

Perspectives in Cultural-Historical Research 1

Marilyn Fleer
Fernando González Rey
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Perezhivanie, Emotions and Subjectivity

Advancing Vygotsky's Legacy

 Springer

Perspectives in Cultural-Historical Research

Volume 1

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There is growing interest in the work of LS Vygotsky internationally, but also in finding new ways and perspectives for advancing cultural-historical theory for solving contemporary problems. Although Vygotsky has become one of the most influential scholars in education and psychology today, there is still a need for serious studies of his work because so much remains unexamined.

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ISSN 2520-1530

ISSN 2520-1549 (electronic)

Perspectives in Cultural-Historical Research

ISBN 978-981-10-4532-5

ISBN 978-981-10-4534-9 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-4534-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017937293

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

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Chapter 1

Perezhivanie, Emotions and Subjectivity: Setting the Stage

Marilyn Fleer, Fernando González Rey and Nikolai Veresov

Abstract This chapter captures and explores three key themes relevant to the concepts of emotions, perezhivanie and subjectivity. In analysing and transcending how these concepts have been primarily discussed in the past, this chapter goes beyond social determinism and theorises how a cultural-historical perspective on these concepts has led to new understandings of the human psyche. Rather than examining emotions, perezhivanie and subjectivity as the result of internalised operations, this chapter puts forward the view that these concepts must be studied as a generative system inseparable from the individual. In advancing upon the original writings of Vygotsky and others who have followed this theoretical tradition, it is argued that all three concepts are inseparable from the complex network within which human activities and human relationships form and develop. It is through understanding the human psyche as the unity of social, personal and environmental characteristics, that it becomes possible to advance on the essence of the three concepts that are the focus of this book, and thereby generate new understandings of what might constitute a contemporary reading of perezhivanie, emotions and subjectivity.

1.1 Introduction

This chapter and those that follow, aim to bring together topics that for a long time have been relegated to a secondary place within cultural-historical theory. Historically, more attention has been paid to cognitive psychological functions,

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its mediation and its internalised and mediated character than to the active character of emotions and their integration into more complex processes, such as imagination and fantasy. Those psychological processes related to imagination, emotion and fantasy were at the centre of attention in Vygotsky's "The Psychology of Art" and in his later works. The final moment of Vygotsky's work was focused on such concepts as sense, *perezhivanie*, emotions, imagination and the understanding of thinking as inseparable from emotions. However, their interrelation and definition remained unclear and open to further development. Some authors addressed Vygotsky's advancement at the end of his life as a new psychological definition of consciousness based on the concept of sense (Leontiev 1992; Zavershneva 2010, 2016).

The aforementioned concepts have in common Vygotsky's search for the unity of cognitive and affective processes. In the case of *perezhivanie*, Vygotsky made explicit his comprehension of it as a new psychological unit of consciousness. Without any doubt, those concepts need to be developed and, on this basis, new theoretical pathways for cultural-historical psychology should be advanced. This is one of the main objectives of this book and is the focus on this chapter.

This book advances on Vygotsky's legacy, elucidating articulations between emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity, in such a way that each section highlights new theoretical constructions that are closely related to the methodological demands of psychological research. In this chapter we analyse this diversity and through this put forward a new perspective on the concepts of emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity. In our opinion, these concepts do not represent isolated definitions, but different levels of integration of psychological functioning, which have the following consequences for advancing Vygotsky's cultural-historical legacy:

1. The concepts of emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity, as discussed in the book, transcend the social determinism that was dominant both within Soviet psychology and many of the works in the field of the Vygotskian studies until today.
2. These concepts led to an understanding of the human psyche not as the result of internalised operations, but as a generative system inseparable from the individual. These concepts, within this cultural-historical theorisation, were first introduced by Vygotsky. Emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity when conceptualised in this way, generate alternative psychological resources within one concrete experience.
3. All three concepts are inseparable from the complex network within which human activities and human relationships occur, but they do not necessarily result from any immediate processes.

This chapter and the chapters that follow in this book not only propose new interpretations of Vygotsky's legacy but also advance Vygotsky's definition, opening new theoretical avenues together with new concrete practices for researching within and across communities, families and institutions. We begin with an analysis of how the concept of subjectivity has been used in research, followed by drawing out the new perspective on emotions that is advanced in this

book, concluding on the concept of *perezhivanie*. It is this latter concept that has been of major interest to many contemporary scholars of cultural-historical theory, and it is this term that has attracted the most diversity in conceptualisation. We conclude this chapter and begin the book on what this diversity of perspectives offer scholars of cultural-historical theory and researchers interested in using this concept to progress understandings of development through their empirical work.

1.2 Advancing the Concept of Subjectivity

Subjectivity, as defined in the final part of the book (Chaps. 9–11), gives one possible set of pathways for embodying the legacy of the last of Vygotsky's concepts in his new psychological system for understanding human development. Subjectivity founded a new ontological domain of human phenomena, whether social or individual, which is inseparable from the cultural-social world within which human beings live their experiences. Few authors have attempted to advance the concept of subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint. Those attempts have not always been done from a cultural historical perspective founded on the Soviet psychology legacy (e.g., Holzkamp 1991). Within Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Stetsenko and Arieivitch (2004) attempted to put self and subjectivity into focus in their theorisation of subjectivity. These scholarly works have not defined subjectivity as a new ontological domain of human phenomena. The former narrowed its definition to one specific concept, while the latter understood subjectivity as an epiphenomenon of activity. This has left room for other ways of theorising subjectivity.

The chapters included in the third section of this book depart from the definition of subjectivity as the unit of emotional and symbolical processes that form a new qualitative phenomenon. The concepts of subjective senses and subjective configurations define human experiences as they are experienced by individuals, groups and institutions. Symbolical processes have generally been narrowly treated in cultural-historical psychology. Those who have taken a more narrow focus have conceptualised symbolic processes in the social environment as a constellation of concrete events and objects, rather than as networks of symbolically produced realities, such as institutionalised orders, myths, religion, moral, gender and race. None of these topics appear to have been the object of theoretical attention in cultural-historical psychology.

Social relationships are living processes within which symbolically produced realities become subjective processes. However, these processes do not result from internalisation. The social symbolical networks turn into two subjectivities; as social and individual subjectivities; so there is not any external process that must become internal, there are process of one form or another that turn into subjective processes; whether social or individual. This is a very complex process within which individuals and groups actively generate different positions during their experiences. Through social relationships, emotions turn into subjective senses and

configurations, as they are integrated with symbolical processes. Subjectivity is not just another concept, but a motivational system within which different psychological processes and functions become subjective as a result of ongoing subjective configurations.

Subjectivity is not “molded by the world ‘absorbing’ and embodying the world in its dynamics and structures”, as Stetsenko and Arievitch (2004, p. 484) stated. Subjectivity represents a new human production that is part of this world, but it never reproduces it; because the world can only be represented through the lenses of those who experience it—as was argued and captured by Vygotsky through his concept of *perezhivanie*. This characteristic of human subjectivity makes the topic very difficult to be assimilated by traditional followers of a cultural-historical approach, due to the pretension of transforming psychology into an objective science. Even Vygotsky, in his instrumental period (1927–1930) took the position of an objectivistic psychology (González Rey 2011; González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 2016; Orlov 2003; Yasnitsky 2009, 2012; Zavershneva 2010, 2016).

As remarked by Leontiev (1967), *psyche* is the capacity of living beings to react to signals from the environment. Vygotsky emphasised the importance of mediation of signs to define higher psychological functions. According to Vygotsky, such capacity was the main difference between human beings and the rest of the animal species. However, the same Vygotsky, at the end of his life, criticised the emphasis given to mediation as the detriment of the comprehension of the function’s psychological nature (Zavershneva 2016). Subjectivity, unlike signals and signs is essentially self—generative, producing subjective senses that result from the current configuration of the system that is drawn upon and shaped during one concrete experience.

As a new ontological domain shared by all processes and human phenomena, including culture, subjectivity is integrative of processes that historically have been treated separately, as thought, motivation, imagination, perception, personality, among others. These processes and functions become subjective when they are organised within a subjective configuration, as self-organised as a subjective system that generates subjective senses, and whose emergence cannot be explained or be evident to observers as objective elements of the experience. Psychological functions, from this point of view, are not merely cognitive operations, or specific fragmenting entities; they become subjectively configured processes and functions, being connected to the subjective system through their ongoing subjective configurations.

As an introduction to the topic of subjectivity, we see a picture of different trends, as well as authors of Soviet psychology, who historically have appeared as being irreconcilable to each other. On the basis of such a historical overview, different axes are organised, integrating authors, and these are seen through the important contributions made on the concept of subjectivity in this book. The discussion of Soviet authors does not intend to be just a historical introduction, but shows the different angles of these authors, who, having relevance for advancing the discussion on subjectivity, are little known within this theoretical framework.

It is important to stress the relevance of the concept of social subjectivity in order to advance a comprehension of the social organisation as part of a broader definition, integrating a wide range of social symbolical productions. The introduction of this concept as inseparable from individual subjectivity, overcomes the dominant split in psychology between the social organisation and the individual.

As defined in Chap. 9: “The concept of social subjectivity is addressed so as to understand the complex subjective configurations of the different social instances and systems of relationships within the more complex systems of social instances that define society. The recognition of a social subjectivity does not entail the definition of social realities as abstract carriers of subjectivity or as fixed entities presented beforehand as living social dynamics” (p. 186). Individual positions and behaviours are not closed in themselves; they are part of complex networks of social relationships within which social subjective configurations emerge, appearing as different subjective senses, and forming individual subjective configurations. So, individual and social subjectivity configure each other in such a way that one is always part of the other through specific subjective senses generated in each of these instances. These complex processes are not intentionally represented by individual or social agents.

Dialogue and communication have a decisive role on the genesis and development of subjectivity because they are the main channels through which emotions are produced, captured as subjective senses as a result of the presence of the symbolical rituals associated with the emergence of the other, as partners in communication from early childhood. This principle allows for a bridge between emotions and subjectivity to emerge. This is discussed in Chap. 8 by Fler and González Rey’s through concrete case examples. In human beings, emotions are not only a reaction to certain external conditions or demands, they are expressed as a complex psychological state that permits or not, one individual to recognise him/herself as being part of some specific social space and relations, as well as feeling how this space or relation is experienced by the individual. In childhood this is an important process that defines, from the very early ages, patterns of emotional reactions that are inseparable from a child’s behaviour.

The methodological and epistemological positions on which subjectivity can be studied according to its theoretical definition, are also developed in the third part of this book. The constructive-interpretative methodological approach, supported by Qualitative Epistemology, comprises knowledge as a theoretical construction that advances on hypothetical researcher’s constructions (indicators). A group of indicators constructed by the researcher gradually become a consistent hypothesis capable of being integrated within the ongoing theoretical model, able to generate intelligibility on subjective senses and subjective configurations.

The discussion on the epistemological and methodological gap in Soviet psychology is necessary, since this discussion has been widely overlooked in a cultural-historical tradition. The dominant idea that any methodological proposal that uses interpretation is phenomenological is a big mistake. Rather, this chapter discusses a constructive-interpretative approach that is different from the one advanced by phenomenological research. In this sense, the general principles of

such epistemological and methodological approaches and the case study that follows the main concepts in this book, make concrete the methodology and theoretical concepts that underpin how subjectivity is advanced in this chapter.

Finally, the concept of subjectivity as discussed in this chapter is used as the basis for advancing a theoretical representation on subjective development. Subjective development is defined as inherently dynamic, variable and singular. It is not immediately determined by external influences and does not follow universal stages or universal principles to explain the different phases. What is evident in the section on subjectivity is not an attempt to give an overview of the classical theories of developmental psychology, because the theoretical demands of advancing subjective development do not allow space to draw such a picture within the scope of the present book. Nevertheless, the most important positions in Soviet psychology regarding developmental psychology are taken into account.

Subjective development allows a bridge between psychotherapy and education, as two closely intermingled processes. Two case studies conducted under this theoretical framework are discussed in depth. In both cases, the changes experienced by the participants were considered as part of a process of subjective development. These chapters give evidence of subjective development in fields that traditionally have not been taken into consideration by different theories within developmental psychology.

What is evident in Sect. 1.3, is that the three chapters integrate, showing how the epistemological and methodological principles of subjectivity are also the basis of a different kind of practice, in which theoretical, epistemological and methodological issues are closely interrelated, not only in research, but also in professional practice. The integrative nature of human development as a generative system that is inseparable from the individual and their social relations and material conditions is revealed through the concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration—*theoretically and empirically.*

1.3 Advancing the Concept of Emotions

It has been argued that the psychological processes related to imagination, emotion and fantasy were at the centre of attention in Vygotsky's (1971) "The Psychology of Art" as well as in his later works. In that thesis, and also some of the writing that followed (e.g. Vygotsky 1966, 1998), scholars such as Zaporozhets (2002), stated that imagination and fantasy act as a second expression of human emotions, which is a "psychological mechanism" for "the emergence of emotional anticipation" (p. 57). Emotional anticipation foregrounds imagination, and in this theoretical reading, "emotions are intellectualized, they become intelligent, generalized, and anticipatory, while cognitive processes functioning in this system, acquire an affective nature and begin to perform a special role in meaning discrimination and meaning formation" (p. 57). Vygotsky did not separate out emotions from other psychological processes, such as imagination or cognition. He said, "Among the

most basic defects of traditional approaches to the study of psychology has been the isolation of the intellectual from the volitional and affective aspect of consciousness” (Vygotsky 1987, p. 5) and “There exists a dynamic meaningful system that constitutes *a unity of affective and intellectual processes*” (p. 50). As with the epistemological and methodological foundations of subjectivity, revealed through the concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration, emotion was also part of an integrative system of concepts which together explain development. This is in contrast with the intellectualised focus of research and theorisation that has dominated education and psychology. The study of emotions has been conspicuously absent.

The integrative conceptual system, in which emotions are examined theoretically and empirically in the middle section of this book, pushes against the separation of emotions from other psychological processes, and this is in line with Vygotsky’s (1999) writing on the teaching about emotions. In drawing upon Vygotsky’s (1997) dialectical concept of inter- and intra-psychological functioning, the studies presented foreground empirically and theoretically how emotions develop culturally but not biologically, and are social rather than just individual. It is argued in the middle section of this book, that it is through the relations between the raw emotions expressed by young children in social contexts and in relation with one another, that raw expressions are culturally framed as particular feeling states. *Emotions are always felt and understood in social contexts with others, where others give meaning to these raw expressions, and it is in these relations with others, that children come to develop emotionally and gain emotion self regulation.* Vadeboncoeur and Collier (2013) have said that, “the logic of feelings, therefore, maintains traces of the social environment given word meaning and sense and, ultimately, comes to reflect a cultural ordering of feelings, what make sense in a particular culture, and expectations of what may occur if actions contradict cultural norms” (p. 217). Holodynski and Seeger (2013) also draw attention to the cultural nature of emotional expressions, being interpreted differently across different cultures. In Chap. 6 the idea of co-experiencing emotions is introduced, and this foregrounds emotions as a shared social endeavour and not as an individual psychological function. *This relational principle transcends social determinism and individual psyche, showing the dynamics of feelings and emotions as cultural expressions, that are culturally interpreted and co-experienced.*

Emotions as part of social and cultural relations also matters in research. Much of the research literature treats the research situation as objective and the researcher must be either absent when in the laboratory or present with a tightly defined script, or as found in ethnographic studies, to be a fly on the wall. In Chap. 8 the role of the researcher in developing a relationship with a child, creates not just developmental conditions for the child, but also gives a more authentic and dynamic research context. How the child feels and how the child emotionally relates to the researcher are important in cultural-historical research. Yet this dimension is missing from many research traditions. *Studying emotions without building an emotional relationship between the researcher and the child is absent in traditional research methods and methodologies.*

It was argued by Vygotsky (1998) that the *dramatic moments in a person's life, drama or crises, create the conditions for development. Dramatic moments can be experienced in everyday life*, such as those discussed in Chap. 6, where Angela becomes upset in the car on the way to childcare because she has forgotten to take her party hats for the birthday party planned, or as shown in Chap. 7, where Dell refuses to eat his lunch. These everyday routines of eating lunch, bath time or going to bed, can create dramatic moments which need to be resolved successfully.

Dramatic moments can also take place in educational settings, where children encounter activity settings which are frightening for them, as is discussed in Chap. 5, when Henry worries about a spider found in the outdoor area. Henry brings to the situation his own individual subjective configuration, and experiences the spider through his own subjective senses, and how the other children and the teacher engage with the spider, each other and with Henry, in turn contribute to the forming and re-forming of his subjective configuration. In using this analytical frame, it becomes possible to understand Henry's emotional imagination of the spider. Imagination in the study of emotions is also an under-researched and theorised area. In Chaps. 5 and 6 the concept of emotional imagination or affective imagination is introduced.

Transitions frequently create dramatic moments. Transition points potentially reveal drama, and this drama gives insights into the development of the child. There are many transition points in the life course of humans—transitions between institutions, such as when going from preschool to school; transitions between activity settings, such as when a preschool child is seated on a mat and must transition to another activity setting; transitions within an activity setting, such as when a young child tries to join the play of a small group of children in the park; transitions in the workplace or between age periods (Vygotsky 1998).

There are also specially engineered dramatic moments, as has been studied and theorised by Zaporozhets (2002) and El'Koninova (2002). Zaporozhets (2002) suggested that children develop "a specific emotional attitude toward their surrounding reality and people, an attitude that corresponds to the goals, moral standards, and ideals of society" (p. 45). It is through engaging in, and collectively co-experiencing "the child begins to evaluate his [sic] own actions, thus passing to the state of self-regulating behaviour" (p. 53). El'Koninova (2002) has argued that emotionally charged events are encrypted into many fairytales, and children must emotionally live through these moments if they wish to follow the hero and resolve the tension/conflict/problem scenario in the story. These dramatic moments or crises create the conditions for emotional development.

Dramatic moments were first described by Vygotsky (1998) in the context of explaining development across age periods, where he introduced the concept of crisis. Crisis or drama is a key concept in Vygotsky's work and yet few cultural-historical scholars look for dramatic moments in their data.

The development of emotions as a cultural practice in specifically engineered situations (Zaporozhets 2002) or through everyday life events, as is shown through the chapters in the middle section of this book, challenges our understandings of emotions as the internalised operations of the individual. Rather, the development

of emotions has to be conceptualised as part of a complex network within which human activities and human relationships occur. Emotions, imagination and emotional anticipation together with the concepts of perezhivanie and subjective sense and subjective configuration, capture the complex network of processes that make up the development of emotions. The dialectical relations between emotions and feelings, in which crisis, transitions or drama acts as the driving force for development, advances the study of emotions from a traditional individual conceptualisation to a cultural-historical theorisation.

1.4 Advancing the Concept of Perezhivanie

In the first section of the book the concept of perezhivanie is theorised (Chaps. 2–4). But to fully appreciate the diversity, complexity and uniqueness of this concept, it is important to draw upon the principles introduced in the introduction as analytical themes (*Overcoming social determinism; Challenging understanding of human mind as a result of internalised operations; Integrative system*), for showing the connections of perezhivanie with the concepts of subjectivity and emotions.

1.4.1 *Perezhivanie as a Unit of Social Situation of Development: Overcoming Social Determinism*

Detailed analysis of perezhivanie as a unit of analysis and how this informs concrete experimental and empirical studies is undertaken in this book (see Chaps. 2–4). However, there is something, which needs further elaboration in relation to the role of perezhivanie and overcoming social determinism.

Already in his early book of 1925 (Vygotsky 1986) Vygotsky defines the traditional distinction of the social and 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).

What is remarkable is that perezhivanie appears early in Vygotsky's writings in relation to the conceptions of the social and the individual as a first attempt to look at the social and the individual not as oppositions, but as a dialectical unity. Later and also in the last stage of his work, he improved this general statement by introducing perezhivanie as a concept within cultural-historical theory:

... 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 analysing the influence of the sociocultural environment, *not on the individual* per se, but *on the process* of development of the individual, which is seen as the “path along which the social becomes the individual” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198). 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 and overcomes naïve social determinism.

More generally, by introducing the concept of *perezhivanie*, Vygotsky challenges the traditional socio-genetic approaches (social constructivism and social behaviourism, in particular), which consider development as a transformative transition from social to individual and therefore understands them as two related, but separate instances. He suggests an alternative approach, looking on the individual in a process of its development as a dialectical becoming; looking on *how* an individual *becomes* itself, creates itself as a unique subject interacting within the social environment (Veresov 2016). Cultural-historical theory considers social environment not as a combination of factors, influencing a child in certain ways, but as a source of development (Vygotsky 1998, p. 203). This might be interpreted as a step back to a separation of the social and the individual. To clarify this, it makes sense to take a look at another concept which was introduced together and in relation to the concept of *perezhivanie* in the later stages of Vygotsky’s work. This is the concept of social situation of development (SSD), as “an exclusive single and unique relation between the child and the social reality which surrounds him [sic]” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198). The concrete social situation of development, according to Vygotsky, (1) “represents the initial moment for all dynamic changes that occur in development”, and (2) “determines wholly and completely the forms and the path along which the child will acquire ever newer personality characteristics, drawing them from the social reality as from the basic source of development” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198). Although different understandings of the relation between the concept of *perezhivanie* and the concept of the social situation of development exist (see Chaps. 2–4, this volume), all researchers agree that the social situation of development highlights the active role of a child in the social environment and positions the child as an active participant of the social situation of development. It is the child who by creating and recreating social situations of development acquires new personality characteristics; it is a child who draws them from the social reality. The social situation does not exist outside of the child or without the child’s participation in it; it is a system of interactions, relations of the child and social environment. The social environment in general, is what surrounds the child and exists independently from a child, as an “aggregate of objective conditions existing without reference to the child and affecting him [sic] by the very fact of their existence” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198). Social situation of development is a unity of a child and social reality, which exist as a system of relations of a child to the environment and the environment to the child.

