vygotsky 1997, pp.49–51).

This new principle does not comprise only the self-determination of the individual; in all Vygotsky's examples such as throwing dice, knot-tying operation, counting with fingers and others (Vygotsky 1997, p.50) a man is being involved in various *social situations and environments*. As Vygotsky himself puts it, “in all three cases that we considered, human behavior was determined not by the stimuli present, but by a new or changed psychological situation created by the man himself” (p.54). A new psychological situation appears within the social context, life itself brings challenging tasks to the individual; the most important aspect is that an individual always acts within social contexts as an active participant using culturally and socially created signs; the individual and his action are determined by the social situation. By doing this, an individual reorganizes the whole social situation and makes it different. Rethinking the individual means seeing the individual as actively involved in social interactions and actively reorganizing the situation by creating and using signs.

Meditation Three: the Dialectics of the Social and the Individual

Perezhivanie is a concept in CHT,² which has attracted great attention from Vygotskian scholars in recent years. The limits of this paper do not allow me to present a variety of interpretations of perezhivanie in recent literature: however, I would agree with Smagorinsky who points out that “perezhivanie thus far remains more a tantalizing notion than a concept with clear meaning...” (Smagorinsky 2011, p. 339). However, in my opinion, this concept is a strong theoretical tool for discovering the dialectics of the individual and the social. I will limit my third meditation on this point and my intention is to focus on two dialectical aspects related to perezhivanie.

Already in his early book of 1925 (Vygotsky 1986) Vygotsky defines the traditional distinction of the individual as naïve:

It is quite naïve to understand the social only as collective, as a large number of people. The social also exists where there is only one person with his individual perezhivanie (Vygotsky 1986, p. 314)

Later he improved this approach. First, he strongly points out the relations between the concept of perezhivanie and development.

...perezhivanie is a concept which allows us to study the role and influence of environment on the psychological development of children in the analysis of the laws of development (Vygotsky 1994, p.343).

What is important is that perezhivanie is a tool (concept) for analyzing the influence of sociocultural environment, not on the individual per se, but *on the process of development* of the individual. In other words, the environment determines the development of the individual through the individual’s perezhivanie of the environment (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294). This approach enlarges the developmental perspective as it rejects the basic principle of the dualism of external and internal, which is the principle of *reflection* and replaces it by the principle of *refraction*. No particular social factors in themselves define the development, only factors refracted through the child’s perezhivanie (Vygotsky 1994, p.339–340). The perezhivanie of an individual is a kind of psychological prism, which determines the role and influence of the environment on development (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341). The developing individual is always a part of the social situation and the relation of the individual to the environment and the environment to the individual occurs through the perezhivanie of the individual (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294).

The principle of refraction is a principle, which shows the dialectical relations of the social and the individual *in the process of development*. The social becomes the individual, but the dialectics of this becoming are that only those components of the social environment that are refracted by the perezhivanie of the individual achieve developmental significance (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294). The dualistic principle of reflection shows direct connections between stimuli and responses whereas the principle of

² Vygotsky defines perezhivanie as “how a child becomes aware of, interprets, and emotionally relates to a certain event” (Vygotsky 1994, p. 340–341).

refraction shows dialectical relations between significant components of the social environment and developmental outcomes (changes in the structure of HMF). This principle shows how the same social environment affects the unique developmental trajectories of different individuals. Vygotsky's famous example of three children from the same family shows that the same social environment, being differently refracted through perezhivanie of three different children, brought about three different developmental outcomes and individual developmental trajectories (Vygotsky 1994, p.339–340). In a certain sense, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the social environment as a source of development of the individual exists only when the individual participates actively in this environment, by acting, interacting, interpreting, understanding, recreating and redesigning it. An individual's perezhivanie makes the social situation into the *social situation of development*.

I would like to illustrate my meditations by an example from the scene from the Epilogue of Dostoevsky's *The brothers Karamazov*. The last pages of the book are about Ilusha's funeral and the speech of Alyosha at the funeral stone.