From this it logically follows that the social situation of development is not equal with the social environment but it is a complex and dynamic unity of certain environmental (objective) aspects and characteristics and certain child’s individual (subjective) characteristics. Therefore, this unity cannot be analysed by dividing it

into parts, into social and individual, objective and subjective components without losing the properties of the whole unity. There should be a unit of analysis of a social situation of development, which allow for the analysis of this complex unity. Perezhivanie is a unit of analysis of a social situation of development:

Perezhivanie is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced - perezhivanie is always related to something which is found outside the person - and on the other hand, what is represented is how I, myself, am experiencing this, i.e., all the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristics are represented in perezhivanie.... (Vygotsky 1994, p. 342)

To state a certain, general, formal position it would be correct to say that the environment determines the development of the child through subjective perezhivanie of the environment

...the child is a part of the social situation, and the relation of the child to the environment and the environment to the child occurs through perezhivanie ... of the child himself; the forces of the environment acquire a controlling significance because the child experiences them (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294).

Social environment as a source of development of the individual is not something, which exists outside the individual. It exists only when the individual actively participates in this environment, by acting, interacting, interpreting, understanding, recreating and redesigning social situations of development. Social environment determines the developmental trajectory; however, child's subjectivity, an individual subjective configuration of the child is no less powerful in defining the course of her individual unique developmental trajectory than objective characteristics of social environment.

1.4.2 Challenging Understanding of Human Mind as a Result of Internalised Operations: Perezhivanie as a Refracting Prism

Another important avenue for rethinking and conceptualising development as a process of sociocultural genesis of mind, which the concept of perezhivanie is opening, is the introduction of a principle or refraction (Veresov and Fleer 2016; Chap. 3, this volume). Vygotsky defines the perezhivanie of an individual as a kind of psychological prism, which determines the role and influence of the environment on development (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341). It definitely challenges the principle of reflection (see Chap. 3, this volume), but it seems that it also allows for a different take on internalisation as a mechanism of social formation of human mind.

For Vygotskians there is no reason to doubt the importance of internalisation; however, what is interesting to mention here is that in Vygotsky's original texts we can hardly find this concept. General genetic law of cultural development which says that higher mental functions initially exist on the social plane inter-psychologically

and then become individual intra-psychological functions (Vygotsky 1997, p. 106) says nothing on internalisation; even more, “inter” here is related not to internal, but to external existence of higher mental functions. Instead, Vygotsky widely uses the Russian term *вращивание* (*vrashchivanie*) (Vygotsky 1956, p. 395; 1984a, p. 13; 1984b, p. 74), which might be translated as ingrowing, growing within from outside, something like as if roots of a tree are outside the soil and the tree grows into the soil. This, of course, corresponds with the idea that the development goes from social (roots of development are outside the individual) to individual (fruits of development are individual psychological processes). Even though we begin to use the term “*vrashchivanie*” instead of “internalisation” the problem remains—what is the essence of *vrashchivanie*. It seems the concept of *perezhivanie* allows us to open up a new perspective for deeper understanding.

It is important to make a note that the principle of refraction was introduced by Vygotsky at the last stage of his work and it remains undeveloped. What is also important is that it was introduced not in relation to *perezhivanie* only. For example, in another work of the same period, Vygotsky says that:

An action reflected¹ through the prism of thought has already been transformed into a different action, one that is meaningful, conscious, and consequently free and voluntary; that is, it stands in a different general relationship to the situation from action which is directly conditioned by the situation and which has not gone through the direct and reverse transformation of dynamics (Vygotsky 1993, p. 235).

This might help us to develop our understanding of a principle of refraction in general and *perezhivanie* as a refracting prism in particular. It shows refraction through thought as a mechanism of liberation of a subject from directly conditioned stimuli. On the other hand, it relates to a subject, his/her subjectivity as a unique configuration of individual functions being able to master and control direct and reverse transformations of actions and thoughts.

This, in turn, might support a deeper analysis of *perezhivanie* as a *subjective* refracting prism. The social becomes the individual, but the dialectics of this becoming is that only those components of the social environment that are refracted by the subjective *perezhivanie* of the individual achieve developmental significance (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294). Therefore, the same social situation might be (or should be) experienced by different children differently depending on which components and how they were subjectively refracted. Vygotsky’s famous example of three children from the same family which shows that the same social environment, being differently refracted through *perezhivanie* of three different children, brought three different developmental outcomes and individual developmental trajectories (Vygotsky 1994, pp. 339–340), might be reinterpreted in terms of child’s individual subjective configuration.

In summary, the concept of *perezhivanie* definitely needs further theoretical and empirical investigation. One possible and promising way of doing this is to discover

¹Refracted (*преломленное*) is the word in Russian original text (Vygotsky 1983, p. 250).

this concept in relation to subjectivity and emotions. This chapter is the first step on this theoretical journey.

1.5 Conclusion

In analysing the studies and historical works presented in the chapters of this book, and in bringing this analysis to the wider literature, it is possible to advance the concepts of emotions, perezhivanie and subjectivity through the principles of:

1. *Overcoming social determinism;*
2. *Challenging understanding of human mind as a result of internalised operations;*
3. *An integrative system.*

The chapters that follow give elaborations of the theoretical insights advanced here, as well as empirical examples to illustrate these key principles. These principles advance understandings in cultural-historical theory and together with the content of this book, give new directions for research and theoretical discussions. The final chapter in the book puts into dialogue the cultural-historical concepts of emotions, perezhivanie and subjectivity between the three editors. Taken together, this chapter and the final chapter make a contribution to advancing understandings about what is unique for researching and conceptualising emotions, perezhivanie and subjectivity from a cultural-historical perspective.

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Part I
Perezhivanie

Chapter 2

On the Concept of *Perezhivanie*: A Quest for a Critical Review

Nelson Mok

Abstract Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie* was only partly developed within his lifetime, and this fact, together with the apparent significance of the concept, has provided the impetus for attempts at further understanding and substantiating the concept. This introductory chapter provides an overview of interpretations of *perezhivanie*. I begin first with a brief history of its origins in Stanislavsky, dialectics and reflection theory. Next, I discuss three aspects of Vygotsky's work (and work built on its foundations) that have been related to *perezhivanie* in attempts to illuminate its meaning: his early interest in emotion in *The Psychology of Art*, the concepts of social situation of development and word-meaning and its interpretation within Activity Theory. The interpretive landscape that is revealed provides a point of departure for theorists seeking to understand and use the concept.

2.1 Introduction

The history of the study of the human mind and consciousness is marked with a desire to delineate the boundary between cognition and emotion. The better known *instrumental period* of Vygotsky's work appears to give a precedence to cognition that has been amplified in subsequent interpretations, perhaps beyond Vygotsky's intentions. It is important, then, to look to the last period of Vygotsky's work, in which he (re)turns to issues of emotion raised earlier in his career. Of particular interest is the concept of *perezhivanie*, which ostensibly unifies emotion and cognition, and the individual with their environment, in a single unit to better conceptualise the process of human mental development.

The concept was central to a lecture delivered by Vygotsky at the Herzen State Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad sometime between 1933 and his death in 1934. The stenographic record of this lecture was published in 1935 under the editorship

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of one of his students, M.A. Levina, in *Foundations of Paedology*, a collection of Vygotsky's lectures that would serve as a foundational textbook for future students (Korotaeva 2001). The extent to which this book was edited, revised, or censored, as was common for works published in the Soviet Union is a matter for textological analysis, but regardless, the lecture on *perezhivanie* was translated to English and appeared in *The Vygotsky Reader* 60 years later in 1994. Given both the difficulty of adequately translating *perezhivanie*, and its centrality in the lecture now titled "The Problem of the Environment",¹ the editors of the *Vygotsky Reader* left the term intact alongside its approximate translation as *emotional experience*, an issue I return to later in this chapter.

Perezhivanie appears to capture an essential part of the cultural-historical approach to development. However, the temporal, cultural, sociopolitical and linguistic gaps that separate Vygotsky from his Western audiences have led to divergent interpretations of the concept. Vygotsky passed away before fully developing and integrating *perezhivanie* into his broader theoretical system. Thus, the task has fallen to Vygotskian scholars, who have situated the concept alongside different facets of his larger body of work, resulting in the emphasis of different aspects of the concept. It is the purpose of this introductory chapter to elucidate these interpretations, drawing on the theoretical and philosophical lineage of Vygotsky's work where it has been overlooked, to lay a foundation for the conceptual clarification (in Part I, this volume), conceptual development (Part II, this volume), and empirical operationalisation (Part III, this volume) in following chapters.

To sketch the landscape of interpretations, I begin first with a history of the word itself in the Russian language, leading to its role in the work of Stanislavsky. Next, I elucidate one of the intellectual foundations from which Vygotsky's work emerges and, moving to Western interpretations, discuss attempts at both linguistic and conceptual translation. Finally, I discuss three aspects of Vygotsky's work (and work built on its foundations) that theorists have used to illuminate the concept of *perezhivanie*: his early interest in emotion in *The Psychology of Art*; in relation to the concepts of social situation of development and word-meaning; and within the context of Activity Theory. Each of these branches of interpretation and interconnection illuminates different facets of the concept of *perezhivanie*.

2.2 The Stanislavsky Connection

Though *perezhivanie* is an everyday Russian word, its theoretical meaning can be traced to Tolstoy. In *What is Art?* (1896/1996), Tolstoy describes the proper activity of art as the conscious expression of felt experience, such that others are *infected* by the art and experience (*perezhivayut*) the same emotions (p. 51). The theatre

¹Originally titled "Проблема среды в педологии" [The problem of environment in paedology].

director Stanislavsky likely drew on Tolstoy when attempting to legitimise acting as a kind of science, within the Stalinist political environment, by using the objective methodological language of “hard” sciences (Pitches 2005).

Stanislavsky used *perezhivanie* in at least three senses. First, it denoted the internal psychological side of acting, in opposition to *voploshchenie*, the external physiological side (Pitches 2005). Second, it described a form of theatre, the essence of which Stanislavsky sought to uncover so that actors could be trained to achieve it. In this context, *perezhivanie* is contrasted with *remeslo* (craftsmanship) and *predstavlenie* (representation). In the theatre of *perezhivanie*, the “life of the human spirit” is created by the actor anew with each performance, who is able to be present, active and completely engaged with the stage reality (Beck 2014, p. 216; Carnicke 2009, p. 136) and can thus be said to be truly experiencing the life of the character. By contrast, in the theatre of *remeslo*, clichés are used to convey emotion, while in *predstavlenie*, though the life of the character is experienced during rehearsal, fixed forms are often presented onstage. Third, *perezhivanie* refers to the tool—at least in Western interpretations (Carnicke 2009, Chap. 8)—for actors to achieve the theatre of *perezhivanie*. Since emotions are aroused by physical action, physical imitation is used to bring about the appropriate emotion, drawing on the actor’s real-life past experiences. Known as the *Method of Physical Actions*, this technique is often contrasted with the earlier technique of *Affective* (or *Emotional*) *Memory*, in which sensory impressions are recalled to generate the appropriate emotion (see Larlham 2014).²

The nature and extent of Stanislavsky’s influence on Vygotsky’s conceptualisation of *perezhivanie* is uncertain. Theorists have variously understood Vygotsky as either directly adapting the term (Brennan 2014; Hakkarainen 2010; Smagorinsky 2011a) or independently developing the concept (Burkitt 2002; van Oers 2012). Others have argued for similarities between Stanislavsky’s *understatement* and Vygotsky’s *sense* (Daniels 2010; Mahn and John-Steiner 2008). What is clear, however, is Vygotsky’s familiarity with theatre and the work of Stanislavsky: Vygotsky’s intellectual career began as a fine arts reviewer (van der Veer and Valsiner 1991); proceeding with his first major work, *The Psychology of Art*, a dissertation which attempted to lend the study of the psychology of aesthetic reaction a scientific credibility; and two years before his death, Vygotsky returned to issues of aesthetics and emotion in “On the Problem of the Psychology of the Actor’s Creative Work” (Vygotsky 1999), where Stanislavsky’s work is discussed at length. It is in part because of these works and interests that a connection—at least historical if not conceptual—is often drawn between Stanislavsky and Vygotsky.

²There is debate as to whether Stanislavsky revised the latter by substituting it with the former or if this narrative of his theoretical development is a Western invention (see Carnicke 2009, p. 150; Whyman 2008, pp. 62–63). Regardless, Stanislavsky is quoted as advising his students in the last months of his life that: “One must give actors various paths. One of these is the path of action. There is also another path; you can move from feeling to action, arousing feeling first” (Vinogradskaja, as cited in Carnicke 2009, p. 173), indicating that both techniques existed in parallel.

2.3 Reflection Theory and Dialectical Materialism

For understanding Vygotsky's conceptualisation of *perezhivanie*, it may be tempting to take his definition of the term in the *Psychological Dictionary* (Vygotsky and Varshava 1931; for a discussion, see Veresov, this volume) as a definitive answer. However, much like the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; see Chaiklin 2003; Valsiner and van der Veer 1993; Veresov 2004), further work is required to understand *perezhivanie*'s place within cultural-historical theory so that the core conceptual content and its methodological consequences can be separated from its use in specific examples and its use as a (mere) rhetorical device.

Take, for example, the metaphor of refraction used by Vygotsky to explain *perezhivanie*:

it is not any of the factors in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors *refracted through the prism of the child's emotional experience* [*perezhivanie*] (emphasis added, p. 340)

Though the meaning of refraction in this context is often taken as self-evident, its philosophical and methodological significance can only be appreciated when understood as a continuation and specification of the Leninist theory of reflection that, at the time of Vygotsky's writing, had become a central tenet of Soviet philosophy. Given the complexity of this theory, only an abridged account of this theory's development can be provided here.

The posthumous publication of Lenin's conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic* in 1929 (in *Lenin Miscellanies IX*; republished in *Philosophical Notebooks* from 1933) occasioned renewed interest in reflection theory. In these notes, Lenin reformulated his earlier "mirror-copy" version of reflection theory in dialectical materialist terms. This was inspired through a *materialistic* reading of Hegel's dialectic *idealism*, and through drawing connections to Marx's earlier materialistic inversion of Hegel for Marx's work on economic theory (Anderson 1995). According to this version of reflection theory, consciousness (for which Lenin uses the term "sensation"; Kirschenmann 1970, p. 95) and reality are understood in a dialectical manner, as two parts connected in a unity rather than being truly distinct. Rather than accessing reality from the outside, as it were, consciousness and reality in fact transform into each other, constantly in movement and/or contradiction. It is through what we term cognition that reality is transformed into consciousness; and conversely, through practical activity, consciousness is transformed into reality. Indeed, this material basis for consciousness is also established as a general property of *all* matter (see Lenin 1909/2014, Sects. 1.1 and 1.5): all matter (inorganic, organic, living) in some way *reflects* the conditions that gave rise to its specific organisation (the objects/phenomena that have acted upon it); consciousness is merely the form that reflection takes when matter takes on a highly complex organisation (Anderson 1995; Kirschenmann 1970; Payne 1968; Sayers 1985, Chap. 1).

The rationale for Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory is the need to create an intermediary language to translate between "the most general, maximally universal science" (Vygotsky 1997, p. 330) of dialectics, and the concrete subject matter of psychology. While there existed a "Marxist psychology" at the time, Vygotsky argued it was a blind application of dialectical materialism that, therefore, could provide no insights about psychology in particular: "we cannot ... study the psychological differences between people with a concept that covers both the solar system, a tree, and man" (p. 329). With this in mind, we can thus view his refraction metaphor as a specification of the general philosophical thesis of reflection to account for issues particular to psychology. It is in refraction, but not reflection, that the concrete and productive contribution of consciousness in determining (or perhaps in cultural-historical terms, *mediating*) the developmental effect of the environment can be taken into account (in Part III, this volume, it is argued that this idea is further developed through the concepts of subjective configuration and subjective sense). Mirrors do not themselves require further analysis if their images are exact reflections, but since consciousness is part of the reality that is "reflected", then consciousness itself (the prism) needs to be accounted for in any concept used to analyse the effect of the environment (the light reflected) on human mental development (for further discussion of the prism metaphor, see Veresov, this volume). It is in this sense that the environment can be understood as being refracted through the individual. Indeed, the reverse is true: there is also a refraction when consciousness transforms into reality through practical activity (Sayers 1985, Chap. 1), an idea that is mirrored in the "activity system" unit of analysis in Activity Theory, in which human activity is shaped by available mediating artefacts and social organisation.

The philosophical heritage of this element of the perezhivanie concept is often overlooked in Western interpretations of Vygotsky's work. Understanding the basis of refraction in reflection theory sheds light not only on the context within and philosophical bases from which Vygotsky constructed his cultural-historical theory, but also on the ways in which he translated general philosophical tenets for psychology. The following section provides an overview of some of the attempts at linguistic and conceptual translation by Western audiences.

2.4 Linguistic and Conceptual Translation

One path to understanding perezhivanie in the West has been to seek an appropriate translation to convey the sense of the concept in familiar terms. This, however, has proven difficult. Stanislavsky's translators have variously used "the art of living a part", "to live the scene", "sensations", "living and experiencing", "experience", "experiencing", "emotional experience", "creation" and "re-living/living through a role" (Carnicke 2009, Chap. 7) for the conceptualisation of perezhivanie in acting theory. Meanwhile, Vygotsky's translators have used "experience" (in "The Crisis at Age Seven", Vygotsky 1998), "lived experience" (drawing on the German

equivalent, *Erlebnis*; Blunden 2009), “inner experience” (Zavershneva 2010) and “emotional experience” (in “The Problem of the Environment”, Vygotsky 1994). Researchers have also used “intensely-emotional-lived-through-experience” (Ferholt 2010, p. 164) and “experiencing” (in Leontiev 2005, translated by Favorov). A complication particular to Vygotsky’s *Collected Works* is that it is unclear when “experience” is translated from *perezhivanie* and when it is from *opyt* (referring to an accumulated body of knowledge/skills). Even if the original term were identified as *perezhivanie*, it would still be necessary to discern whether it was used with its everyday or technical meaning.

Scholars from other language backgrounds have also sought translations in their own languages. González Rey (2009b) uses the Spanish *vivencias* as a direct translation of *perezhivanie*, Sato (2010) draws parallels with the Japanese philosopher Mori’s concept of *keiken*, and the editors of the *Vygotsky Reader* (1994, R. van der Veer and J. Valsiner Eds.) suggest a similarity to the German *erleben*, drawing comparisons to Dilthey’s concept of *Erlebnis* (which can be traced back to Goethe, with whom Vygotsky was also familiar).

Parallels have also been drawn to the conceptual languages of other theoretical and philosophical frameworks. For example, Vygotsky and Dewey have been linked in various ways: Blunden (2009) argues that Dewey’s *experience* is “more or less similar” to *perezhivanie*, while Glassman (2001) proposes a similarity between Dewey’s *experience* and Vygotsky’s conceptualisation of *culture*. Others (Clarà 2013; Jóhannsdóttir and Roth 2014; Roth and Jornet 2014) have proposed fundamental similarities between Vygotsky and Dewey (e.g. the shared basis in Hegelian philosophy) that allow for mutual theoretical enrichment.

As Roth and Jornet (2013, 2014) have argued, Dewey’s and Vygotsky’s theories of experience and *perezhivanie*, respectively, share essential characteristics. For both Dewey and Vygotsky, experience (*perezhivanie*) is a category (i.e. a minimal unit of analysis) of thinking that defines the indeterminate and emergent aspects of practical activity and interaction that are difficult, if not impossible, to predict from the outset. While *an* experience denotes a completed and temporally discrete event known and understandable only in retrospect, *experience/perezhivanie* refers to the ongoing transaction of that activity, the interplay between practical, intellectual, affective and situational aspects, that affects the individuals involved. It is transactional, Roth and Jornet argue, precisely because they construct each other and feed back into the situation (e.g. manifesting itself to participants), transforming the course of the activity as the activity itself emerges. Thus, it is the purpose of the category of *experience/perezhivanie* to capture these indeterminate aspects together in an irreducible, integral entity as they are coming into being, rather than when they have done so. *Experience/perezhivanie*, therefore, provides the starting point for a more holistic (i.e. non-reductive) and concrete analysis of learning, an examination of how/which experiences become developmentally significant. By contrast, Razfar (2013) argues that many aspects of both theories—their ideologies, philosophies and ontologies—do not align, which, at best, requires a re-examination of their similarities, and at worst, entails their incommensurability.

The idea that the developmental significance of an environment can only be understood in relation to a specific individual's characteristics is also present in Gibson's (1979/1986) notion of *affordances* (for a history of the concept, see Jones 2003). An affordance refers to what a particular object offers an individual, defined in relation to that individual with their specific capacities and capabilities. Thus, a set of steps affords ascent, but not for an infant who has not yet learned to walk. For both Vygotsky and Gibson, the conception of learning moves beyond the transfer paradigm—in which learning is the acquisition of knowledge—and towards a situated cognition view in which learning is expanding action possibilities (i.e. affordances) in larger systems of activity (Roth and Jornet 2013). As with Dewey, the links drawn between Vygotsky and Gibson vary.

Van Lier (2000, 2004, 2008) connects affordances with Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory more generally in his ecological approach to language learning, though without using the term "perezhivanie" explicitly. Daniels (2010) links affordances to Vygotsky's *social situation of development*, arguing that Vygotsky provides the understanding of psychological formation that is missing in Gibson's work. By contrast, Michell (2012) argues that Gibson's understanding of perception as being direct and unmediated is incommensurable with Vygotsky's view that it is indirect and sign-mediated, differentiated and complexified through cultural mediation. Where for Gibson, individuals see new affordances through adaptation (becoming better attuned to already-existing affordances of value-rich ecological objects), for Vygotsky, it is through transformation (*perception itself* changes through mediation).

Much like metaphors, these efforts towards linguistic and conceptual translation have been useful for illuminating facets of the perezhivanie concept. However, it is in examining the concept in the context of Vygotsky's larger body of work that crucial connections, to both the purpose and constituent concepts of cultural-historical theory, can be made.

2.5 Perezhivanie in Context

In this section, I look at three approaches to contextualising perezhivanie: in relation to Vygotsky's early work on art, aesthetics and emotional psychology; other cultural-historical concepts; and in activity-theoretic terms. An overview of these approaches provides a guide to the refinements and operationalisations of the concept post-Vygotsky.

2.5.1 Art, Aesthetics, and Emotional Psychology

Theorists who examine perezhivanie through the context of Vygotsky's earlier work tend to view perezhivanie as a return to interests in intelligent emotional processes with the benefit of a more developed understanding of psychology. In this

context, Vygotsky's better known "instrumental period", in which the internalisation of object-mediated activity was central (González Rey 2009a), is viewed as having overlooked the role of emotion. *Perezhivanie*, then, is seen as a concept that restores the role of emotion and affect to psychological development research, allowing for a more holistic view of consciousness, and shifting focus from the unit of the instrumental act to the unit of the psychological system (Daniels 2010). Capturing the unity of thought and emotion (Brennan 2014; Chen 2014; Fleer and Hammer 2013; Gajdamaschko 2006),³ *perezhivanie* avoids simple categorisation of mental processes as either cognitive or affective, thus avoiding the need to propose extraneous interactions to explain their relation to each other. Rather, thought and emotion are deeply and inherently interconnected, an idea Vygotsky (1987) made explicit when he wrote that "thought has its origins in the motivating sphere of consciousness" (p. 282), and which is supported by modern neurobiological research (see, e.g. Immordino-Yang and Damasio 2007).

The view that *perezhivanie* is a return to an earlier interest in emotion (González Rey 2009a; Vadeboncoeur and Collie 2013) leads to a view of *perezhivanie* as a process at the end of which an object comes to take on a developmental significance. This line of thought begins with Vygotsky's (1971) *The Psychology of Art*, particularly his work on catharsis, draws on Stanislavsky's understanding of *perezhivanie* as a tool for actors, continues with Vasilyuk's (1991) theoretical developments and reflects the connotations of the word in everyday Russian.

According to Benedetti (2007), Stanislavsky used *perezhivanie* to denote a tool, "the process by which an actor engages actively with the situation in each and every performance" (p. xviii). More specifically, it can be used to describe the re-living of past-lived experiences as a means to engage with and convey emotional subtext (Robbins, 1 December 2007). This conceptualisation likely informed Vygotsky's (1971) understanding of catharsis in *The Psychology of Art*. In the experience of and engagement with art, "intelligent emotions"—emotional responses elevated by one's imagination (Smagorinsky 2011a)—can be provoked. Here, *perezhivanie* captures the role of affect in interpreting one's experience. It refers to a "meta-experience" (Smagorinsky and Daigle 2012), an experience of experience that is both cognitive and emotional. Since what counts as an appropriate expression of a particular emotion is socially situated and conventional rather than innate, this meta-experience is also grounded in shared cultural experience (Smagorinsky 2011a). Through this meta-experience, an individual can deeply reflect on and have a raised awareness of past-experiences, leading to tensions between conflicting emotions—what Veresov (2014) has identified as "dramatic collision"—that are resolved in catharsis. It is in catharsis that there is an explosive discharge of emotion and a generalisation of personal emotions to a "higher plane of experience"

³Blunden (2014) clarifies that the unity to which *perezhivanie* refers is an original, rather than synthetic, unity. That is, it is not a concept that combines two abstractions—thought and affect—but is in fact a concept that names the already existing unity, from which those very abstractions have been made. This also aligns with Dewey's notion of an experience as being an original unity (see Blunden 2009).

(Smagorinsky 2011a, p. 332), transforming an individual's perception of themselves, others and the world (Cross 2012; Marjanovic-Shane et al. 2010). In the same way that Stanislavsky's actor engages with the situation in each performance, so too does Vygotsky's viewer engage with art at each viewing: in both cases, past experience can be re-experienced. Thus, Smagorinsky (2011a) argues, Vygotsky sees the dramatic nature of art in the development of personality, and the psychological nature of personality in art, both of which are required for understanding the development of consciousness. It is likely for this reason that the notion of drama in art was later used to characterise the internal and external conflicts of everyday life that lead to a different kind of catharsis and generalisation: human mental development. That is, human mental development as the resolution of "drama" in the domain of psychology is analogous to catharsis as the resolution of emotional conflict in the experience of art.

Vasilyuk is, in the literature, assumed to have elaborated Vygotsky's perekhivanie (Clarà 2013), defining the concept as "*a special inner activity or inner work*" (Vasilyuk 1991, p. 15) in which an individual withstands, overcomes and copes with a (usually painful) critical event or situation in life—a crisis—integrating it into their personality, which constitutes development (Blunden 2014; Levykh 2008a; Sannino 2008).⁴ This conceptualisation of perekhivanie as a mental activity echoes Stanislavsky's notion of perekhivanie as a tool in which past-lived experience is re-lived on stage. It also aligns with Vygotsky's perekhivanie in catharsis, though contrasts with his later view of perekhivanie as a mental "representation of me-in-the-environment" (Clarà 2015, p. 40). For this reason, Blunden (2014) has suggested that using "'perekhivanie' for the experience and 'catharsis' for the working over" (p. 22)—the latter being necessary for development following a crisis.

2.5.1.1 The Primacy of Emotion

This particular understanding of perekhivanie as being informed by Stanislavsky raises two issues. The first is that the resulting operationalisation of perekhivanie strongly emphasises emotion. This is particularly evident of work following Mahn and John-Steiner (2008; see, e.g. Abdul Rahim et al. 2009; Antoniadou 2011; Blair 2009; Cross 2012; Dormann et al. 2013; Garratt 2012; Golombek and Doran 2014; Mi-Song 2010), who revitalised the concept for investigating how the building and sustaining of confidence in interaction supports learning. For Mahn and John-Steiner (2008), perekhivanie describes the affective and emotional lens through which interactions in the ZPD are perceived, represented and appropriated. This is supported, as stated earlier, by Vygotsky's conceptualisation of emotions as

⁴This understanding of perekhivanie as only what is developmentally significant (here, a crisis that has been overcome) draws with parallels with Dewey's concept of *an* experience (as opposed to the *category* of experience, discussed above).

forming part of the “sphere of consciousness within which all other mental activity occurs” (Beatty and Brew 2004, p. 330). Indeed, emotion permeates all aspects of consciousness, as “every idea contains some remnant of the individual’s affective relationship to that aspect of reality which it represents” (Vygotsky 1987, p. 50).⁵

Though useful for restoring balance to an otherwise cognition-dominant approach to research, there is the risk of this kind of interpretation leading to a reduction of perezhivanie to only emotion, when Vygotsky’s anti-reductionism (see, e.g. Matusov 2007) makes clear that perezhivanie is to be holistic and synchronic (i.e. for understanding at a particular point in time). In the case of second language learning, for example, a learner may lack the confidence to take the kinds of risks that allow for further practice and language development. This lack of confidence is not purely affective, but may be intimately linked to cognitive ability (including motor skills), self-perception of their abilities and their manifestations in concrete situations (e.g. a moment of nervousness or distraction may influence a learner’s confidence), among other aspects. As Vygotsky (1994) writes:

what is important for us to find out is which [of the child’s] constitutional characteristics have played a decisive role in determining the child’s relationship to a given situation ... in another situation, different constitutional characteristics may well have played a role. (emphasis in original, p. 342)

That is, though the pervasiveness of emotion (whether or not differentiated from affect) makes it important in an understanding of the individual–environment relationship, there is a crucial difference between presuming the primacy of emotion in a given perezhivanie *before* analysis (e.g. via “investment”, Andoniadou 2011; confidence, Blair 2009; motives, Clarà 2013; or mood and stance, Stone and Thompson 2014) and establishing its centrality *after* analysis. Though needs and desires may motivate particular behaviours and subsequently frame experience, it is not necessarily emotion—only one of many aspects of the psyche—that plays the “decisive role” in determining perezhivanie.

This is why in Vygotsky’s (1994) discussion, the perezhivanie of different children appear to be characterised by different salient characteristics. In the example of three children under the care of their sometimes-abusive mother, the youngest child is *overwhelmed*, the second child has a simultaneously positive and negative *attitude* to the mother, and the eldest child’s precocious maturity is explained by his ability to *understand* the situation. In another case, a child who is unable to *comprehend* the bullying occurring to him is consequently unaffected by it, and in another, a hypothetical child whose linguistic generalisations are concrete rather than conceptual “interprets and imagines the surrounding reality and environment in a different way” (p. 345). Thus, it is clear that the “decisive” determinant of a given child’s perezhivanie is a matter of empirical discovery. Through subsequent analysis, the extent to which this psychological determinant has developed in the individual can also be investigated.

⁵It is worth noting that this statement echoes the dialectical law of reflection discussed above, wherein an object reflects within it the processes that gave rise to it.

Theorists who have assumed the primacy of emotion in understanding perezhivanie have also drawn on related words in everyday Russian for understanding the particular kind of emotion that is relevant. Echoing Vasilyuk, it is, in general, argued that perezhivanie refers specifically to the overcoming of an *emotionally negative* experience (see, e.g. Levykh 2008a; Robbins, 1 December 2007), though Kotik-Friedgut (2 December 2007) argues it can refer also to emotionally *positive* experiences (e.g. happiness, victory). Other examples of words with the *pere-* prefix in Russian suggest a broader, sometimes affectively neutral meaning, indicating movement or transition (Veresov, personal communication).⁶ Similarly, Roth and Jornet (2014) trace the Proto-Indo-European root *per(e)-* to verbs indicating various senses such as: to dare, put at risk, try (as in “*experiment*”), to put oneself in danger (as in “*perilous*”) and limit (as in “*perimeter*”).

In these contexts, perezhivanie refers to the overcoming of a particular kind of emotional experience. However, another interpretation is possible: if perezhivanie is understood dialectically as a struggle between contradictory forces (e.g. between individual capabilities and environmental demands), then it is this struggle itself that is emotional(ly negative), both in its genesis (the experience of the contradiction/dissonance) and its resolution (as the new development contains an emotional imprint of the process of its coming to being; Levykh 2008b).

In this section, I have provided an overview of a range of interpretations of perezhivanie as focusing on emotion in experience (not to be confused with more general issues of emotional development; see Part II, this volume). The extent to which non-technical connotations of the perezhivanie informs, or should inform, its technical usage is a matter for further discussion beyond the scope of this chapter. In the next section I examine understandings of perezhivanie as a component in Vygotsky’s system of concepts.

2.5.2 *Perezhivanie’s Relation to Other Cultural-Historical Concepts*

A second approach to understanding perezhivanie is to view it alongside other cultural-historical concepts such as the *social situation of development*, and word-meaning and *sense*. Since Vygotsky was unable to fully explicate the relationship between these concepts, it has been the task of researchers following in his footsteps to do so.

⁶For example: *perekrestok* (crossroads), *peregruzhen* (overloaded), *perepolnen* (overcrowded), *peremeshchenie* (transition), and *perestroika* (reconstruction).

2.5.2.1 Social Situation of Development

The concepts of *perezhivanie* and social situation of development both conceptualise a dynamic relationship between the individual and their environment. Thus, to understand the relationship between these concepts—their origins, similarities and differences—illuminates the conceptual content of both (see, e.g. Veresov, this volume, for a more substantial analysis of this content), and their places within Vygotsky’s theoretical system. Vygotsky had, at best, only implied a connection between the two concepts. In discussing “the problem of age”, Vygotsky (1998) wrote: “one of the major impediments to the theoretical and practical study of child development is the incorrect solution of *the problem of the environment* and its role in the dynamics of age (emphasis added, p. 198). It is the phrase “the problem of the environment”, that alludes to the subject of his later lecture in which *perezhivanie* is explicated. However, in specifying that he seeks to understand the problem of the environment in the specific context of its role in the “dynamics of age”, he goes on to define “the social situation of development”, providing a crucial clue for understanding how *perezhivanie* and social situation of development are related.

The social situation of development captures a *dynamic* relation because it defines a set of relations between the child/individual and their environment such that, if either change, then so too, does the social situation of development. Conceptually, it is used to delineate psychological age periods, which are book-ended and defined by the emergence and (completed) development of a particular psychological functions (or set of functions), or aspect(s) of personality (either of which constitute the “neof ormation” of that period). Additionally, the social situation of development specifies a culturally particular relation between the child/individual and their social reality defined by two crucial aspects of the age period. First, there is contradiction (e.g. between social demands/norms/requirements and the abilities/needs/desires of the individual) that constitutes the motivating force for development. Second, within this particular relation, the child encounters the *ideal form* of development—the psychological function expected to develop—the completed development of which both resolves the contradiction and also, therefore, marks the end of the age period (Bozhovich 2009; Karabanova 2010; Vygotsky 1998). Subsequently, a new period begins marked by a new contradiction, new ideal form, and overall, a new child–environment relationship (e.g. the child can now use speech to communicate their needs)—that is, a new social situation of development.

Bozhovich’s (2009) research has explicitly connected the social situation of development and *perezhivanie* concepts, with many researchers maintaining her distinction (at least conceptually, if not terminologically; Daniels 2010; Esteban-Guitart and Moll 2014; Fler and Pramling 2015; Grimmet 2014). From the perspective of Activity Theory, Bozhovich rejects Vygotsky’s conceptualisation of *perezhivanie*, instead substituting the term “internal position”, which is in contrast to “objective/external position” (the social situation of development). The latter refers to the imposed demands and afforded resources of a social context,

while the former refers to the individual's own needs and desires. It is when an external position aligns with an internal position (e.g. a child is required to communicate using speech, and also has the desire to do so) that it serves as a "true factor" in development. Thus, the external position (social situation of development) is mediated—refracted—through the psychological system of the individual (internal position).⁷ Following Bozhovich, researchers have argued for perezhivanie as a unit of analysis for investigating development within the social situation of development (Adams and Fleer 2015; Bozhovich 2009; González Rey 2009a; Grimmet 2014). However, it should not be misunderstood as applying *only* to understanding the social situation of development. Rather, perezhivanie is best understood as a unit—or perhaps more appropriately, stable "reference point" (Brennan 2014, p. 288)—for conceptualising the developmental role of the environment in general, of which the social situation of development is a particular kind, useful for characterising psychological age.

That is, though social situation of development and perezhivanie concepts share some similarities, they serve distinct analytical purposes. The social situation of development characterises relations between *children* within a particular culture and the cultural environment itself. Thus, theorisation grounded in this concept relates to *normative* claims about, for example, the expected neoformations and particular contradictions that characterise a specific age period for a particular culture. To investigate the progress, process, and course of development of a particular child, however, requires the use of the perezhivanie concept, in which the actual interactions between child and their environment (regardless of whether this is characterised as a social situation of development) are crystallised, reflecting that child's past and current experiences, personality, attitudes and so on, as manifest in a concrete situation (see, e.g. Fleer and Pramling 2015). Indeed, as Vygotsky (1998) writes: "the forces of the environment acquire a controlling significance because the child experiences them" (p. 294).⁸ These "forces of the environment" can be characterised in terms of a social situation of development—in which case, analysis provides an understanding both of the individual and of normative

⁷It is unclear, however, whether the external and internal positions are both components of the social situation of development (as Karabanova 2010, has argued), or whether social situation of development only refers to external position.

⁸Karabanova (2010) gives a different translation as: "child's attitude to surroundings, and vice versa, the way surroundings affect a child, are regarded through his emotional experience and activity, thus surroundings acquire a leading force through child's perception"; while in the original Russian, it is "что среда определяет развитие ребенка через переживание [perezhivanie] среды... отношение ребенка к среде и среды к ребенку дается через переживание [perezhivanie] и деятельность самого ребенка; силы среды приобретают направляющее значение благодаря переживанию [perezhivaniyu] ребенка" (Vygotsky 1984, p. 383).

psychological age periods, that is, of *actual* development relative to *potential* neoformations—but it would be equally valid not to do so.⁹

To sum: though the concepts of social situation of development and perezhivanie are mutually informing, they characterise the child–environment relationship for different purposes and from different perspectives. The former, generally speaking, allows for theorisation of what is potential and culturally expected, while the latter reveals what is actually occurring. In a broader sense, we can see that the concepts are applications of the language of cultural-historical theory to particular issues (culturally constructed psychological age periods, and consciousness, respectively), in much the same way that cultural-historical theory is itself a specification of dialectical materialism for psychology.

2.5.2.2 (Word-)Meaning and Sense

In another of Vygotsky’s well known works, *Thinking and Speech* (Vygotsky 1987), the unit of word-meaning provides the basis for understanding the development of verbal thought (i.e. thought mediated by the sign system of language). For many researchers, this work has provided insight into Vygotsky’s thoughts on the development of consciousness, and thus by extension, the concept of perezhivanie. This connection can be made for a number of reasons.

First, they are methodologically analogous. Both concepts are described as units of analysis: empirically discoverable parts of the whole. Understanding how word-meaning is used to inform an understanding of the development of verbal thought should also provide insight into the way in which perezhivanie relates to and provides insight into, the development of consciousness (Valsiner and van der Veer 1993).

Second, two of the chapters of *Thinking and Speech* that elaborate the unit of word-meaning were written around the time (circa 1934) Vygotsky was also developing perezhivanie. It is likely, then, that the two concepts were either parts of a new approach to understanding psychological development, or two connected points in a singular line of inquiry. González Rey (2009a), for example, has argued that this phase in Vygotsky’s work¹⁰ was leading toward the development of the psychological concept of *sense* (which appears briefly in the last chapter of *Thinking and Speech*).

⁹This distinction between the investigation of potential/expected (social situation of development) and actually manifest (perezhivanie) development is, of course, identified in Bozhovich’s distinction between external and internal position, respectively. However, her characterisation of Vygotsky’s perezhivanie appears at odds with Vygotsky’s intended conceptualisation, for reasons discussed in the last section of this chapter. Thus, I have instead borrowed terminology from Chaiklin’s (2003) discussion of the ZPD, in which he distinguishes *objective/normative* (corresponding to the social situation of development) and *subjective* (corresponding to what a child can actually imitate and thus what is actually developmentally significant) ZPDs.

¹⁰From examining the Vygotsky family archives, Zavershneva (2010) ascertains that this new period in Vygotsky’s thinking began “not later than July 1932” (p. 52).

Third, in concluding *Thinking and Speech* (1987), Vygotsky suggests that what lies beyond of the scope of the book is “a more general problem, the problem of the relationship between the word and consciousness” (p. 285), that is, language in the larger context of “the motivating sphere of consciousness” (p. 282). The same concluding chapter makes reference to Stanislavsky, suggesting that Vygotsky had either begun developing perezhivanie or had the seeds of the concept in mind.

A final link can be found in “The problem of consciousness” (Vygotsky 1997, Chap. 9), notes of Vygotsky’s talks that mirror the structure of *Thinking and Speech*. In it, perezhivanie is linked to meaning and his work on verbal thought when Vygotsky identifies “the relation between activity and emotional experience [*perezhivaniyu*] (the problem of meaning)” (p. 130)¹¹ as an issue to be addressed in his work.

As with the concept itself, there are multiple interpretations of the manner in which perezhivanie relates to Vygotsky’s discussion of word-meaning. Before examining some of these interpretations, it is necessary first to address issues in understanding word-meaning itself.

2.5.2.3 A Note on the Meaning of (Word-)Meaning

Of particular interest are at least two unstated interpretations of the relationship between word-meaning (*znacheniya slova*) and *meaning* (*znacheniya*) that are differently assumed by theorists: either word-meaning and meaning are equivalent (as with works following Mahn and John-Steiner 2000, 2008; e.g. Cross 2012), or word-meaning is a larger whole of which meaning (understood as lexical definition) is a part, (e.g. Robbins 2001, Chap. 3).¹² The consequences of these two

¹¹Otnosheniye deyatelnosti k perezhivaniyu (problema znacheniya).

¹²Support for the first interpretation can be found in Vygotsky’s (1997) notes, when he alludes to this distinction: “Meaning [*znachenie*] is not the sum of all the psychological operations which stand behind the word [i.e. not *sense*, as defined in *Thinking and Speech*]. Meaning is something more specific—it is the internal structure of the sign operation” (p. 133). However, it is nonetheless evident that while Vygotsky uses Paulhan’s meaning and sense distinction in *Thinking and Speech*, he disagrees with Paulhan’s characterisation of meaning: “Word meaning is not a simple thing given once and for all (against Paulhan)” (p. 138). Therefore, Vygotsky either uses Paulhan’s *meaning* with a different definition, or subsumes both meaning (redefined as lexical definition) and sense within his own word-meaning construct. Indeed, Vygotsky (1987) writes that: “The actual meaning of the word [*znachenie slova*] is inconstant Isolated in the lexicon, the word has only one meaning [*znachenie*]. However, this meaning [*znachenie*] is nothing more than a potential that can only be realised in living speech ...” (p. 276). A possible interpretation of this apparently contradictory statement is that word-meaning is inconstant because it changes when the potential, abstract lexical meanings (i.e. dictionary definitions) of words are made concrete (i.e. used to refer to specific objects of discussion, rather than the entire class of objects to which a lexical definition would refer) in actual speech, and thus change from one context to another (including in inner/private speech contexts).

interpretations relate to other statements in *Thinking and Speech*. First, meaning is described as a relatively stable zone *within* sense,¹³ “the aggregate of all the psychological facts that arise in our consciousness as a result of the word” (Vygotsky 1987, pp. 275–276). Second, in inner speech—highly abbreviated, non-verbalised, self-directed speech—sense predominates over meaning. Finally, word-meaning is described as existing on the plane of verbal thought (rather than, for example, the deeper and broader planes of thought or consciousness).

Where word-meaning and meaning are equivalent, it follows that sense and inner speech are associated with a broader plane than verbal thought—that is, consciousness—from which other psychological facts (e.g. emotion and personality) can be elicited by the word. Where word-meaning and meaning are differentiated, then both sense and meaning can be understood as parts of word-meaning, which, together with inner speech, are all situated on the plane of verbal thought. Though sense draws its “psychological facts” from beyond word-meaning in consciousness (e.g. motives; Vygotsky 1997, p. 136), it is nonetheless “contained” within word-meaning. This disagreement potentially stems from issues in translation. For example, it is unclear in the original Russian manuscript, except to proficient Russian speakers, whether *znacheniya slova* is best understood as (a word’s) *meaning* or word-meaning. Additionally, the use of “word” in “word-meaning” is likely a synecdoche (Kozulin 1990, p. 151; or, similarly, a metaphor, Robbins 2001, Chap. 3)—that refers to language and its psychological and semantic structure as a whole, not particular words, which may confuse some readers unfamiliar with Vygotsky’s writing style.