“Boys, I should like to say one word to you, here at this place.”

The boys stood round him and at once bent attentive and expectant eyes upon him...

“Let us make a compact here, at Ilusha's stone, that we will never forget Ilusha and one another. And whatever happens to us later in life, if we don't meet for 20 years afterwards, let us always remember how we buried the poor boy at whom we once threw stones, do you remember, by the bridge? ..and afterwards we all grew so fond of him... And so in the first place, we will remember him, boys, all our lives. And even if we are occupied with most important things, if we attain to honor or fall into great misfortune—still let us remember how good it was once here, when we were all together, united by a good and kind feeling which made us, for the time we were loving that poor boy, better perhaps than we are... You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory, especially a memory of childhood, of home. People talk to you a great deal about your education, but some good, sacred memory, preserved from childhood, is perhaps the best education. If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is safe to the end of his days, and if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us. Perhaps we may even grow wicked later on, may be unable to refrain from a bad action, may laugh at men's tears...”

“...But however bad we may become—which God forbid—yet, when we recall how we buried Ilusha, how we loved him in his last days, and how we have been talking like friends all together, at this stone, the cruelest and most mocking of us—if we do become so—will not dare to laugh inwardly at having been kind and good at this moment! What's more, perhaps, that one memory may keep him from great evil and he will reflect and say, ‘Yes, I was good and brave and honest then!’ Let him laugh to himself, that's no matter, a man often laughs at what's

good and kind. That's only from thoughtlessness. But I assure you, boys, that as he laughs he will say at once in his heart, 'No, I do wrong to laugh, for that's not a thing to laugh at.'"

The boys were excited and they, too, wanted to say something, but they restrained themselves, looking with intentness and emotion at the speaker.

"I say this in case we become bad," Alyosha went on, "but there's no reason why we should become bad, is there, boys? Let us be, first and above all, kind, then honest and then let us never forget each other! I say that again. I give you my word for my part that I'll never forget one of you."

"You are all dear to me, boys, from this day forth, I have a place in my heart for you all, and I beg you to keep a place in your hearts for me! Well, and who has united us in this kind, good feeling which we shall remember and intend to remember all our lives? Who, if not Ilusha, the good boy, the dear boy, precious to us for ever! Let us never forget him. May his memory live for ever in our hearts from this time forth!"

"Yes, yes, for ever, for ever!" the boys cried in their ringing voices, with softened faces.

"Let us remember his face and his clothes and his poor little boots, his coffin and his unhappy, sinful father, and how boldly he stood up for him alone against the whole school."

"We will remember, we will remember," cried the boys. "He was brave, he was good!"

"Ah, how I loved him!" exclaimed Kolya.

"Ah, children, ah, dear friends, don't be afraid of life! How good life is when one does something good and just!"

"Yes, yes," the boys repeated enthusiastically.

"Karamazov, we love you!" a voice, probably Kartashov's, cried impulsively.

"We love you, we love you!" they all caught it up. There were tears in the eyes of many of them.

"Hurrah for Karamazov!" Kolya shouted ecstatically.

"And may the dead boy's memory live for ever!" Alyosha added again with feeling.

"For ever!" the boys chimed in again (Dostoevsky 1930, pp. 785–877).

This scene, which is the final of this Dostoevsky's book could serve as an example of the development of a higher mental function, namely a cultural memory, and the dialectics of the social (interpsychological) and the individual (intrapsychological) within a dramatic collision in a social situation of development.

The content of the social situation was that Ilusha's death and the funeral was a tragic, dramatic event for boys; it was full of grief, woe and dolour. For many of them it was probably the first experience of meeting with death. However, Alyosha Karamazov, acting within this social situation and using cultural means (speech), reorganised the social situation, bringing in a wider context (how we buried the poor boy *at whom we once threw stones, do you remember, by the bridge? ..and afterwards we all grew so fond of him...*). Here the social situation becomes a social situation of development and an interpsychological dimension, as an initial stage of the development of a cultural memory, is created.