The context of writing also warrants consideration: the fifth and seventh chapters of *Thinking and Speech*, which focus on (word-)meaning, were written three years apart (in 1931 and 1934, respectively), during which Vygotsky apparently embarked on a new direction in his research (González Rey 2009a).¹⁴ Thus it is possible that the use of (word-)meaning is not necessarily consistent across these chapters. Indeed, in the fifth chapter, word-meaning is distinguished from

¹³The origins of the meaning–sense distinction in the work of Paulhan raise two further questions. The first is whether the distinction was fully developed and understood by Paulhan himself, as it is disregarded as being insignificant in his later work (Kellogg, 12February 2015). The second is whether Vygotsky’s usage of the distinction is in fact better explained as originating from the work of Volosinov (who distinguished between *thema* and *meaning*, corresponding roughly to actual and potential meaning, respectively), whose work was closely read by Vygotsky (Kellogg, 11 February 2015).

¹⁴The new direction for research can possibly be traced back to notes written on the back of library cards, examined by Zavershneva (2010), that reveal Vygotsky’s intention to begin to direct his attention inwards, to investigate the dynamics of meanings by way of “semic analysis” (p. 42).

object-relatedness¹⁵ from a functional perspective, in relation to the development of conceptual thinking in children, and strongly reflects Frege's distinction between sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*), respectively (Wertsch 1978, p. 20), though Vygotsky does not make this connection explicit.¹⁶ By contrast, in the seventh and final chapter, Vygotsky's discussion is structural and in the context of fully developed conceptual thinking and inner speech. Here, he draws on Paulhan, either to further refine his own definition of word-meaning by contrasting it with sense, or to introduce a new distinction within word-meaning itself.¹⁷ Having made explicit the issues in interpreting word-meaning, we can now return to the present task of connecting the concept with perezhivanie.

2.5.2.4 Word-Meaning and Perezhivanie

Perhaps the most tantalising statement connecting word-meaning and perezhivanie is one that appears at the end of *Thinking and Speech*: "the word is a microcosm of consciousness, related to consciousness like a living cell is related to an organism, like an atom is related to the cosmos. The meaningful word is a microcosm of human consciousness" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 285). As with many other aspects of Vygotsky's work discussed in this chapter, differing interpretations of this connection have emerged. In this case, these differences appear to align with differing understandings of the term "microcosm".

On one interpretation, word-meaning is a microcosm of human consciousness *en toto* (Leitch 2011). That is, word-meaning is the unit that captures the structures and contents of consciousness, thereby reflecting an individual's concrete lived experience (e.g. the meaning and significance ascribed to an experience; e.g. Fleer 2013), and thus is able to serve as a unit for analysing consciousness (Connery 2006; Leitch 2011). This interpretation is premised on the constitutive role that

¹⁵Vygotsky (1987) later quotes R.Shor: "in what is commonly called word meaning, we must distinguish two features...the meaning of the expression...and its object relatedness" (p. 152). This can be differently interpreted as making a distinction between: (1) two parts *within* word-meaning; (2) two *functions* of or within word-meaning (i.e. nomination/indication and signification); (3) the whole (where meaning means word-meaning) against a part (object relatedness) of itself; (4) lexical definition and object-relatedness, both of which are parts of word-meaning; or (5) between structure (meaning) and a function (object relatedness).

¹⁶Additionally, both Frege's *sense* and Vygotsky's word-meaning are, respectively, described as the *mode* of presentation.

¹⁷Before the writing of the last chapter, Vygotsky (1987) has either not distinguished between sense and meaning, or has taken the two terms to be contained within word-meaning, for example: "We were able... to observe how that which is perceived is isolated and synthesised, how it becomes the *sense or meaning* of the word, how it becomes a concept" (emphasis added, p. 164) and "the greatest difficulty for the adolescent and one that he overcomes only at the end of the transitional age is the further transfer of the *sense or meaning* of the developed concept to new concrete situations" (emphasis added, p. 161).

Vygotsky assigns to language. Through activities such as speech, the meaning inherent in signs (i.e. language) generates sense, which either constitutes consciousness or effects interfunctional change (i.e. between processes of consciousness) within it (Vygotsky 1997, Chap. 9). As a result, this sense-creating activity of meanings is said to create the semantic structure of consciousness (Vygotsky 1997, Chap. 9), with word-meaning becoming the locus of thinking (Leitch 2011), mediating the entirety of consciousness (and not merely its expression in speech; Michell 2012). As Vygotsky wrote in notes from 1932: “The first word is a change in consciousness long before a change in thinking” (Zavershneva 2010, p. 44). Accordingly, in this context, *perezhivanie* is understood as an abstracted construct reflecting the larger system of the individual-in-environment (Connery 2006). To borrow Connery’s (2006) metaphor, the window of word-meaning permits insight to the house of *perezhivanie*. However, Zinchenko (1985) has argued word-meaning is insufficient as a complete unit of analysis as it does not also contain the motive force for its transformation (motives, needs, desires, etc.), which, indeed, Vygotsky had argued lay beyond the plane thinking (and therefore, word-meaning), in the realm of consciousness.

On another interpretation, word-meaning is understood as a particular “privileged case” (Wertsch 1985 p. 194) of the semiotic organisation of consciousness (Vygotsky 1987, p. 43). That is, word-meaning, as a part of consciousness, is characterised by the same kind of generalisation and semiotic organisation that exists in the broader whole of consciousness. It should be clarified that, in this context, generalisation is not understood as in the context of verbal thought (i.e. forming abstracted concepts), but instead as the “exclusion from visual structures and the inclusion in thought structures, in semantic structures” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 138). Generalisation is thus a kind of abstraction from reality, shaped and determined by the activity of one’s consciousness (Vygotsky 1997, Chap. 9). Thus, generalisation as a general principle explains not only the process by which concepts are formed in verbal thought, but also explains the non-intellectual means by which features of the environment can be said to be significant (or not) for an individual. While the meaning of a situation can be grasped at the *intellectual* level (e.g. to consciously understand), other factors such as an individual’s current stage of development, needs, desires, abilities and attitudes can also make a situation “meaningful” to that individual in a non-intellectual (i.e. non-conscious) sense (Blunden 2014). As Vygotsky (1997) writes: “Meaning does not belong to thinking but to consciousness as a whole” (p. 138).¹⁸ On this interpretation, the process of generalisation found within word-meaning on the plane of thought (which leads to an investigation limited to thinking; Smagorinsky 2011b) is a particular example of generalisation that, on the plane of consciousness, is found in *perezhivanie*. Where word-meaning is understood to be subsumed within sense, it is also possible to

¹⁸Note that this quote from Vygotsky also supports the first interpretation of word-meaning as a unit of analysis for consciousness *en toto*: the meaning attached to signs shapes consciousness.

interpret sense as being equivalent to (or even beyond) *perekhivanie*, as González Rey (2009a) and Lantolf (2000) have argued.

Further insight into this issue can be found in examining Vygotsky's use of the term "microcosm". Though not often used, it appears in "The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology" (Vygotsky 1997, Chap. 15), in an argument for new methodology:

When our Marxists explain the Hegelian principle in Marxist methodology they rightly claim that each thing can be examined as a microcosm, as a universal measure in which the whole big world is reflected. On this basis they say that to study one single thing, one subject, one phenomenon *until the end*, exhaustively, means to know the world in all its connections. (emphasis in original, p. 317)

Vygotsky contends that psychology requires explanatory principles that explain what meaning observed facts have in the context of psychology.¹⁹ Thus, while he disagrees with Pavlov's behaviourism, he commends his method: Pavlov studied the particular case of salivation in dogs, but this was grounded in an identification of what salivation has in common with other homogenous phenomena, and what dogs have in common with other animals. Thus, the degree to which salivation in dogs (the specific case) informed an understanding of the general biological principle of the reflex, was predetermined. To identify a microcosm (for Pavlov, salivation in dogs; for Marx, commodity value), then, is to understand what further analysis of the microcosm will reveal in relation to the macrocosm (Pavlov, the biological reflex; Marx, bourgeois society). This is why Vygotsky (1997) writes: "*to know the meaning is to know the singular as the universal*" (emphasis in original, p. 136).

This conceptualisation of microcosm owes much to Hegel (whether directly or through Lenin or Marx), who argues that microcosms are essentially concrete instantiations of the universal *macrocosm* of which it is a part, and reflect relationships and as-yet undifferentiated differences of that macrocosm (see, Lenin 1925/2003b; Stern 2009, Chap. 12). To simplify the relevant arguments from Hegel: if nature is considered a macrocosm—a dialectic that contains within it, not-yet-manifested differences (e.g. between organic and non-organic matter, animals, etc.)—then an animal can be considered a microcosm of nature. An animal is a specific instantiation of the essence of nature (its laws, matter, etc.), and because it is manifest in such a way, it also contains within its definition what it is *not* (e.g. an animal is not inorganic). Thus, reflected in the animal are the conditions of the macrocosm (e.g. laws of evolution, organisation of matter) that gave rise to the animal, as well as a relation to that which is external to it (Hegel 1970/2013, p. 108). Considered together, the individual animal is said to be a microcosm of the whole of nature.

¹⁹This point is also made while using the metaphors of reflection theory discussed earlier in this chapter: "When we know the *thing* and the *laws of reflection of light*, we can always explain, predict, elicit, and change the [mirror image]. And this is what persons with mirrors do. They study not mirror reflections but the movement of light beams, and explain the reflection" (Vygotsky 1997, p. 327).

Returning to Vygotsky, it can be plausibly argued that the word is indeed a microcosm of consciousness to the extent that its manifestation reflects the semantic nature of consciousness. However, it does not fully capture aspects of consciousness beyond the plane of thinking (e.g. motives, needs, desires, personality) that appear to be accounted for in *perezhivanie*. Rather, in being a concrete starting point for investigation, it can only indicate other aspects within the macrocosm to which the microcosm is related (in virtue of *not* being the microcosm), but which are not otherwise captured in the microcosm. The centrality of word-meaning therefore owes not only to it being a particular manifestation of the semantic nature of consciousness, but also to its potential to be studied “until the end”, to reveal its relation to other aspects (e.g. personality, affect) within the dialectic macrocosm of consciousness that can then form the basis of further investigations (with, e.g. *perezhivanie* as the new unit of analysis).

2.5.3 *Activity Theory*

In this final section, I turn briefly to the activity-theoretic interpretation—or, as I argue, *misinterpretation*—of Vygotsky’s *perezhivanie*, as exemplified in the influential work of A.N. Leontiev.²⁰ Activity Theory is built on the premise that Vygotsky’s theory of the cultural mediation of human mental development is incomplete. Like the concept of mediation, *perezhivanie* is subsequently interpreted within the broader context of activity (as opposed to consciousness), with Vygotsky’s conceptualisation found to be lacking and/or contradictory.

According to Leontiev (2005), Vygotsky argues that the effect an environment has on a child’s development is determined by the child’s “degree of comprehension of the environment and on the significance it has for him” (p. 17). This comprehension, in turn, rests on the development of word-meaning, conceptualised as “the specific form in which the development of the child’s consciousness takes place” (p. 18). Development consequently occurs through interaction between meanings—between the developing word-meanings that constitute consciousness, and the social meanings that are manifest in the ideal forms of development in the environment. Although Vygotsky specifically argues aspects of personality like motivation, needs and desires are beyond the plane of thought (where word-meaning, in one interpretation, is situated) and located in the deeper plane of consciousness, Leontiev interprets Vygotsky to be grounding the concept of *perezhivanie* in *thinking* (i.e. in the ability for generalisation, word-meaning) rather than consciousness. Consequently, the absence of personality in the concept of *perezhivanie* renders it a false (i.e. incomplete) unity of person and environment, and therefore, an inadequate unit for its analysis.

²⁰And also echoed in the work of Bozhovich (2009), discussed earlier.

This interpretation of Vygotsky, I argue, is uncharitable, relying on an understanding of word-meaning as a microcosm of consciousness *en toto*, as previously discussed. Leontiev's interpretation of Vygotsky also assumes that the following example fully captures the type of psychological processes—that is, only cognition—that determine *perezhivanie*:

The situation will influence the child in different ways depending on how well the child understands its sense and meaning. For instance, imagine a family member is dying. Obviously, a child who understands what death is will react to this differently than a child who does not understand at all what has happened (Vygotsky 1934, as cited by Leontiev 2005, pp. 16–17)

However, as previously discussed in this chapter, it is clear in Vygotsky's writing that, while cognitive processes like generalisation and understanding may play the decisive role in determining *perezhivanie*, it is not always the case. It is a matter of empirical discovery whether the decisive role is played by cognition, emotion, personality or any number of kinds or combinations of psychological processes. Even in the example of the three children from the same family, Vygotsky identifies different kinds of psychological processes as being salient in the determination of their *perezhivanie*: being overwhelmed, positive and negative attitudes and the ability to understand. Indeed, on a more charitable reading of this example, it is possible to find underlying aspects of personality, needs and desires, as contributing to the determination of *perezhivanie*. The eldest child's "precocious maturity [and] seriousness" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 340), for example, may contribute to his experiencing his situation as one which requires him to play the role of protector to his siblings—arguably, this *perezhivanie* is, at most, only *partly* determined by an intellectual understanding. In the same way that some theorists erroneously emphasised emotion as the sole determinant of *perezhivanie*, Leontiev has here emphasised cognition. Leontiev's alternative to Vygotsky's *perezhivanie* as a word-meaning-based intellectual process is to situate it in activity. Rather than being a primary fact of consciousness,²¹ *perezhivanie* is instead a secondary and derivative fact determined "by the content of the [practical, material] activity through which I realise [my] relationship [with the object]" (Leontiev 2005, p. 26). That is, *perezhivanie* is secondary, since it relies on word-meaning, which develops in childhood rather than existing from birth. For Leontiev, practical activity appears first, then later, thinking and *perezhivanie*.

Subsequent work in Activity Theory has attempted to return *perezhivanie* to the domain of consciousness. Clarà (2015), for example, has argued that *perezhivanie* is synonymous with *appraisal* in emotion theory, and is a representation in consciousness of an object's relation (un/desirable, harmful, valuable, dis/like) to the self as an individual with a particular history, aims and so on. Accordingly, the ability for an object/situation/event to affect the individual (i.e. the object's agency) is mediated through this "feeling" (i.e. emotion). The converse situation—one's

²¹The primacy of experience in consciousness is an interpretation also shared by Rubinstein (see, Fakhruddinova 2010).

effect on the environment—is instead mediated through cognition. Together, cognition and emotion are both implied in activity, since activity is constituted by both objects and subjects, and their respective agencies (Clarà 2015).

2.6 Concluding Remarks

The concept of perezhivanie does not stand alone: it exists within the rich conceptual system of cultural-historical theory and emerges as part of a new direction in Vygotsky's work. It is also necessarily informed by Vygotsky's theoretical and philosophical heritage, and alludes to (or crystallises) ideas scattered throughout his prolific career. Post-Vygotsky, the concept encounters issues of translation, interpretation and appropriation for differing domains of research. These issues are magnified through the particular research agendas of individual theorists seeking to develop, understand and use the concept. What emerges is thus a complex landscape of refinements, reinterpretations and differing operationalisations, each shedding light on different facets of the concept. This chapter begins the process of charting this varied landscape to illuminate the difficult terrain that lies ahead for researchers seeking to use the concept. It is by developing this foundation that perezhivanie's potential for particular research agendas can be explored (e.g. emotion; Part II, this volume), and its shortcomings addressed through new conceptual systems (e.g. subjectivity; Part III, this volume).

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Chapter 3

The Concept of Perekhivanie in Cultural-Historical Theory: Content and Contexts

Nikolai Veresov

Abstract This chapter, advancing Vygotsky's original definitions, makes an important distinction between the two meanings of perekhivanie—perekhivanie as a *psychological phenomena/process* which can be empirically observed and studied (P1) and perekhivanie as a *concept, a theoretical tool* for analysis of the process of development (P2). The chapter is an attempt to unlock *the theoretical content* of the cultural-historical concept of perekhivanie in three interrelated dimensions, in relation to: (1) the concepts of social environment and interaction of present and ideal forms; (2) the general genetic law of cultural development; (3) the idea of analysis of complex wholes by units. Advancing Vygotsky's legacy, this chapter introduces a concept of dramatic perekhivanie which allows to discover the dialectics of the process of development of human mind as a sociocultural genesis both in evolutionary and revolutionary aspects as well as in a unity of macro and microgenesis.

3.1 Identifying the Problem: P1 and P2

3.1.1 What Are the Meanings of Perekhivanie in Vygotsky's Texts?

Over the past two decades Vygotsky's concept of perekhivanie has attracted increasing attention by various researchers working within the cultural-historical tradition (Rieber and Wollock 1997; Van der Veer and Valsiner 1994; Mahn and John-Steiner 2002; Daniels 2008).

The term *perekhivanie* is quite difficult to explain and almost impossible to translate. There is no English equivalent for this term; even the Spanish *vivencia* (Quiñones and Fleer 2011) does not seem to be appropriate. After several unsuccessful attempts to translate this term, some authors use the term perekhivanie

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without any translation, simply as *perezhivanie* (see, among many others, Mahn 2003; Daniels 2008; Ferholt 2009, 2010; Fakhrutdinova 2010; Smagorinsky 2011).

Yet, what matters is not the word or the term, but its meaning and content. From this standpoint, it makes sense to take a close look at meanings of *perezhivanie* in Vygotsky's various original texts. Thus, in 1931 he defines *perezhivanie* as follows:

Perezhivanie (переживание) is a common name for direct psychological experience.¹ From a subjective perspective, every psychological process is *Perezhivanie*. In every *Perezhivanie* we distinguish: Firstly, an act, and secondly, the content of *Perezhivanie*. The first is an activity related to the appearance of certain *Perezhivanie*; the second is the content, the composition of what is experienced (Varshava and Vygotsky 1931, p. 128).

This definition might look strange and even irrelevant to the cultural-historical theoretical framework. It looks like an umbrella-like “indefinite definition” (common name for direct psychological experience), whereas in the *Historical Meaning of Psychological Crisis* written in 1926–1927 Vygotsky was very critical of definitions of this kind emphasising that “to try and explain everything means to explain nothing” (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 246). Yet, there is no contradiction here: This definition was from the *Psychological Dictionary* and reflected the traditional classical meaning of the term *perezhivanie* as it existed in the psychology of those times originated from Dilthey, Dewey and James. This meaning of *perezhivanie* encompasses a huge variety of psychological phenomena; it is a phenomenological definition (“from a subjective perspective, every psychological process is *Perezhivanie*”). However, what is important is the same word might mean a process (act, activity) or a content; in other words, *perezhivanie* is “How I am experiencing something” and “What I am experiencing.” The word “activity” should not mislead the reader as it has nothing to do with the concept of activity developed by Leont’ev and his scientific school. The Russian word *deyatel’nost’* (деятельность) was very often used as a synonym of *aktivnost’* (активность), for example, Pavlov’s term “higher nervous activity” is *vysshaya niernvnaia deyatel’nost’* (высшая нервная деятельность).

This example shows that the first meaning of *perezhivanie* in Vygotsky’s texts coincides with the traditional classical definition that existed in psychology (every psychological process is *perezhivanie*); however, it distinguishes two meanings of the term—(1) *perezhivanie* as a process and (2) *perezhivanie* as content. In *The Psychology of Art* written in the beginning of the 1920s, we can also find lot of places, where *perezhivanie* is used with these meanings (see, for example, Vygotsky’s thinking about aesthetic experience (Vygotsky 1971, 1986).

My second example is from *Lectures of Paedology of 1933/34* (Vygotsky 2001). At present only one of these lectures (*The Problem of Environment*) is available in English (Vygotsky 1994). Here we find a different approach:

¹Опыт (опыт) in Russian original text.

...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).

The meaning here is radically different from the first one. First, perezhivanie is a *concept*, not a definition. Second, it is related to the process of *development*. Third, it is related to the role and influence of *environment on development*. And fourth, it has a strong reference to the *psychological laws* of development. Perezhivanie is a concept which allows us to study the process of development which means that this concept is an *analytical tool, a theoretical lens* to study the process of development.

Thus, in relation to the various meanings of perezhivanie in Vygotsky's original texts we have a complex picture. Meaning number 1 is perezhivanie as a common name of all psychological processes and experiences, which can be labelled an "ontological" or "phenomenological" meaning as it covers a huge variety of phenomena and reflects their ontological status and nature. To make it simple I suggest we call it P1. Accordingly, perezhivanie as a process could be labeled as P1.1 and perezhivanie as content would be P1.2.

Meaning number 2 (P2) is not about general name of various psychological phenomena, it is a concept related to the process of development, the role of environment and laws of development. P2 is a theoretical tool, analytical lens to study the process of development within a system of other concepts of cultural-historical theory. In other words, the meaning of P2 is theoretical (gnoseological or epistemological, depending on philosophical terminology we follow).

3.1.2 Recent Studies on Perezhivanie: A Very Brief Overview

A survey of existing literature shows a very complex picture. I do not need to undertake in-depth analysis as it is presented in previous chapter of this Volume (see Mok, this Volume). I will focus therefore on some aspects related to my topic.

All authors agree that perezhivanie is essential for understanding Vygotsky's thought. However, different authors highlight different aspects. Some researchers emphasise the emotional character of perezhivanie (Mahn and John-Steiner 2002; Daniels 2010), whereas others point to its complex and integrative nature as a unity of emotional and cognitive components in perceiving and understanding the social environment (Antoniadou 2011; Ferholt 2009; Rieber and Wollock 1997; Vasilyuk 1991). These explanations represent a wide combination of various characteristics. Thus, taking these definitions, perezhivanie is discovered as a special type of psychological process (or state of mind) which includes and relates to:

- (1) emotional experience,
- (2) interpretation,

- (3) imagination,
- (4) creativity,
- (5) perception,
- (6) living through,
- (7) meaning making,
- (8) appropriation,
- (9) internalisation,
- (10) understanding,
- (11) cognition.

This list might look strange; even more, it might look like a mechanical and artificial combination of different approaches and understandings. I would agree, but what this list makes clear is that most recent studies strictly correspond to the P1 meaning (every psychological process is *perezhivanie*).² Thus, there is no problem here. Where is the problem then? In my opinion, the problem is that we have little research on *perezhivanie* with the P2 meaning. Thus, the research of Brennan is focused on applying P2 as an analytical tool to study infant–adult interactions (Brennan 2014), some researchers undertake interesting studies in developing the content of P2 by theorising play (Fleer 2013), parent–child interactions (Chen 2015) and emotion regulation in child care settings (Fleer and Hammer 2013). However, in general, *perezhivanie* as a concept and as a theoretical analytical tool remains much less discovered compared to P1.

The best summary of this state of affairs belongs to Smagorinsky who claims:

... *perezhivanie* thus far remains more a tantalizing notion than a concept with clear meaning and import to those who hope to draw on it. How this feature of human development is constructed and employed in future work will affect how Vygotsky's legacy in the development of a comprehensive, unified cultural psychology is extended and realized by those working in his considerable wake (Smagorinsky 2011, p. 339).

I would agree with this and would go even further—before using the concept as an analytical tool in research design and data analysis, before developing such a tool further we have to have a clear understanding what this tool is, what is the original theoretical content of this concept within cultural-historical theory.

3.1.3 *Aims of the Chapter*

The way to understand this concept and to restore its theoretical content is to identify clearly the place and role of this concept within cultural-historical theory and to show the connections of this concept with other concepts, principles, and laws of the theory.

²Internet resources is another evidence to support this conclusion, see, for example an extended discussion on the status of *perezhivanie* at <http://www.ethicalpolitics.org/seminars/perezhivanie.htm>.

In this chapter, I try to unlock *the theoretical content* of the concept of perezhivanie in three interrelated dimensions. First, I try to elucidate perezhivanie as one of the key concepts in Vygotsky's theory. Second, I try to show its place within Vygotsky's theory by identifying its connections and interrelations with other concepts and principles of cultural-historical theory. Third, I try to undertake an analysis of perezhivanie as a theoretical tool for analysing the sociocultural genesis of human mind. By doing this I will follow the P2 meaning, i.e. I will uncover its theoretical content in relation to the process of development and the role of environment and, finally, in relation to the general law of cultural development.

The way I suggest is very close to Chaiklin's approach to another concept of cultural-historical theory—the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Chaiklin claims that to understand the role and place of the ZPD in Vygotsky's theory,

... one must appreciate the theoretical perspective in which it appeared... That is, we need to understand what Vygotsky meant by 'development' in general, if we are going to understand what he meant by 'zone of proximal development' in particular. In this way, the reader can develop a generative understanding of the theoretical approach, which will be more valuable than a dictionary definition of the concept (Chaiklin 2003, p. 46).

This chapter is an attempt to initiate a generative understanding of the theoretical content and context of perezhivanie. This goal is not easy to reach and it is hardly possible to do this in one single paper; my task here is merely to show certain ways to identify the psychological and developmental content of perezhivanie as a theoretical concept of cultural-historical theory. In doing this, I will mostly concentrate on Vygotsky's original texts to show the possible ways of developing a generative understanding of the psychological content of this concept.

The process of the cultural development of the human mind is the subject matter of cultural-historical theory. In cultural-historical theory, every concept and principle reflects and explains certain aspects of this extremely complex process of the cultural development of the human mind. Hence, the way to define the place and the role of perezhivanie as a concept within this theory is to answer the question: How is this concept related to the process of cultural development, and which aspects of cultural development does it theoretically reflect?

Within this framework, the cultural-historical concept of "perezhivanie" is discussed in relation to three main aspects. It is related to:

- (1) the concept of social environment³ as a source of development,
- (2) the general genetic law of cultural development,
- (3) the idea of a unit of analysis.

³I use the notion of "social environment", not "social-cultural environment" which looks more appropriate in this context, because it corresponds to Vygotsky's own terminology. According to Vygotsky "the word "social", as applied to our subject, has a broad meaning. First of all, in the broadest sense, it means that everything cultural is social" (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 106).

3.2 Perekhivanie, Social Environment, and Social Situation of Development

3.2.1 *Social Environment as a Source of Development*

In contrast to “classical” developmental theories which explain development as a process determined by two groups of factors—biological and social—cultural-historical theory characterises the social environment not as a factor, but as a source of development. Vygotsky claims:

The social environment is the source for the appearance of all specific human properties of the personality gradually acquired by the child or the source of social development of the child, *which is included in the process of actual interaction of “ideal” and present forms* (Vygotsky 1998, p. 203).

However, what does “social environment as the source of development” mean? There are two more concepts, which bring psychological content to this general claim. The first one is the concept of “social situation of development”:

...at the beginning of each age period, there develops a completely original, exclusive single and unique relation specific to the given age, between the child and reality, mainly the social reality, that surrounds him. We call this relation *the social situation of development* at given age. The social situation of development represents the initial moment for all dynamic changes that occur in development during the given period. It determines wholly and completely the forms and the path along which the child will acquire ever newer personality characteristics, drawing them from the social reality as from the basic source of development, the path along which the social becomes the individual. Thus, the first question we must answer in studying the dynamics of any age is to explain the social situation of development (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198).

The concept of social situation of development, on one hand, characterises the social world as a source of development and, on the other hand, describes a special type of *relation* between the child and the social environment, a kind of starting point of development of the child’s higher forms of behaviour and consciousness. In other words, social situation of development is not a social environment; it is a social situation of development as a dynamic system of relations and interactions of a child and social environment. It, therefore, reflects the influence of a social reality on a child development and at the same time foregrounds what a child brings to the social environment.

The second concept is the “interaction of ideal and primary (present) forms.” Introducing this concept Vygotsky gives the following example:

We have a child who has only just begun to speak and he pronounces single words... The child speaks in one word phrases, but his mother talks to him in language which is already grammatically and syntactically formed and which has a large vocabulary, even though it is being toned down for the child’s benefit. All the same, she speaks using the fully perfected form of speech. Let us agree to call this developed form, which is supposed to make its appearance at the end of the child’s development, the final or ideal form - ideal in the sense that it acts as a model for that which should be achieved at the end of the developmental period; and final in the sense that it represents what the child is supposed to attain at the end

of his development. And let us call the child's form of speech the primary or rudimentary⁴ form (Vygotsky 1994, p. 347–348).

If no appropriate ideal form can be found in the environment, and the development of the child, for whatever reason, is to take place outside these specific conditions, i.e. without any interaction with the final (ideal) form, then this proper form will fail to develop in the child. The following example makes this point clearer:

Try to imagine a child who is growing up among deaf people and is surrounded by deaf and dumb parents and children his own age. Will he be able to develop speech?... Speech will not develop at all in such a child. In order for speech to develop, it is necessary for this ideal form to be present in the environment and to interact with the child's rudimentary form; only then can speech development be achieved (ibid, p. 349).

In a broader sense, the “ideal form” might be considered as any kind of developed cultural form of behaviour and interaction the child meets in her social environment. Vygotsky stresses that the interaction between the developed (ideal) and the present (primary) forms is a distinguishing feature and “the greatest peculiarity of child development in contrast to other types of development” (Vygotsky 2001, p. 112–113).

The child's development and its “individual developmental trajectory” depends on (1) what kind of social situation the child is involved in, (2) what kind of ideal forms the social surrounding presents to the child, and (3) what kind of interactions take place between the child's real forms and social ideal forms.

3.2.2 *Perezhivanie and Social Environment: Vygotsky's Example*

Let us examine an example of *perezhivanie* given by Vygotsky. In *The Problem of Environment* (Vygotsky 1994, 2001) he gives an example which shows the role and place of a child's *perezhivanie*.

He begins the description of an example with a very general statement:

...for a proper understanding of the role which environment plays in child development it is always necessary to approach environment not with an absolute but a relative yardstick... Environment should not be regarded as a condition⁵ of development... but one should always approach environment from the point of view of the relationship which exists between the child and its environment at a given stage of his development (Vygotsky 1994, p. 338).

⁴In Russian original text the term начальная форма is used (Vygotsky 2001, p. 83) which might be translated as “incipient form”.

⁵In the Russian text the word обстановка (surrounding) was used: Среду следует рассматривать при этом не как обстановку развития... (Vygotsky 2001, p. 71). Condition in Russian is условие.

Two valuable points should be mentioned in regard to this citation. First, Vygotsky approaches the problem of environment from its role in child development (social formation of mind) and second, what is important is not the social environment per se, but *the relationship* between the child and his or her social environment. This statement has direct connections with the concept of the “social situation of development” as a starting point of Vygotsky’s considerations. However, what is the most important indicator of this relationship between the child and the environment? Vygotsky continues:

...the essential factors⁶ which explain the influence of environment⁷ on the psychological development of children, and on the development of their conscious personalities, are made up of their... *perezhivaniya*⁸ The... *perezhivanie*, arising from any situation or from any aspect of his environment,⁹ determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child. Therefore, it is not any of the factors¹⁰ in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors¹¹ refracted through the prism of the child’s... *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky 1994, p. 339–340).

To clarify this general theoretical statement Vygotsky continues with the following example:

We are dealing with three children, brought to us from one family. The external situation in this family is the same for all three children... The mother drinks and, as a result, apparently suffers from several nervous and psychological disorders. The children find themselves in a very difficult situation. When drunk, and during these breakdowns, the mother had once attempted to throw one of the children out of the window and she regularly beat them or threw them to the floor. In a word, the children are living in conditions of dread and fear due to these circumstances (Ibid).

Despite the fact that the external situation looks the same for all children, there are essential differences in respect to their development:

The three children are brought to our clinic, but each one of them presents a completely different picture of disrupted development, caused by the same situation. The same circumstances result in an entirely different picture for the three children (Ibid).

The youngest of these children

...reacts to the situation by developing a number of neurotic symptoms, i.e. symptoms of a defensive nature. He is simply overwhelmed by the horror of what is happening to him. As

⁶In the Russian text the word моменты (moments) is used: существенными моментами для определения влияния среды ... (Vygotsky 2001, p. 72). Factor in Russian is фактор.

⁷In the Russian text—для определения влияния среды (Vygotsky 2001, p. 72–73), which can be translated “for defining the influence of the environment”.

⁸Here the word perezhivanie is used in plural form—«переживания».

⁹Perezhivanie of certain situation, perezhivanie of any part of this environment—«переживание какой-нибудь ситуации, переживание какой-нибудь части среды» in the Russian text (Vygotsky 2001, p. 73).

¹⁰Moment (момент) in the Russian original (Ibid).

¹¹The same, moment (момент) in the Russian original (Ibid).

a result, he develops attacks of terror, enuresis and he develops a stammer, sometimes being unable to speak at all as he loses his voice. In other words, the child's reaction amounts to a state of complete depression and helplessness in the face of this situation. (Ibid)

The second child approached the situation differently. He was

...developing an extremely agonizing condition, a state of inner conflict... On the one hand, from the child's point of view, the mother is an object of painful attachment,¹² and on the other, she represents a source of all kinds of terrors and terrible emotional experiences [perekhivaniya] for the child.¹³ The second child was brought to us with this kind of deeply pronounced conflict and a sharply colliding internal contradiction expressed in a simultaneously positive and negative attitude towards the mother, a terrible attachment to her and an equally terrible hate for her,¹⁴ combined with terribly contradictory behaviour. He asked to be sent home immediately, but expressed terror when the subject of his going home was brought up (Vygotsky 1994, p. 340).

Finally, the third and eldest child

...showed signs of some precocious maturity, seriousness and solicitude. He already understood the situation. He understood that their mother was ill and he pitied her. He could see that the younger children found themselves in danger when their mother was in one of her states of frenzy. And he had a special role. He must calm his mother down, make certain that she is prevented from harming the little ones and comfort them. Quite simply, he has become the senior member of the family, the only one whose duty it was to look after everyone else. As a result of this, the entire course of his development underwent a striking change. This was not a lively child with normal, lively, simple interests, appropriate to his age and exhibiting a lively level of activity. It was a child whose course of normal development was severely disrupted, a different type of child (Vygotsky 1994, p. 340–341).

How can one explain why exactly the same environmental conditions exert three different types of influence on these three different children?

It can be explained because each of the children has a different attitude to the situation... Each of the children experienced¹⁵ the situation in a different way. One of them experienced it as an inexplicable, incomprehensible horror which has left him in a state of defenselessness. The second was experiencing it consciously, as a clash between his strong attachment, and his no less strong feeling of fear, hate and hostility. And the third child experienced it, to some extent, as far as it is possible for a 10–11 year old boy, as a misfortune which has befallen the family and which required him to put all other things

¹²In the Russian original the expression «предмет большой привязанности» (object of great/intensive attachment) is used (Vygotsky 2001, p. 73–74).

¹³In the Russian text «источник самых тяжёлых впечатлений» (a source of all kinds of... terrible impressions for the child) is used (Ibid). Nothing is said about emotional experience or perekhivanie in this sentence.

¹⁴In the Russian original “страшной привязанности к ней и страшной ненависти к ней” (a terrific attachment to her and an equally terrific hate for her). The word страшной here means the degree of attachment (“deep”, “intensive”, “strong”, “terrific”), not the character of it (“dangerous” or “terrible”).

¹⁵Everywhere in is this quote the Russian verb perekhival (переживал) is used. This is the past singular grammatical form of the verb perekhivat' (переживать), from which the noun perekhivanie has been derived.

aside, to try somehow to mitigate the misfortune and to help both the sick mother and the children (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341).

The conclusion is:

So... depending on the fact that the same situation had been experienced by the three children in three different ways,¹⁶ the influence which this situation exerted on their development also turns out to be different (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341).

Further, Vygotsky summarises the whole issue by saying that

... by citing this example, I only wished to clarify the idea that... paedology¹⁷ does not investigate the environment as such without regard to the child, but instead looks at the role and influence of the environment on the course of development. It ought to always be capable of finding the particular prism through which the influence of the environment on the child is refracted, i.e. *it ought to be able to find the relationship which exists between the child and its environment, the child's...perezhivanie*, in other words how a child becomes aware of, interprets, and emotionally relates to a certain event. This is such a prism which determines the role and influence of the environment on the development of...the child's character, his psychological development, etc. (Vygotsky 1994, p. 341)

He concludes the explanation of the example by a general statement, which returns us back to the concept of the social environment as a source of development.

...the influence of environment on child development will, along with other types of influences, have to be assessed by taking the degree of understanding, awareness and insight of what is going on in the environment into account (Vygotsky 1994, p. 343).

The environment exerts this influence... via the child's perezhivaniya, i.e. depending on how the child has managed to work out his inner attitude to the various aspects of the different situations occurring in the environment. The environment determines the type of development depending on the degree of awareness of this environment which the child has managed to reach (Ibid, p. 346).

3.2.3 Social Environment and Perezhivanie: Relations and Unresolved Problems

Vygotsky's example of perezhivanie allows to take a step forward in understanding the concept of the social environment as a source of mental development as it was developed in cultural-historical theory.

¹⁶In the Russian original text «у троих детей возникло три разных переживания одной и той же ситуации» (three different perezhivanie of the same situation appeared in three children) (Vygotsky 2001, p. 74–75).

¹⁷Paedology was the complex scientific discipline of child development, which existed in the Soviet Union from the 1920s to the mid 1930s and was banned by a Communist Party Decree in 1936. Vygotsky was one of the founders of paedology (for details see Schneuwly 1994 and Langford 2005).

First, the above example shows that perezkhivanie is seen neither as a separate single psychological process, nor as function or a state of consciousness. Perekhivanie is not only an emotional experience, although it includes emotional components. As Vygotsky puts it, in perezkhivanie there is an indivisible unity of personality and the social environment (personal characteristics and environmental characteristics) on the one hand, and the complex unity of different psychological processes including emotions, understanding, awareness, insights, thinking, memory, attitudes, addictions, inner conflicts, and even dread and fear, etc., on the other hand.

Second, in cultural-historical theory, perezkhivanie is viewed not as an empirical fact about a given moment in time; it is understood from a *developmental*¹⁸ perspective. Describing this example on three pages of his paper, Vygotsky many times uses and repeats words and expressions like “child development,” “the psychological development of children,” “future course of his development,” “picture of disrupted development,” “the entire course of his development underwent a striking change,” “...whose course of normal development was severely disrupted,” “the situation exerted on their development,” “an influence of the environment on the course of development” and so on.

Third, perezkhivanie “is a prism through which the influence of the environment on child development is refracted” and this is not a pure metaphor. What is important is that perezkhivanie is a tool (concept) for analysing 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 perezkhivanie of the environment (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294). This approach enlarges the cultural-historical understanding of development as it challenges the principle of reflection and introduces the principle of refraction. 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 perezkhivanie of the individual (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294).

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 perezkhivanie of the individual achieve developmental significance (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294).

This principle shows how the same social environment affects the unique developmental trajectories of different individuals. The example of the three children shows that the same social environment, being differently refracted through the perezkhivanie of the three different children, brought about three different developmental outcomes and individual developmental trajectories. In a certain sense, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the social environment as a source of

¹⁸By developmental perspective I mean a sociocultural genesis of human mind, the process of “how the social becomes the individual” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198).

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.

To state a certain, general, formal position it would be correct to say that the environment determines the development of the child through experience¹⁹ of the environment;... the child is a part of the social situation, and the relation of the child to the environment and the environment to the child occurs through experience²⁰.. of the child himself; the forces of the environment acquire a controlling significance because the child experiences²¹ them (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294).

So, without the concept of *perezhivanie* it is hardly possible to understand the psychological content of the concepts of “social situation of development” and “the interaction between ideal and present forms”. Only by being taken together can these *three* concepts create the complete psychological content of the idea of the social environment as a source of mental development in its wholeness.

On the other hand, identifying the place and the theoretical content of the concept of *perezhivanie* (P2) and the principle of refraction in relation to these two fundamental concepts creates two more theoretical and methodological challenges.

The *first* challenge is related to interactions of ideal and present forms and looks as a contradiction. On one hand, as I discussed earlier, the interaction between the ideal and present forms is defined as a distinguishing feature and “the greatest peculiarity of child development” (Vygotsky 2001, p. 113). On the other hand, it contradicts to the definition of interaction of the ideal and present forms as “the very essence of cultural development” (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 99). No features of a certain process, even distinguishing ones cannot be considered as its essence.

The *second* theoretical challenge is related to the concept of social situation of development. Social situation of development is a system of unique and dynamic relationship of a child and her social environment, which occurs through *perezhivanie*. This means that social situation of development exists as a unique and dynamic unity of child's individual characteristics and various aspects of social environment. Yet, what is the psychological content of this unity? Are there any ways to study this unity and are there any tools of analysis of the structure and dynamics of this unity? In the following two sections of this chapter I will try to present my arguments and discuss possible ways of improving the theoretical content of the concept of *perezhivanie* so as to resolve these two challenges.

¹⁹“Переживание” is used in Russian original (Vygotsky 2001, p. 214).

²⁰The same, «переживание» in Russian original (Ibid).

²¹«Переживает» in Russian original text (Ibid).

3.3 Perekhivanie and General Genetic Law of Cultural Development

Is the interaction of ideal and present form a distinguishing feature of the cultural development of a child or is it a very essence of cultural development? It seems that in order to find the answer we need to “zoom out” the focus of our theoretical lens and take a look at the general genetic law of cultural development and how this law is related to the concept of perekhivanie.

The general genetic law of the cultural development of higher functions is the basic and fundamental law in cultural-historical theory. However, there is something which I hope can bring a new perspective to this topic.²²

3.3.1 General Genetic Law, Drama and Perekhivanie

General genetic law of cultural development says:

“...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 people as an intermental category, then within the child as an intramental category...Genetically, social relations, real relations of people, stand behind all the higher mental functions and their relations (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 106)

According to this law, every function appears firstly on the social plane, among people. However, social relations are not the “area,” not the field, and not the “level” where mental functions appear. The social relations *themselves* become the individual functions:

“...every higher mental function was external because it was social before it became an internal strictly mental function; it was formerly a social relation between two people (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 106)

However, if *every* higher mental function was a social relation between people, does it mean that *every* social relation becomes a mental function? The answer in cultural-historical theory is no. Cultural-historical theory has a clear notion of what specific types of social relations can become a mental function. In a word, these are “dramatic” social relations. I am referring to the term “category.”²³

In Russian, the term «категория» has different meanings. One of them is a synonym of “rank.” For example, in 1924, when Vygotsky moved to Moscow and started his scientific career, his first official position at Moscow State Institute of Experimental psychology was “the scientific worker of second category”

²²I undertook detailed analysis of the formulation of the general genetic law in my previous publications (Veresov 2004, 2005, 2010, 2014), so here I just repeat it in brief with the main emphasis on what is necessary for the topic of this Chapter.

²³Категория (Vygotsky 1983, p. 145).

(Vygodskaja and Lifanova 1999, p. 58²⁴). Another possible meaning of категория originates from Hegel's philosophy and refers to the notion of "the concept". For example, in *Thinking and Speech*, Vygotsky uses the word "categorical thinking" as a synonym of "thinking with concepts" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 84–88).

Which of these two meanings is valid referring to the formulation of the general genetic law of development in Vygotsky's theory? The best way is to try to find an answer in Vygotsky's texts. The first quotation refers to the requirement of experimental research of psychological processes:

Processes must be analyzed, 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 1997b, p. 70).

The key words here are "the true relation". Yet, what does it mean to disclose the "true relation," and what kind of relation is this "true relation"?

Genetically, social relations, real relations of people, stand behind all the higher functions... From this, one of the basic principles...is the principle of division of functions among people, the division into two of what is now merged into one, the experimental unfolding of a higher mental process into the drama that occurs among people (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 106).

In the *Concrete Human psychology* written in 1929 (Vygotsky 1989) this is given in a specified way:

Renewed division into two of what had been fused in one (Cf. modern labor), the experimental unfolding of a higher process...into a small drama (p. 59).

This is followed by a general conclusion

...the basic principle of the functioning of higher functions... is social, entailing interaction of functions, in place of interaction between people. They can be most fully developed in the form of *drama* (Ibid).

Thus, for Vygotsky, "drama which occurs among people" is "an inter-mental (social) plane of higher mental functions." Inter-mental social relation is not an ordinary social relation between the two individuals. This is a social relation that appears as a social collision, the contradiction between two people, a dramatic event, a drama between two individuals. Being emotionally and mentally experienced as social drama (on the social plane) it later becomes the individual intra-psychological category (on the psychological plane). Aspects of the relations between inter-and intra- psychological functions as discussed here, are also presented in Fleer and Fleer and March (March and Fleer, this Volume), but in the context of emotions and emotion regulation. The inter-mental "category," i.e. an emotionally experienced collision might bring radical changes to the individual's mind, and therefore it is a sort of act of development of mental functions—the individual becomes different, he rises higher and above his own behaviour. Without internal drama, an intra-mental category, such kinds of mental changes are hardly possible. So, the term "drama" is a

²⁴In Russian «научный работник второй категории».

key word here. The second key word is *perezhivanie*. As there is no dramatic collision without such critical perezhivanie, there is no development without *perezhivanie*. Drama (social collision) and perezhivanie are essential for understanding how the general genetic law of development works, how the social becomes the individual.