The interpsychological collision (social drama) becomes an individual intrapsychological process (cultural memory) because the social situation of development is refracted through the boys' perezhivanie. However, this is not purely a refraction of Ilusha's death; what is refracted is the **whole** social situation of development (*we threw stones and afterwards grew so fond of him*). Here the intrapsychological function (memory) remains quasisocial.

In this situation the individual and social are not dualistic oppositions; they constitute a dialectical unity since the interpsychological does not exist without the intrapsychological, and vice versa. The reorganisation of the intrapsychological function is impossible without an interpsychological dimension and, at the same time, the interpsychological (social) plane does not exist without the intrapsychological process. Thus, interpsychological and intrapsychological are dimensions of one "social-individual" or "individual-social" continuum. A drama of real life refracted through the prism of perezhivanie becomes a drama of a personality; cultural memory appears as a higher mental function (...*let us remember how good it was once here, when we were all together, united by a good and kind feeling which made us, for the time we were loving that poor boy... Let us never forget him.... May his memory live for ever in our hearts from this time forth!*" ... "And may the dead boy's memory live for ever!" "For ever!" the boys chimed in again).

In Lieu of the Conclusion: Duality of Categories or Dialectical Concepts?

The amazing paper of Mammen and Mironenko (2015) raises interesting and even intriguing points. The introduction of the duality of categories to the domain of psychology and the idea of ontological openness might have an excellent future. My ambition is not as great; I simply want to show the possibilities for an alternative vision in overcoming a dualistic approach. The process of becoming, the process of human mental development needs new non-dualistic approaches to ontology as well as a new non-dualistic epistemology. This, in turn requires introducing dialectical concepts as analytical tools, which make it possible to study the sociocultural process of development in its contradictory complexity and its dynamics. My task was to show that CHT contains at least three dialectical concepts and principles—1) development as drama (dialectical contradiction) and the principle of dramatic construction of the personality,

2) the concept of mediating activity and the principle of qualitative transition and reorganisation and 3) the concept of perezhivanie and the principle of refraction.

These concepts mostly remain undeveloped in CHT, but the problem is that they were not developed, and even not accepted, in activity theories. I would agree that introducing the concept of human object-oriented activity is a transition from dualism to monism. Yet, the dialectical perspective was lost; 1) social environment as a source of human development was reduced to the activity (activity as a substance); 2) the dialectics of interpsychological and intrapsychological were reduced to the transformation of external collective activity into internal individual activity; and 3) drama as a key concept in relation to social interaction and the personality does not exist in AT. AT definitely does not develop psychology so as to take account of interpsychological drama. Mediating activity remains unknown for CHAT which deals with *mediated* activities and activity systems as the basic units of analysis (triangle of activity). And finally, it is simply impossible to find the concept of perezhivanie in Leont'ev's writings. Developing an understanding of the concepts of drama, mediating activity and perezhivanie as *dialectical* concepts, unpacking their content and explanatory potential as analytical tools to discover the sociocultural genesis of psychological functions, rethinking the dialectics of the relationship of the social and the individual through the principle of refraction—these still remain challenging tasks which need collective efforts from the collective mind of researchers.

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Dr. Nikolai Veresov has an experience as a day care centre and kindergarten teacher (1987-1991) and secondary school teacher (1982-1987). He has got his first PhD degree in Moscow in 1990 and started his academic career in Murmansk (Russia) as a senior lecturer (1991-1993) and the Head of Department of Early Childhood (1993-1997). The second PhD was obtained in University of Oulu (Finland) in 1998. From 1999 to 2011 he had been affiliated to Kajaani Teacher Training Department (Finland) as a Senior Researcher and the Scientific Director of the international projects. He published 5 books and over 60 articles available in 9 languages. His area of interests is development in early years, cultural-historical theory, genetic research methodology.