Coming back to Vygotsky's example with the three children and their mother, we can see that the concept of dramatic event is very important: in the same social situation, three children had three different perezhivanie and therefore experienced three different dramas. This means that the initial inter-mental forms of their relations were essentially different in the same social situation. Consequently, because the initial inter-mental forms were different, the children's social situations of development and their individual developmental trajectories became different.

So, according to the general genetic law of cultural development, every higher mental function appears twice—first it appears as a social relation in the form of experienced *external* dramatic collision. Therefore, perezhivanie is not only a kind of prism which refracts the interaction of the ideal and present form. The concept of perezhivanie determines the very essence of such an interaction. Perezhivanie is the personal way of experiencing a dramatic event (inter-mental category). It is a form in which this dramatic event is experienced (refracted) by an individual.

So, the theoretical content of the concept of perezhivanie (P2) would remain incomplete without “zooming out” and identifying its relations with the general genetic law of cultural development. And vice versa, the content of the general genetic law remain unclear without a link to the concept of perezhivanie. I believe such “zooming out” resolves *the first* theoretical challenge. Yes, interaction of ideal and present forms is a distinguishing feature of human cultural development. However, the collision, the dramatic confrontation of these two forms refracted through critical perezhivanie is the very essence of the process of cultural development.

The very essence of cultural development consists in a confrontation of developed cultural forms of behavior which confront the child and primitive forms that characterize his own behavior. (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 99)

Interaction not always happens in a form of collision and confrontation, but dramatic collisions and confrontations are dialectical contradictions, which are moving forces of a process of development. Dialectical contradictions are a very essence of development; dialectical contradictions of inter-mental and intra-mental planes are the very essence of a child cultural development. The concept of perezhivanie is a tool to discover the dialectical process of how inter-mental becomes intra-mental, how the “social becomes the individual” (Veresov 2016b).

3.4 Perezhivanie as a Unit of Analysis

In this section of the chapter I will present my arguments in response to the second theoretical challenge related to rethinking of the theoretical content of the concept of *perezhivanie*. As I said earlier, rethinking the content of P2 in relation to the social as a source of development generates a question: Social situation of development is a system of unique and dynamic relationship of a child and her social environment, which occurs through *perezhivanie*. This means that social situation of development exists as a unique and dynamic unity of child's individual characteristics and various aspects of social environment. Yet, what is the psychological content of this unity? Are there any ways to study this unity and are there any tools of analysis of the structure and dynamics of this unity? I believe we can find the answer if we take a look on the idea of the units of analysis as it is developed in cultural-historical theory.

3.4.1 Unity and Unit: Analysis by Units

Before coming to this point, it is necessary to explain the difference between three terms, namely “unity,” “unit,” and “element”.

There are two terms in Russian—единство (unity) and единица (unit). The first, единство [edinstvo] (unity), is used when we speak about a complex whole, a complex system consisting of a number of parts, components, elements etc.²⁵ One of the meanings of the second term, единица [edinita] (unit), is a part, a component, or an element of a certain complex whole. In other words, “unity” (единство) is used in relation to the whole, whereas “unit” is often related to the parts of the whole. If we put it in general way, we could say that a certain system (the complex whole) in its unity (единство) consists of certain units (единица).

Very often all these terms—parts, components, units, elements—are used as synonyms. However, Vygotsky clearly distinguished two main types of analysis in psychology which underlie two main approaches to the investigation of mental formations (Vygotsky 1987). The first of these approaches is the decomposition of the complex mental whole into its elements. This type of analysis can be compared with a chemical analysis of water in which water is decomposed into hydrogen and oxygen. The essential feature of this form of analysis is that its products are of a different nature than the whole from which they were derived. The elements lack the characteristics inherent in the whole and they possess properties that it does not possess (Vygotsky 1987, p. 45).

When the researchers approaches development of a complex whole by decomposing of the whole into elements, he

²⁵For example in Russian “consciousness is a unity of affect and intellect” is “сознание есть единство аффекта и интеллекта”.

...adopts the strategy of the man who resorts to the decomposition of water into hydrogen and oxygen in his search for a scientific explanation of the characteristics of water, its capacity to extinguish fire or its conformity to Archimedes law for example. This man will discover, to his chagrin, that hydrogen burns and oxygen sustains combustion. He will never succeed in explaining the characteristics of the whole by analyzing the characteristics of its elements (Vygotsky 1987, p. 45).

Vygotsky explains that a psychology that decomposes the complex mental whole into its elements in an attempt to explain its characteristics will search in vain for the unity that is characteristic of the whole. These characteristics are inherent in the phenomenon only as a unified whole. “When the whole is analyzed into its elements, these characteristics evaporate. In his attempt to reconstruct these characteristics, the investigator is left with no alternative but to search for external, mechanical forms of interaction between the elements” (Vygotsky 1987, p. 45).

An entirely different form of analysis is the partitioning of the complex whole into *units*.

In contrast to the element, *the unit* (1) possesses all the basic characteristics of the whole, and (2) is a “vital and further indivisible part of the whole” (Vygotsky 1982, p. 16).²⁶

The key to the explanation of the characteristics of water lies not in the investigation of its chemical formula but in the investigation of its molecule and its molecular movements. In precisely the same sense, the living cell is the real unit of biological analysis because it preserves the basic characteristics of life that are inherent in the living organism (Vygotsky 1987, p. 46).

What does this mean for psychology and psychological analysis? The conclusion Vygotsky drew is that a psychology concerned with the study of the *complex whole* must comprehend the necessity of analysis by units and not elements. In other words, psychology must identify those units in which the characteristics of the whole are present (Vygotsky 1987, p. 47).

3.4.2 *Perezhivanie a Unit of Personal and Environmental Characteristics*

Let us take a look at two quotations from Vygotsky’s key works related to *perezhivanie*.

The first quotation is from *The Problem of Environment*:

Perezhivanie is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced—*perezhivanie* is always related to something which is found outside the person—and on the other hand, what is represented is

²⁶Here Vygotsky’s words “далее неразложимыми живыми частями этого единства” (further indivisible part of the whole) were mistakenly translated as “irreducible part of the whole” (Vygotsky 1987, p. 46).

how I, myself, am experiencing this, i.e., all the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristics are represented in perezhivanie.... So, in perezhivanie we are always dealing with an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics, which are represented in the perezhivanie (Vygotksy 1994, p. 342).

At first glance, it looks controversial as perezhivanie is presented as a unit (in the first sentence) and as a unity (in the last sentence). However, there is no contradiction here. In a molecule of water we deal with an indivisible unity of oxygen and hydrogen. This makes a molecule of water a unit of analysis of the whole unity (water). The living cell is a unit of biological analysis as in this unit we are dealing with a unity of the living organism. In line with this, perezhivanie is not the unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics; it is a unit, a “vital and further indivisible part of the whole” unity of personal and situational characteristics, which retains all its basic features and qualities. Perezhivanie itself is not the unity, but in perezhivanie we are dealing with an indivisible unity of personal and situational characteristics like in a molecule of water we deal with the unity of oxygen and hydrogen (water).

The second quotation is from *The Crisis at Age Seven*. The English text shows perezhivanie as a unity of environment and personality (Vygotksy 1998, p. 294). However, comparison with the Russian original text (Vygotksy 1984, p. 382) which I give in parallel, shows a radically different picture (Table 3.1).

So, there is nowhere that Vygotksy speaks about perezhivanie as a unity of personal and situational characteristics; perezhivanie is presented not as a unity (единство), but as a unit (единица) of the personality and the environment, as an internal relation to reality.

Table 3.1 Parallel translation 1

Vygotksy (1998), Vol. 5, p. 294	Vygotksy (1984), Vol. 4, p. 382 ^a
A <i>unity</i> can be noted in the study of personality and environment. This <i>unity</i> in psychopathology and psychology has been called <i>experience</i> . The child's <i>experience</i> is also this kind of very simple <i>unity</i> about which we must not say that in itself it represents the influence of the environment on the child or the individuality of the child himself; <i>experience</i> is the <i>unity</i> of the personality and the environment as it is represented in development. Thus, in development, the unity of environmental and personality factors <i>is achieved</i> in a series of <i>experiences</i> of the child. <i>Experience</i> must be understood as the <i>external</i> relation of the child as a person to one factor or another of reality	A <i>unit</i> can be noted in the study of personality and environment. This <i>unit</i> in psychopathology and psychology has been called <i>perezhivanie</i> . The child's <i>perezhivanie</i> is also this kind of very simple <i>unit</i> about which we must not say that in itself it represents the influence of the environment on the child or the individuality of the child himself; <i>perezhivanie</i> is the <i>unit</i> of the personality and the environment as it is represented in development. Thus, in development, the unity of environmental and personality factors <i>happens</i> in a series of <i>perezhivanie</i> of the child. <i>Perezhivanie</i> must be understood as the <i>internal</i> relation of the child as a person to one factor or another of reality

^aMy translation from Russian

3.4.3 *Perekhivanie a Unit of Human Consciousness*

Perekhivanie was introduced by Vygotsky as a unit of human consciousness.

In Table 3.2, the English text does not say anything about perekhivanie as a unit of human consciousness, it positions perekhivanie as a unity and therefore the difference between “unity,” “unit,” and “element” disappears. The Russian original text provides us with much better opportunity for understanding. Thus, (1) consciousness is a unity and perekhivanie is a unit of consciousness; (2) attention and thinking are not units since the basic properties of consciousness are not given, they are elements of consciousness whereas perekhivanie is a dynamic unit of consciousness.

Given that perekhivanie is a unit of the environmental and personal characteristics as the first quotation shows (let us call it Unit1) and it is a unit of human consciousness, which comes from the second quote (Unit2), could we conclude that in Vygotsky’s understanding consciousness and the unity of environmental and personal characteristics is the same? Or to put it another way, is human consciousness and the unity of environmental and personal characteristics one and the same complex living whole? And, if not, how is it possible that perekhivanie is a unit of analysis of both?

We do not have any evidence in Vygotsky’s published texts on the similarity between the two. Yet, there is a difference. It seems the way to recognise the difference is to apply a developmental approach which means to look at a concept as a result of generalisation. “At any stage of its development, the concept is an act

Table 3.2 Parallel translation 2

Vygotsky (1998), p. 294	Vygotsky (1984), p. 382 ^a
All <i>experience</i> is always <i>experience</i> of something. There is no <i>experience</i> that would not be <i>experience</i> of something just as there is no act of consciousness that would not be an act of being conscious of something. But every <i>experience</i> is my <i>experience</i> . In modern theory, <i>experience</i> is introduced as a <i>unity</i> of consciousness, that is, a <i>unity</i> in which the basic properties of consciousness are given as such, while in attention and in thinking, the connection of consciousness is not given. Attention is not a <i>unity</i> of consciousness, but is an element of consciousness in which there is no series of other elements, while the unity of consciousness as such disappears, and experience is the <i>actual dynamics of the unity of consciousness</i> , that is, the whole which comprises consciousness	Every <i>perekhivanie</i> is always a <i>perekhivanie</i> of something. There is no <i>perekhivanie</i> that would not be a <i>perekhivanie</i> of something just as there is no act of consciousness that would not be an act of being conscious of something. But every <i>perekhivanie</i> is my <i>perekhivanie</i> . In modern theory, <i>perekhivanie</i> is introduced as a <i>unit</i> of consciousness, that is, a <i>unit</i> in which the basic properties of consciousness are given as such, while in attention and in thinking, the connection of consciousness is not given. Attention is not a <i>unit</i> of consciousness, but is an element of consciousness in which there is no series of other elements, while the unity of consciousness as such disappears, and <i>perekhivanie</i> is the <i>actual dynamic unit of consciousness</i> , that is, the consciousness consists of <i>perekhivanie</i>

^aMy translation from Russian original

of generalization” (Vygotsky 1987, p. 169). In other words, concepts are the result of generalising, or better to say, conceptualising a certain reality. A concept has its theoretical content; however, conceptualisation never happens in empty space, on nothing. What we conceptualise is not less important than how we conceptualise. This moves us back to P1.

As we do have two meanings of P1—(1) *perezhivanie* as an act, a process of experiencing and (2) *perezhivanie* as the content, as what is experienced, we might presume that Unit1 is a result of conceptualisation of P1.1 and Unit2 is a result of conceptualisation of P1.2. This difference, the difference between P1.1 and P1.2, might be illustrated by an analogy of thinking—*how* we think (the process of thinking) is not the same as *what* we think (the content, thoughts). From here Unit1 is related to the process of experiencing and therefore is a unit of analysis of the unity of environmental and personal characteristics. Unit2 is a result of conceptualisation of *perezhivanie* as the content of what happens in individual consciousness and this makes it a unit of consciousness (Veresov and Fleer 2016, p. 9).

3.5 Back to *Perezhivanie* as P2; Bringing It All Together

The aim of this chapter is to initiate a further discussion on the theoretical content and context of the concept of *perezhivanie* as a possible (and I think, necessary) step forward in the transformation of a tantalising notion into a concept with clear meaning (Smagorinsky 2011, p. 339). In doing this we have to make an important distinction between the two meanings of *perezhivanie* presented in Vygotsky’s original texts—*perezhivanie* as a *psychological phenomena/process* which can be empirically observed and studied (P1) and *perezhivanie* as a *concept, a theoretical tool* for analysis of the process of development (P2). I think, this distinction is an important step forward in developing the generative understanding of the concept of *perezhivanie* within the cultural-historical theoretical framework.

This chapter is an attempt to disclose the theoretical content of *perezhivanie* as a concept (P2) in two main directions: (1) how is this concept related to the process of cultural development, and (2) what is the place of this concept in the system of other concepts and principles of cultural-historical theory. In other words, the aim of this chapter is to unpack Vygotsky’s words that “*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).

The concept of *perezhivanie* is a powerful theoretical tool for researching the role of environment in mental development which allows us to understand the social environment as a *source* of development. It clarifies and enriches the theoretical content of social environment as a source of development stating that only those components of the social environment that are refracted through the *perezhivanie* of the individual achieve developmental significance. Hence, the concept of *perezhivanie* introduces the principle of refraction in contrast to the classical

principle of reflection. This new and revolutionary principle allows us to clarify the content of two other concepts—“the social situation of development” and “interaction of ideal and present forms” . The social situation of development is a unique relation of the child to the environment, but what makes it unique is that the relation of the child to the environment and the environment to the child occurs through perezhivanie. This makes perezhivanie an important and decisive component of the social situation of development.

Development is a dialectical, complex and contradictory process of quantitative and qualitative changes. In relation to human development, in Vygotsky’s words, higher mental functions “can be most fully developed in the form of drama” (Vygotsky 1989, p. 59). The general genetic law of cultural development emphasises the place and role of social (inter-psychological) drama as a first form of existence of higher mental functions (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 106). The social becomes the individual, but the transformation of inter-mental to intra-mental is not a linear process, it is not a direct transition because it happens through perezhivanie. Therefore, perezhivanie is not only a kind of prism which refracts the interaction of the ideal and present form. The concept of perezhivanie determines the very essence of such an interaction. Perezhivanie is the personal way of experiencing a dramatic event (inter-mental category). It is the form in which this dramatic event is refracted and experienced by an individual. The unique organisation and hierarchy of higher mental functions is the result of the unique dramatic inter-psychological collisions that have happened in the life of the human being and of the process of that human being overcoming them, the intra-psychological result of the individual’s unique developmental trajectory. In overcoming social dramatic collisions (the dramas of life) a human being creates his/her unique architecture of personality. There is no development without drama, there is no drama without perezhivanie. Rethinking the theoretical content of the concept of perezhivanie might open a new direction in developing psychology in terms of drama (Vygotsky 1989, p. 71).

Perezhivanie is neither a unity of individual and environmental characteristics, nor a unity of human consciousness. First, it is a unit, a “vital and further indivisible part of the whole” unity of personal and situational characteristics, which retains all its basic features and qualities. Perezhivanie itself is not the unity, but *in perezhivanie* we are dealing with an indivisible unity of personal and situational characteristics like *in a molecule of water* we deal with the unity of oxygen and hydrogen (water). This understanding of perezhivanie as a unit is a result of conceptualising perezhivanie a process of experiencing (P1.1). Second, perezhivanie as a dynamic unit of consciousness is a result of the theoretical conceptualisation of perezhivanie as content (P1.2).

In the late 1920s, Vygotsky wrote:

Theoretically, psychology has long since rejected the idea that development of the child is a purely quantitative process. All agree that here we have a process that is much more complex, a process not exhausted by quantitative changes alone. But in practice, psychology is confronted with having to disclose this complex process of development in all its real completeness and to detect all those qualitative changes and transformations that refashion child behavior (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 98).

In my opinion, rethinking the theoretical content of the concept of perezhivanie constitutes a step forward in fixing the gap. Theoretical contribution of this chapter could be expressed in the following brief summary:

Perezhivanie is a powerful concept allowing us to study development in its dialectical complexity.

There is a dialectics in the process of sociocultural genesis of human mind—the dialectics of evolutionary and revolutionary aspects. Perezhivanie is a prism which refracts influences of social environment on child’s development through interactions of ideal and present forms. However, this general statement needs further theoretical improvements. There is a special form of perezhivanie (we can call it a critical or dramatic perezhivanie) as a refraction of a dramatic collision which appears as a confrontation, a contradiction of an ideal and present form. Being refracted by critical perezhivanie it might bring qualitative changes to child’s mental functions and therefore might bring changes to how the child becomes aware, interprets and relates to sociocultural environment. This in turn, reorganises the whole social situation of development. Social dramatic events, collisions refracted through critical perezhivanie produce qualitative changes and “turning points” in child’s individual developmental trajectories. In this sense, the concept of critical perezhivanie is an analytical tool which unfolds the dialectics evolutionary and revolutionary aspects of development as well as dialectics of the social and the individual (Veresov 2016a, 2016b).

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Chapter 4

Perezhivanie and Child Development: Theorising Research in Early Childhood

Marie Hammer

Abstract This chapter will extend on the theoretical perspective of the previous chapter and will explore the connection between perezhivanie and children's development, in particular the development of social competence. The cultural context of social competence is critical to children's successful engagement with their world and this is explored in the context of early childhood educational settings as pivotal to the development of personality. This is a cryptic concept for early childhood teachers, although the emphasis on social skills and development are often emphasised as the key plank of early year's education.

Vygotsky (1994) wrote "...The emotional experience [perezhivanie] arising from any situation or from any aspect of environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child". Therefore, it is not any of the factors in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of perezhivanie (Vygotsky 1994, p. 342). Hence, this chapter is designed to frame the theoretical into the application for early childhood educators and will draw on current research that explores the diverse elements of emotion and social competence through the environment and the interpersonal relationships of early childhood education settings.

In the previous chapter Veresov draws our attention to Vygotsky's statement about the use of the concept of perezhivanie as "a tool for analyzing the influence of the sociocultural environment not on the individual per se, but on the process of development of the individual through the individual's perezhivanie of the environment" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 294). It is this application of the concept as a tool that takes us to the essence of the work of teachers in synthesising the development and the social situation of the child to engage in meaningful learning. To achieve this it is necessary for teachers to understand the many dimensions of perezhivanie that go

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beyond the emotional experience and incorporate a range of psychological functions such as memory, thinking, imagination and sense of self.

In rethinking the child's *perezhivanie* as a theoretical concept from the teacher's point of view, it can be seen as a prism that refracts every social interaction and influence. Every influence of the teacher is not a direct influence on the child because it is refracted through the child's *perezhivanie*, even though the child is seen to be following the teacher's directions in learning, the child engages in the learning tasks in his/her own way. As every child is unique, the learning is refracted through their own experiences and perspectives of the world.

The notion of child focused learning, and developing the curriculum based on the child's interest is in fact a manifestation of both the child's and the teacher's own *perezhivanie* that is not of itself observable. Whilst it is possible to observe a child's emotional response to a critical event this may give a glimpse of the child's dramatic *perezhivanie*, the dramatic events indicate the turning point in the child's development through which *perezhivanie* can change what the child learns.

For example in their study on children's literacy development, MacKenzie and Veresov (2013) describe an instance where a class of 5-year-old children travelled to a nearby church by bus. On their return from the visit the children were asked to draw the story of their outing. One child drew a quite detailed picture of the church they had visited, stating: "We went to the church on a bus". Another child drew a detailed picture of the bus, stating: "We went on a bus to the church".

Although both children shared the same experience it was their *perezhivanie* that foregrounds their specific interest and the learning they drew from the experience, that is their emotions, memories and the thinking they bring to the experience enables the child to interpret their experience in the framework of their own social situation. The child refracts the environment and the experience, although the teacher is unable to observe all of these elements but it is the refraction rather than a reflection that is most significant. This is best described by Veresov and Fleer (in press, 2016) where Vygotsky's metaphor of a prism is further refined to note that the influences on the child are refracted through the prism to show the movement or processes of the experience. Such a notion challenges the concepts of documenting only what the outcomes are of the experience, but to focus on the actual experience as it occurs.

This gives rise to a new vision of a sociocultural model in education, enmeshed with the social competence of the children as active players in their understanding of the learning environment.

4.1 The Need for New Understandings of Social Competence

The notion of social competence brings with it the sense of belonging or fitting into the social situation of the child. Very often the children who do not easily fit in are regarded as difficult or naughty and are reprimanded and often excluded from the

social situation, the exact opposite of the sort of social situation of development that these children need to develop.

In Vygotsky's original writings he talks about the idea of 'child primitives' to discuss his concept of the cultural development of the child. Translated at a particular period in time, this now politically incorrect term captures some important ideas that are foundational for reconceptualising social competence from the individual to the collective construct. What Vygotsky was talking about at the time were the consequences of cultural deprivation and emotional neglect. At the time of his work, he was writing after the revolution when there were a lot of homeless children and 'street kids' wandering around, unattached, disengaged, without family or other structures.

I permit myself to explain this in relation to cultural development. Both cultural development and practical development are connected with the use of cultural means of thinking, in particular verbal thinking. In recent times psychologists have discerned a form of child thought which sheds light on the problem of cultural development; this is *child primitiveness*, where the degree of cultural development is minimal. (Vygotsky 1993, p. 147)

It is useful to commence this discussion from the perspective of 'child primitives' or vulnerable children, as we refer to these children today, as it is similar to looking at a photographic negative that allows us to see the points of difference in the development of social competence. That is, we can see more clearly what is not there and bring into sharp relief the essential elements of cultural development that are critical parts of social competence and participation. In particular we are alerted to a disconnect that occurs for these children due to sociocultural deprivation which may on the surface appear to be a form of learning disability (Gindis 2006). The inability of these vulnerable children to use appropriate tools such as cognitive language and social tools often results in these children being positioned as 'naughty' and removed from the social situation, further exacerbating the disconnect and reducing any benefit from participating in social educational environments.

Functional cases of behavioral deviation from normal development must be regarded as problem children in the strict sense of the word. The nature of such cases consists for the most part of a *psychological conflict* between the child and his environment. (Vygotsky 1993, p. 175)

In his discussions around difficult children Vygotsky emphasises the role of development as the 'key to understanding disintegration' and that disintegration is also 'the key to understanding development' (Vygotsky 1993). Through this dialectic we are returned to the notion of 'primitive reactions' as simple revelations of a range of reactions. Vygotsky suggests that these reactions avoid the entity of personality indicating that these are a form of the individual's personal responses and coping mechanisms borne from the child's earlier experiences. This is exhibited in the example Vygotsky cites of the girl of Tartar origin who, when asked if all children at a school can write and draw well, responds that she is unable to know what she cannot see. (ibid). Vygotsky refers to this as 'the underdeveloped personality'. He concludes that this is because a lack of mastery of 'cultural reasoning'. The child is limited to thinking in tangible terms, that is only what she can see.

In this context, perezhivanie as a tool provides the necessary insight for teachers to connect to the child’s cultural context and to provide learning programmes that extend and enhance the child’s ‘cultural reasoning’.

Therefore, it has become evident that a new model of social competence is needed. In the following section a model showing the relations between individual and collective development of social competence is presented in the hope that perezhivanie can be more clearly ascertained as part of the developmental process.

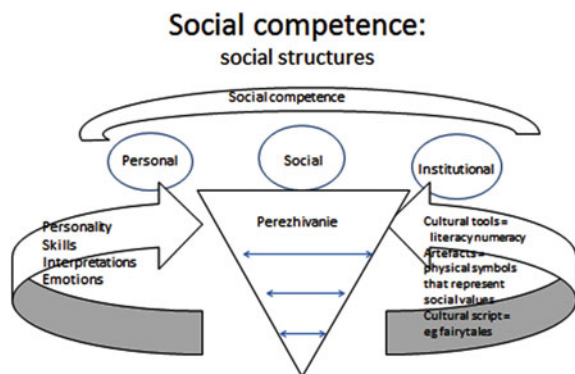
4.2 A New Conception of Social Competence

The metaphysical poet, John Donne, famously wrote: “no man is an island entire of itself”. This strong notion of connectedness is pivotal to the consideration of social competence. Hedegaard (2011) in her introduction to the CHADOC <https://www.iscar.org/organisation/sections/thematic-sections/> seminar held recently in association with the International ISCAR Congress in Sydney,

Developmental psychology has often been characterised historically as the study of ‘the general child’, with a focus on developing a model that can be used to evaluate individual children and their changing relations to society as they grow up. Childhood studies have focused on the study of children anchored in historical times and settings. ... Cultural-Historical approaches seek to unite the general principles in relation to time and place. (Hedergaard 2011)

Hedegaard’s statement aligns the view of children with a notion of social competence as a package rather than a deconstruction of their individual skill elements or component parts. In other words, the child is an intact and complete member of the social group—not as has become the trend a ‘future’ member of the society or worse still a cultural investment of the future. She focuses on the idea of the generalised perception of children as a historical or traditional approach and seeks to unite those general principles in relation to time and place. In repositioning the child as a social being and the learning environment as a social situation it is

Fig. 4.1 Elements of Social Competence



possible for teachers to redefine their role as supporting social competence of children where skills and tools are utilised as part of the social process, to successfully negotiate the structure of the society in which children live (Fig. 4.1).

In unpacking the idea of social competence it is useful to draw from Dewey, and his thinking about what is the purpose of education is it knowledge and understanding, the preservation of the status quo? However, understanding and knowledge of what? It is about being part of the overall social structure to which we belong, being able to participate using a whole collection of skills that are needed. In particular, the manner in which we think about ourselves, how we use tools and skills, personal skills, think about relationships, how to regulate emotions, but also literacy and numeracy.

A useful working definition of social competence is the capacity to be able to successfully negotiate the structure of society, such negotiation includes skills such as:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Interpersonal skills
- Empathy
- Emotional self-regulation

Further, these elements underpin Vygotsky's view of personality and help to deconstruct the working parts of social competence which come together in unique and individual forms through perezhivanie

Character is the social imprint on personality. It is the hardened, crystallized, typical behavior of personality; it is the struggle for social position. It is a secession from the primary line, the leading line of development, the unconscious plan of life, from the integral of development of all psychological acts and functions. (Vygotsky 1993, p. 156)

This then is my challenge to educators to bring into position life skills to support the daily programme. We need the skills to function effectively, not indeed just in themselves but in the social situations that bring relevance and meaning to the skill set. Also we need social competence as an overarching goal and purpose of education and there are many underpinning components that I am trying to find, such as the notion of the sense of self, images of ourselves (see Fig. 4.2). Gonzalez-Rey tells us the concept of personal sense is a new pathway that needs to be developed. He says it is an interesting psychological concept but through the emphasis on the process it is a valuable and flexible concept. It is here that the importance of perezhivanie as a conceptual tool for teachers is the key to reframing the learning experience (Gonzalez-Rey 2011).

The second element of the model is the social as the pivotal element of social competence. Again, these contribute to that notion of personal sense, the social condition embodies the notion of personal sense. So how do children indicate this, how do they find it with others and how do they regulate their behaviour. Hedegaard (2011) reminded us that Vygotsky pursued the wholeness approach to the development of child and his concept of the child's social situation of

Fig. 4.2 Personal aspect of social competence

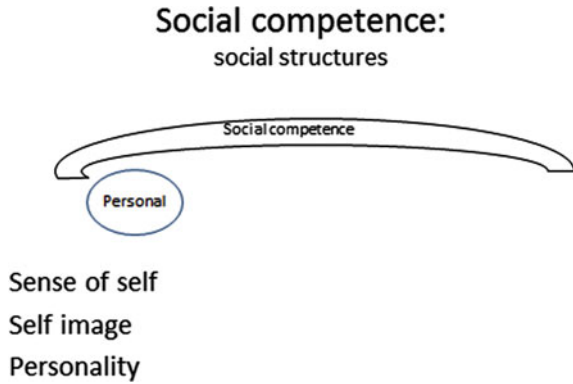


Fig. 4.3 Interpersonal aspect of social competence

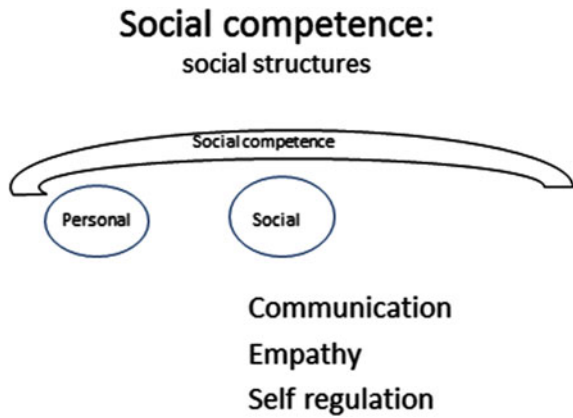
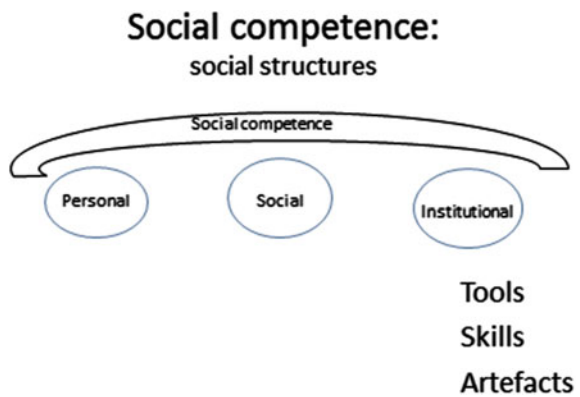


Fig. 4.4 Institutional aspect of social competence



development was a critical component. The social construction and the social development is a critical concept in all these. This goes to the important skills of communication in all its forms and the capacity to read the communications of others, it highlights the two-way interaction of social encounters (Fig. 4.3).

This is also the most challenging task for teachers to create the space and opportunity for children to engage in meaningful and purposeful activities within a social milieu and this connects with the third element of the model—the institutional. Again, I look to Hedegaard's work to understand the role of the institution in helping child to confirm the everyday. This goes beyond the understanding of culture in its broadest sense to consider tools, or context that includes the activity settings within the institutional practices. Thus the idea of providing the mediating tools/skills in the context of the social is the key role of the teacher (Fig. 4.4).

Hedegaard and Chaiklin (2005) give us an inkling to the role of the institution in conforming the everyday to the social structures; they extend the ideas of Vygotsky and Brofrennbrenner beyond an understanding of culture as meaning mediating tools or as context, to include activity settings within institutional practices.

Children through their motivated activities in different settings in institutional practices acquire culture through competencies with tools but also as values and motives for activities. The personal aspect of knowledge, the everyday concepts, is located in the life setting of a person (sense of self). These personal concepts are the foundation for the child's appropriation of specific syllabus concepts that qualify the child's personal concept so they can function as theoretical concepts. However, subject matter concepts are not universal, they are related to curriculum traditions for example (Hedegaard and Chaiklin 2005). This can also be applied to the practices of other institutions such as religious observances, sporting clubs, etc.

Teachers' sensitivity has been shown to bridge the gap between the cultural practices across institutions, and where an absence of cultural mediation has been noted. It is through children's activities within the institutional settings found in particular communities that children are supported by teachers to develop cultural competence and learn to use the cultural tools of their communities. Through their participation in valued activities found in institutions, such as schools and pre-schools, children develop the values and motives of their communities. For example, personal meaning of everyday knowledge supports the development of everyday concepts (Vygotsky 1994) and this should be dialectically related to valued abstract or school-based concepts. Hedegaard reminds us also that within the syllabus, the subject silos and content concepts of the institutions are not universal, they are related to particular traditions of curriculum. For example, the personal concepts of the child are the basis for the child to function and develop theoretical concepts, which are in some ways met by the specific topics of the educational subjects and the traditional curriculum views of the world. So, there is the constant tension, if you like, between what the child brings, with knowledge traditions found in institutions, alongside their lives and sense of understanding of self.

This does not end with the curriculum in schools. There are practices in other social institutions such as religious practices and religious beliefs and rituals that deliver a set of rules over everyday knowledge and understanding. There are

particular kinds of cultural rules about how you conduct yourself. What are the rules of games and how you work together as a team, all those impose on top of the personal self and insinuate themselves as another layer influencing the child and child's sense of the self. It is the personality, the combination of the sense of the self, the importance of emotions in all these that are fundamental to the individual child and these are adapted and interpreted through the child's *perezhivanie*.

The importance of emotions is fundamental to this sense of self, and again it is particularly highlighted when we look at the photographic negative and consider Vygotsky's work about 'primitives'. When Vygotsky talks about vulnerable children, he highlights a disconnect, where the emotions and the personal sense of the self completely disengage from the social and the institutional. Within that, there is a sense that these children have their own institution and their own perspectives of social competence that stands alongside the general view of such competence. In exploring the issue of the children who are disengaged, there is a strong message about the institution, and the need to develop those communication skills and those connection skills of the personal sense. What practices need to be considered so as to bring the institution into a conceptualisation of the child's social construction and social competence?

Through the cultural context of the child there is an intersection of the demands and defining elements of the child as part of belonging to the social situation.

On the other side, from the individual, there is the whole cultural–societal dimension to consider. What is the richness of the culture? What are the cultural tools, literacy or numeracy? And also the artefacts that are the visible symbols that represent the cultural values. For example, Vygotsky heavily relies on the arts, the theatre, Thomas Merton says "art enables us to find ourselves and to lose ourselves at the same time" (Merton 1955). All these elements represent the cultural values and the social structure. There is also the cultural script, evidenced in the literature, and this is most noted in the literature associated with the oral tradition of fairy tales. For example, fairy tales provide the script through which children play imaginatively, using the various cultural tools, adding the sense of self and how that fits into what is the social and institutional. The drama of the fairytale is a vehicle for children to pull together all the elements of life and put things together. All of these personal, social and institutional dimensions of social competence are shown in the Fig. 4.1 to foreground to early childhood teachers the importance of the practice traditions in which preschool children participate. But also, the model seeks to make visible the dynamic tension found between the richness of what the child brings and the context of the institutions that s/he attends where valued practices in society are enacted. It is these dynamic and dialectic sites which create the conditions for the development of social competence, and it is the early childhood teacher who has a central role in this process best explained by the concept of *perezhivanie*, as will be shown in the next section.

4.3 A Case Example to Illustrate a Cultural–Historical Model of Social Competence

And so to return to perezhivanie and introduce the idea of the unity of the personal and social, best explained through the story of Billy, a four-and-half-year-old child. Billy is a tall child for his age and had been in short-term emergency care since he was 6 months of age because of his mother's addiction to heroin and consequent inability to care for Billy. She had attended a number of rehabilitation centres but had been unable to achieve an extended period of being drug-free that would be necessary to care for a young child. The placement where Billy had been cared for was a short-term emergency accommodation facility where children generally did not stay for more than 8 weeks at a time, however, because of a number of legal impediments and his mother refusing to relinquish his care, Billy had remained at the service for 4 years. During this time, he had witnessed the coming and going of many children, throughout this time Billy had continued to attend an early childhood centre on a daily basis in an effort to provide some stability and predictable routine in his life. Following a court order to revoke his mother's guardianship of Billy he was eventually able to be placed in a foster care home with a family unit (two parents and other children as well as several pets were all part of this new household). This was an exciting time for Billy and he began to bring objects from the house to kindergarten, usually household effects such as cutlery, etc. The case workers expressed concern that Billy had become institutionalised and was now stealing from the family with whom he had been placed.

At kindergarten, Billy held onto a spoon refusing to relinquish it to staff or to store it in his locker. On one occasion, Billy was trying to climb the apparatus at the kindergarten but was finding it difficult as he had a spoon from the home in his hand. The teacher offered to hold the spoon while he was climbing and he agreed after stating that he had to have it to take back to the foster home.

This was an insight into Billy's perezhivanie, the teacher needed to view how the child is interpreting his situation and environment in a way that transforms the earlier negative judgements into a positive understanding of Billy's need for a tangible link to the security of the foster home. Billy has demonstrated a process that analyses his situation and made decisions to problem solve.

In this scenario the child's thinking is not just emotional but a complete process of psychological functions to ensure his need for security. In light of the earlier discussion of 'primitives' it would have been easy to reprimand Billy and admonish him for stealing property, however by taking time to listen to Billy and seek to understand his perezhivanie it became possible for the teacher to ensure there were opportunities to strengthen Billy's position and sense of belonging to this new social situation in his life. Perezhivanie is not internalised rather it is produced by the child. The production of personality of the child, the production of the human being in the social context. "Perezhivanie represents the unity between the child and their engagement with their social and material environment" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 343).

Thus the teacher needs to be aware that there is a different *perezhivanie* for the child and the adult. Each individual goes into the same situation but comes away with different feelings creating a connection that assists teachers to take on-board what is happening and add to that sense of self and that relationship between the self and the broader community in the social situation. The mechanism that is taken away changes how individuals react to particular situations.

This becomes the kernel of planning for future learning and development by the teacher. Billy's need for security and to continue in this new place led him to develop his own independent strategy to maintain his security. His need to be part of a family structure and to have the predictability of being able to return to his safe home was paramount for him and overshadowed his engagement in the learning experiences and interactions with his preschool peers. The teacher in understanding Billy's *perezhivanie* must adapt her planning to acknowledge Billy's need and to incorporate this in the approaches to including Billy in learning activities. This might be as simplistic as helping Billy to create a pouch or pocket that will hold his security object on his person (connected to a belt or similar) but can be extended to further enhance his problem-solving skills through discussion, art expression and dramatic play opportunities where the teacher asks questions, poses problem situations and supports Billy as he works through these activities. Individualised dramatic play opportunities using puppets or small figurines are ideal in such circumstances. The key element here is not to impose the adult interpretation of events but to acknowledge and respect the child's *perezhivanie*.

In order for teachers to achieve high quality, meaningful education programmes for children, the importance of *perezhivanie* as a tool of analysis of the sociocultural environment cannot be understated. *Perezhivanie* is the very essence of the social interactions in the learning environment and provides insight into the children's cultural context and cultural reasoning. Through this approach of analysis teachers are able to determine not just what the children know and understand but also why they know in a particular way, thus enabling teachers to refine their educational approaches in a targeted and specific way to the children in a particular class.

Billy's case stands as a reminder of the importance for teachers to be aware of all children's emotional experiences that come from many aspects of their sociocultural environment and that this extends beyond the learning situation. *Perezhivanie* is a tool for teachers to achieve new and deeper insight of the children and to develop educational programmes that build and extend on the children's everyday experiences to underpin meaningful learning.

“The emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] arising from any situation or from any aspect of environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child”. Therefore, it is not any of the factors in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky 1994).

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Author Biography

Dr. Marie Hammer (Dip.T(IECD); GradDipEdStuds; BEd(LaTrobe); MEd.PhD) is currently a lecturer in Early Childhood Education at Monash University where she has taken a number of leadership roles including Early Childhood Course Leader. She has worked in a range of different children's service types including long day care, sessional kindergarten and family support programmes as well as 5 years as President of the Kindergarten Teachers' Association of Victoria, representing the needs of early childhood educators. She has participated in two summer schools in Moscow, Russia exploring the application of Vygotsky's theories of development to teaching practices. Marie has particular research interests in the area of children's social competence and the role of emotions. Within this context she has explored the role that Early Childhood professionals can play in supporting children who have experienced trauma. Marie was the National Australia Bank, Yachad Scholar 2004 and used the outcomes of a study tour in Israel as a cross cultural study dimension to explore the impacts of trauma for young children on their emerging social competence.

Part II

Emotions

Chapter 5

Foregrounding *Emotional Imagination* in Everyday Preschool Practices to Support Emotion Regulation

Marilyn Fleer

Abstract A great deal has been written about children's learning and development as a result of their experiences in preschools, where both teacher planned and self-directed exploration by the child is possible. However, less is understood about how everyday preschool practices and the corresponding self-directed activities of children contribute to the emotional development of young children. Mostly what is known about the emotional development of the preschool child has been gained through intervention studies, rather than through naturalistic research of everyday preschool practices. The aim of this chapter is to examine how everyday interactions in a preschool environment can contribute to the emotional development of young preschool children. Specifically, the study sought to find out what kinds of conditions support children's emotional development when engaged in self-directed activities where teachers and other children spontaneously respond to the dramatic moments found in everyday play practices. Using the concept of *perezhivanie* to capture in unity the everyday practices of preschools and the moments of children's self-directed activity, this chapter theorises emotion regulation as part of everyday practices where children become more consciously aware of self and the environment. The concepts of a *two-positional perspective* and *emotional imagination* are introduced to explain those dramatic events (*emotionally imaginative situations*) that emerged spontaneously and which were found to contribute to emotion regulation during children's self-directed activity.

5.1 Introduction

Young children's experiences in preschools generally provide many opportunities for both teacher planned and self-directed exploration. Supporting these practices are a plethora of studies that have examined in a range of ways, the learning outcomes of children who attend preschool (e.g. Heckmand and Masterov 2007),

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where claims are made about the importance of the early childhood period for learning and development (e.g. OECD 2006). In recent times, most studies have focused on researching planned learning programs (as teacher directed or as interventions for research purposes), rather than examining those self-directed moments of children's everyday lives in these preschool settings, such as when children go outdoor and freely engage in whatever they wish after teacher planned experiences. This is often called 'free choice time' in preschools. Whilst a lot is understood about the outcomes of learning programs, less is known about how these everyday practices and corresponding self-directed activities of children in preschools contribute to the emotional development of young children.

The aim of this chapter is to examine how everyday interactions in a preschool environment can contribute to the emotional development of young preschool children. The concept of *perezhivanie* was used for analysis because it readily captured in unity the nature of both the everyday practices of preschools and the moments of children's self-directed activity, so that greater insights into the emotional development of children could be examined. In theorising the outcomes of the study, it was necessary to introduce the concepts of a *two-positional perspective* and *emotional imagination* in order to expand the scientific reading of emotion regulation noted in the literature. The study found that the emotionally charged situations or dramatic events, as everyday moments of children's self-directed activity, create the conditions for children to become more consciously aware of self and the environment (inter and intra psychological functioning), thus giving opportunities for emotion self-regulation.

This chapter begins with an overview of the research problem, followed by a theoretical discussion of the concepts that informed the study design and analysis, concluding with an empirical example from the study to illustrate the conditions for the emotional development of children in free play settings. A theoretical discussion of emotion self-regulation during self-directed activities is presented. Foregrounded is the dramatic tensions that arise, and how children engage in these moments through self-directed role-play where they consciously engage with the emotional tension through a *two-positional perspective* where they are happy in the process of role-play, but fearful of the subject of their role-play (e.g. spider). This *two-positional perspective* theoretically constitutes a form of self-regulation where *emotional imagination* supports emotional development as part of emotion regulation during everyday preschool practices.

5.2 The Research Problem and Theoretical Framework

There is an overwhelming amount of research into the development of emotions during the early childhood period since the 1920s, with spikes in activity in the 1930s, 1950s and 1990s. If social and emotional development is specifically examined, then most research has emerged since the 2000s (Chen 2015; Quinones 2013; see also Chen this volume). What has been found is a consistent link between

social and emotional competence and failure or success at school (e.g. Eisenberg et al. 2010), children can and do learn about emotions from others (e.g. Densham et al. 2012), positive emotions contribute to social competence and this in turn leads to positive relationships further increasing emotion regulation (e.g. Barblett and Maloney 2010) and friendship formation (Dunsmore and Noguchi 2008), and there appears to be a demonstrated link between self-regulation, emotions and executive functions (Holodynski et al. 2013).

But much of the literature on emotions has been framed in dualistic terms, where new ways of conceptualising emotions that go beyond behaviours and the mental dimensions of emotions have been called for (Holodynski 2013). Holodynski (2013) presents a synthesis of these definitions from a cultural-historical perspective by discussing *emotion as thoughtful feelings, situatedness of emotions* and *action-regulating functions* for capturing a more holistic and dialectical definition of emotions. In recognising culture specific meanings for more complex emotions (Kartner et al. 2013; Rottger-Rossler et al. 2013), such as shame and guilt and their physical expression, researchers have foregrounded new theoretical perspectives on emotion regulation (Holodynski and Friedlmeier 2006) that draw on the original work of Vygotsky (1999) who argued against Cartesian conceptualisations of mind and body. Vygotsky (1999) stated that in emotions, there exists a relation “between the bodily and the mental processes” (p. 160) where the idea of *imagination* in emotionally charged situations could give new directions for researchers. In drawing upon Stanislavsky, Vygotsky (1999) argued for examining emotions as part of “complex system of ideas, concepts, and images” in which feelings give a “psychological coloring to the entire given system as a whole and to its external expression” (p. 243).

A cultural-historical conception of emotion regulation and emotional development pushes against Cartesian logic and draws upon a very different way of defining these constructs. For instance, Holodynski (2009) defines emotion regulation as “the ability to modify emotions in terms of their quality, intensity frequently, course, and expression” (p. 145) where the complementary processes of emotion-regulating action and action-regulating emotions together support emotional development. Through the process of miniaturisation of expressions in solitary situations, Holodynski (2004) was able to show that children consciously withhold their displays of emotions when being observed by others, but not when they thought they were on their own. This he argued was associated with increasing age. He suggested that this form of emotion regulation is a demonstration of a consciousness of a child’s own emotional state.

A cultural-historical conception of emotional development by Holodynski (2009) foregrounds the relations between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning (he names these as inter- and intrapersonally). He gives the example of how at the interpersonal level someone might look for comfort when feeling sad, or at the intrapsychological level could reject emotional support and to cry alone. According to Holodynski (2009) emotions can be conceptualised both inter- and intrapersonally as integrative (rather than as Cartesian framing) where intentionally and consciousness of emotions is foregrounded.

In a cultural-historical conception of emotions, it is argued by Domasio (2003) that children show self-regulation when they become consciously aware of their raw emotions as particular feeling states. Vygotsky (1999) originally drew attention to this idea of emotions as the raw expression and feelings as culturally developed system of feelings, when he argued that,

emotions are not an exception different from other manifestations of our mental life. Like all other mental functions, emotions do not remain in the connection in which they are given initially be virtue of the biological organisation of the mind. In the process of social life, *feelings develop* and former connections disintegrate; emotions appear in a new relation with other elements of mental life, a new system develops, new alloys of mental functions and unities of a higher order appear within which special patterns, interdependencies, special forms of connection and movements are dominant (p. 244; my emphasis).

What is common to these interpretations of emotions and emotion regulation is that in the social process of naming emotional displays (e.g. crying) as particular feeling states (e.g. sadness), children consciously become aware of their raw emotions, which in turn support emotion regulation. Domasio (2003) argues that “feelings are not a passive perception” but rather they are “dynamic engagements of the body” (p. 92) that arise from repeated experiences. Domasio (2003) says,

A feeling in essence is an idea – an idea of the body and, even more particularly, an idea of a certain aspect of the body, its interior, in certain circumstances. A feeling of emotion is an idea of the body which is perturbed by the emotional process (p.88; my emphasis).

In social situations (interpsychological level), as has been noted by March and Fleer (this volume) and Fleer and Hammer (2013a) for preschool children, and Riquelme and Montero (2013) for school-aged children, children can and do become aware of their feeling state (intrapyschological level). Through following the storyline of fairytales or storybooks children participate in emotionally charged situations, where they have opportunities to emotionally self-regulate as they identify with the characters of the story or fairytale and *imagine themselves* on the journey engaged in the plot that develops and is resolved. Emotions in imaginative situations, such as when role-playing a fairytale (Zaporozhets 2002), foregrounds the idea of *emotional imagination* or *affective imagination* (Fleer and Hammer 2013a) where the “actor recognizes his [sic] own emotions... from the point of view of the actor’s self-awareness” (Vygotsky 1971, p. 241). This research, and as was originally discussed by Vygotsky (1997), in the context of inter and intra psychological functioning, draws attention to the relations between emotions and feelings, where emotion regulation constitutes a form of cultural development of the child (Fleer and Hammer 2013b).

Vygotsky’s (1999) seminal work on emotions and the teaching of emotions have supported very different ways of theorising and conceptualising the development of emotions. In drawing upon Vygotsky’s system of concepts (Vygotsky 1994, 1999), Vadeboncoeur and Collie (2013) have theorised the development of emotions and emotion regulation through conceptualising the idea of verbal feelings for infants where they learn about their world through others (foregrounding interpsychological relations), through to school-aged children, where they develop a logic of

feelings that are directed to self and others (foregrounding intrapsychological dimension). Emotional development over time is conceptualised as this movement from “verbal feelings” to the “logic of feelings”, but always as a cultural rather than biological process of development. The concept of feelings capture the unity of affect and intellect (Vadeboncoeur and Collie 2013), where social context and interactions with others matter in the cultural development of the child. What these researchers point to, is that emotion regulation and emotional development are cultural practices, and not forms of biological development.

It has consistently been shown that educators have a key role in children’s emotional development (e.g. Boulon-Lewis et al. 2011; Wong 2010), and that families positively support emotional and social competence through a range of practices (e.g. Corapci et al. 2012; Costa 2012; Tommsdorff et al. 2012; see also Chen, this volume). In these studies the social relations are foregrounded. Research has also examined intervention programs for supporting emotional development, such as, US: Strong Start (Kramer et al. 2010), Germany: Project Primar (Koglin and Petrmann 2011), Israel: Learning to Live Together (Rosenthal and Gatt 2010), and Australia: You can do it (Ashdown and Bernard 2012) to name but a few (see also Quinones 2013). Evaluations of these programs have shown that they contribute to the development of social and emotional competence of children, and support self-regulation. But less is understood about children’s emotion regulation and emotional development in free play situations where a research gap has emerged.

In addition to emotion-related studies, research into executive functioning (EF) (working memory, response inhibition and shifting, Garon et al. 2008) and self-regulation has specifically investigated how individual children perform on self-regulation tasks and these have shown an increase in cognitive and social and emotional outcomes for children (Diamond and Lee 2011). This research has also shown that when teachers regularly use these tasks over an extended period of time, children can and do increase their scores in post-test results in a range of ways. For instance, executive functioning and mathematical competence (Clark et al. 2013), executive functioning and school success (Masten et al. 2012), and predictive links between poverty and low executive functioning (Raver et al. 2013). In recent times more research has been directed to the social and emotional context of executive functioning for better understanding how to embed these tasks into teacher programs (Bodrova et al. 2011), thus giving new directions for maintaining the positive research outcomes noted in the literature. However, the executive functioning research has generally shown that in traditional pre and post designs that the executive function tasks themselves cease to be administered beyond the research phase by the teachers because, as reported by Rothlisberger et al. (2012), they do not relate to the teacher’s program, the children and teachers generally do not find them engaging, and they are time consuming. Many researchers involved in executive functioning research for supporting cognitive and social and emotion outcomes, have argued for further studies to better understand how to embed the tasks into everyday practices in preschools (Rothlisberger et al. 2012). These studies draw attention to the naturalistic conditions of preschools for better

understanding how everyday practices can support self-regulation, social and emotional development and executive functioning. It has been noted that limited research has been undertaken to understand the social processes and the child's own contributions to the development of executive functions (Conway and Stifter 2012). Most research has focused on individual differences rather than the relations between social interactions and executive functions. However, some, such as Conway and Stifter (2012), have noted that the social processes along with the child's temperament were key predictors of some executive functions. Bodrova et al. (2011) have also noted the importance of social processes in their research into executive functions where they highlight the importance of self-regulation in the context of make believe play, aligning well with those studies that have foregrounded emotional imagination (Fleer and Hammer 2013a). Bodrova et al. (2011) bring together executive functions and self-regulation in an integrative way in their play programs and this is also in keeping with Holodynski and Friedlmeier (2006).

In summary, many studies reference executive functions, play, self-regulation and emotion regulation in the context of social processes. Many researchers note the need for better understanding the social situation for supporting the development of self-regulation and some have highlighted *emotional imagination*. What has been missing from this research is an understanding of how children in free play situations in preschools consciously become aware of self and their environment for supporting emotion regulation in *emotionally imaginative* situations. This would appear to be a productive line of enquiry for better understanding emotion regulation as a conscious social process during everyday preschool activities, rather than relying solely on specifically engineered tasks or intervention programs where teachers need to learn and implement these programs or task in an ongoing way.

Children's social engagement within the preschool and their development of self-regulation (Willford et al. 2013) across a range of contexts (Timmons et al. 2015) appears to be not well researched. Examining a child's emotion regulation in the context of everyday practices and their self-directed activities for understanding emotion self-regulation, where the child's consciousness of self and the preschool environment is conceptualised in unity, offers a new line of inquiry. As such, the study reported in this chapter sought to answer the following question: What kinds of conditions support children's emotional development when engaged in self-directed activities where teachers and other children spontaneously respond to the dramatic moments found in everyday play practices?

5.3 Study Design

Quinones (2013) in her extensive review of the literature has noted that there exists a dichotomy between internal and external forms of emotion regulation, and the "dichotomy may not be helpful for educators and parent when they attempt to interpret children's emotions, since the binary categorisations may oversimplify what is happening for the child" (p. 37). In order to move away from a study

designed based on Cartesian logic, the present study drew upon the dialectical logic of cultural-historical theory, where the unit of analysis seeks to capture the whole dynamic system by determining the relations between both the environment and the child (Vygotsky 1994).

Vygotsky (1994) argued that in the study of the child that the main task of the researcher is to find the particular prism through which the environment is refracted. That is, to find the prism which best represents the refracted relationship between the child and the environment in a given situation. In this study, this meant examining in unity the environment and the child's particular relation at different moments of interaction in everyday situations in the preschool, where the children were self-directed. To achieve this, the concept of *perezhivanie* was drawn upon, as this cultural-historical concept best reflected the intent of the research.

The method for this study was to determine the unit of *perezhivanie*. The unit is the product of the analysis. The unit does not lose any of the characteristics of the whole (personal and environment). See Veresov (this volume) for a detailed discussion of the concept and content of *perezhivanie*. As such, the outcome of this study is the unit of *perezhivanie* for the particular child, where the unit is both outside the child as the concrete environment and also at the same time, is how the child is experiencing that particular situation based on the child's own personal characteristics. Consequently, the concept of *perezhivanie* was used to conceptualise the indivisible unit of personal characteristics and situational characteristics.

In this study, the levels of awareness of the situation (consciousness) by the child (see also March and Fler, this volume) were captured through the concept of *perezhivanie*. Underpinning this, was a belief that if children have different levels of awareness, then the same situations will have different meaning for different children. In order to understand the level of awareness and therefore opportunities for emotion regulation, the concept of *two-positional perspective* was used to theorise the findings so as to better understand the *dramatic moments* captured through video observations of everyday practices. These concepts are discussed in turn.

Dramatic moments: The genesis of cultural development as proposed by Vygotsky (1997) and so widely cited in the literature suggests that "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 people as an intermental category, then within the child as a intramental category." (p. 106). Dramatic events allow for the development of the child. Vygotsky (1999) stated that in drama the feeling of "we" rather than "I" is created as a form of social consciousness. The actor creates on the stage infinite sensations, feelings, or emotions that become the emotions of the whole theatrical audience. Children's role-play connects directly with these ideas because play is a collective activity among children. In this study, a form of social consciousness of dramatic events evidenced in role-play during everyday preschool practices was sought.

Vygotsky referenced the concept of crisis or drama to foreground change (dramatic event or tension) in general development (crisis—from one cultural developmental period to another). Linqvist has also described this concept in her

work on play where she has used drama pedagogy to support the development of mature forms of play:

Drama is linked to play more directly and more closely than any other form of art; play which is the origins of every child's creativity and includes elements from the most differing forms of art. This is partly what makes dramatisation so valuable to children, it opens doors to and provides material for different sides of their creativity (Lindqvist 1995, p. 53).

Lindqvist (1995) says that "play is like a photographic negative of everyday life" (p. 53) and documenting children's play gives insights into what matters to them at that moment and which forms the basis for their cultural development. Examples of this for studying emotions in everyday family life are found in Chen (this volume). In this study, analyses of those moments of drama in emotionally charged situations during free play, as potentially photographic negatives of everyday life, were sought because they potentially revealed *imaginative emotional situations* where emotion regulation could be achieved.

Two-positional perspective: Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010) introduced the concept of a *two-positional perspective* in play, where the idea of audience as noted by Vygotsky (1971) in his discussions on drama in the Arts, is central for children's development. They stated that "play from the "dual (or two)-positional" perspective allows the child to better understand him/herself, as well as understanding the surrounding world" (p. 33). The child is inside the play acting out the things that s/he has experienced, observed or read/viewed in everyday life (e.g. play house, being a superhero, character in a book), whilst also being able to step outside or above the play, directing how the play should take place (e.g. as we see when child, comments to another child that they don't like something they are doing). In Vygotsky (1966) original writing on play, he too discussed this two-positional perspective, stating that when two sisters are role-playing being sisters, they must consciously consider what are the attributes of sisterhood they wish to show through their play. In doing so, they take a two-positional perspective, making conscious in play their living experiences and understandings of sisterhood. The concept of *two-positional perspective* supported the analysis of those dramatic moments so that better insights into emotion regulation during everyday preschool practices could be determined (see also March and Fleer, this volume).

Participants: The play activity of sixteen 3-year-old children (3.6–4.2 years, mean age of 4.1 years) and ten 4-year-old children (4.7–5.9 years, mean age of 5.3 years) were video recorded.

Context: The centre is located close to the centre of a large city, where there is a range of SES families and cultural backgrounds of children. The centre has two main rooms and a large outdoor area that is shared by the children from both rooms. The equipment and resources is typical of early childhood settings across Australia, with block area, construction area, art spaces, woodworking materials, puzzles, children's books, iPads, drawing and glueing materials and an open area of children to assemble for group time. The program has two group times that is managed by the teachers, with the remainder of the time as self-directed time for the children.

Data gathering: A total of 59.6 h of video observations were gathered over 4 weeks using two video cameras. One camera followed the children as they engaged in self-directed activities, whilst another camera was mounted inside the early childhood centre on a tripod and sought to capture the full centre context, including group time. The latter camera was also used to follow children in the outdoor area, as they engaged in self-directed activities, when no children were inside the centre.

5.4 Findings and Discussion

The study found that although there are different kinds of conditions that can support children's emotional development during everyday preschool practices where children are self-directed (see Table 5.1), what was common to each free play activity was a form of *emotional imagination* that took place during dramatic events where a level of consciousness of a feeling state could be observed. Table 5.1 summarises some of the types of free play activities or conditions that emerged in this particular preschool. The examples cannot be representative, as each situation and each child bring different social situations of development, which mean each event will be experienced differently. For example, it is illustrated in Column 1 some of the self-directed activities possible at the research site investigated. This is followed by a summary of the dramatic moment to illustrate the emotionally charged situation. The third column foregrounds the two-situation perspective, where the dramatic event has made conscious to the child the experience and how they are experiencing it.

In these examples taken from the full data set, *emotional imagination* appeared to consistently support the emotion regulation of children during self-directed activity in the preschool. To illustrate this key finding, one expansive example is given further below.

In the example that follows, a small group of preschool children in the outdoor area of the preschool where they are self-directed, show interest in the movement of a small spider. The children initially observe the spider's actions as it attempts to move out of sight of the children. Jasmine 'calls the spider' back, by saying in a high-pitched voice 'spider, spider' as she closely studies where the spider is moving to. She appears to be curious and comfortable with the spider—pleased to be 'calling the spider back' so she can observe it. Henry on the other hand, who is also actively observing the spider is frightened by it. This can be noted towards the end of the observation, where he declares his fear out loud after everyone leaves. However, his emotional displays (bracketed) suggest he is moving between interest and fear as an emotional struggle. We observe that the teacher too, like Jasmine, enthusiastically embraces the spider's presence. The teacher shows emotional displays of pleasure and curiosity, and is comfortable to handle and care for the spider during the process of the small group observations.

Table 5.1 Emotional imagination in self-regulated preschool activities

Examples of self-directed activities	Emotional behaviours and moments	Two-situational perspective
Looking inside the compost bin	“Eeee” exclaiming during the process of lifting the lid and looking at the organisms and decomposing food scraps	Exploring with enthusiasm but also expressing disgust
Using iPads to video record and photograph the outdoor environment	“I going to film you” (laughing). Other child saying “Hey” with surprise	Filming other children and replaying the video clips to self and others—being surprised and experiencing joy at seeing self on iPad
Bathing baby dolls and filming these events	Bathing the baby dolls, showing caring and responsive embraces with dolls	Filming bathing process, and watching this afterwards—remembering the caring play and observing the play actions of self and others
Camping	Setting up camp and smiling and laughing at play of self, but also capturing on digital device the play for a missing play partner	Children video document on an iPad their play camping (missing play partner) and share with children missing (joy at sharing with missing child) from their play on a subsequent day
Lifting logs to find insects	Observing with hand lenses and exclaiming loudly and with excitement about the liquids produced by the slugs, as the teacher ask the children to imagine if they had slime coming out of their hands and feet	Imagining themselves as the slugs (joy at imagining and disgust at the slugs’ eyes and tongues)
Observing insects in the outdoor area	Worrying gestures and exclamations about being frightened of the insects	Joy of role-playing insects, but frightened or worried at the insect itself
Making sand cakes	Cooking, eating and exclaiming (in the process of pretending to eat the sand cakes)	Pretending actions of eating the sand cakes (joy), but not actually putting any sand in the mouth (knowing it cannot be eaten or would not taste too good)

The teacher notices the children’s interest in the spider and joins the small group of four children.

Teacher Can you see that spider web?
 Jasmine No,
 Henry I can I can (enthusiastic).
 Teacher Oh, I think you might have interrupted the web, he’s gone to find...
 Henry I made, I made... (worrying, as he can’t see the spider and doesn’t know where it is).

- Jasmine No, spider spider (in high pitched voice, appearing to call the spider with enthusiasm).
I did that because I wanted him to, to walk.
- Teacher Well if you watched him... Oh look at that.
- Jasmine I flipped him over.
- Teacher Look at that, he's tucked himself under. I wonder what that means? Oh wow, He's looking for a place to feel safer.
- Henry He's silly (looking worried).
- Teacher Well I don't know, what do you do when you feel a bit scared?
- Jasmine I don't, well...
- Henry Normally I tell my mum so that I don't feel scared.
- Teacher You tell your mum and dad, well he hasn't got his mum or dad.
- Jasmine He's going under, they all stick with themselves (enthusiastic tone).
- Teacher Did you see the way he pulled himself into the underway, to protect himself?
- Children That's because, why he is he under there?
- Teacher ... to find somewhere safe to be.
- Jasmine He won't come out again.
- Teacher Let's pop it into the shed.
- Henry No don't, I don't want it in the shed (worrying tone).
- Teacher Where could I put him that you would be able to watch him and he'll be safe?
- Henry Here, here here (worrying tone).
- Teacher Aha so maybe he knows that on the paper we can see him really well and he wants to go where it's harder for us to see him.
- Jasmine I can still see him. He's actually trying to trick us that he's not here (laughing).
- Teacher Yeah he's a bit camouflaged there, so it's a bit harder to see him now isn't it. You can still see him but it just that we have to look closer.
- Children [children talk to each other] He's starting to get a little bit angry (worrying tone).
- Teacher Why do you think he might be a little bit angry?
- Angela Because.
- Teacher You just need to be a little bit careful with creatures like that.
- Angela He might be a little bit angry because we are being 'naughty/noisy' to him (serious intent).
- Teacher ... would you like to wash your hands and get your water bottle? (The children leave to go inside).
- Henry I'm scared of the spider (worrying tone).

Henry is frightened by the spider, but he is also very interested in observing the spider, and keeping in close by. He appears to display two emotional expressions in this small group context, where other children are keenly observing, and discussing with the teacher what they notice about the spider.

A moment later, Henry finds another child in the outdoor area who has not gone in for afternoon tea, but who is in the sandpit. Henry role-plays being the spider, posturing like an aggressive spider, and then keeping still to camouflage himself as observed previously with the group of children and the teacher:

Henry (The child acts out being the spider. He is standing still, with his hands in a claw motion). It's camouflaged itself, did you see (enthusiastic happy tone)?

Carl Eww (worried).

Henry Come and see how it stays still, what does that say (as Henry stands very still with claw like gesturing into the air, with worrying frown)?

In both examples, Henry appears to exhibit a *two-positional perspective*—he is both frightened by the spider and happy to role-play being the spider, imitating the aggressive features he imagines (but did not see when they were studying the spider). Vygotsky (1966) argued that in play children can experience a *two-positional perspective*, where they are feeling happy that they are playing, but may also feel fear, if the content of their play makes them frightened. In role-play the child becomes more conscious of his or her feeling state, understanding him or herself better, as well as being able to understand the surrounding world. In writing about fables, Vygotsky (1971) stated that, “if they exist not only as a logical contradiction, but especially as an affective contradiction, the reader of the fable will experience contradictory feelings and emotions which evolve simultaneously with equal strength” (p. 139). Drama explicitly creates the conditions for these contradictory feelings:

The heroes of a drama, as well as an epic, are dynamic. The substance of drama is struggle, but the struggle contained in the principal material of a drama overshadows the conflict between artistic elements that result from conventional dramatic strife. This point is very easy to understand if we regard a drama not as a finished work of art but as the basic material for a theatrical performance (Vygotsky 1971, p. 227).

In drama or in the theatre, there is also a sense of the audience that is built into the dynamics of the production. For example, as Vygotsky (1971) notes, “The hero is sad and the spectator laughs, or vice versa” (p. 232). We see this also in comedy: “Laughter requires a social environment. Comedy is impossible outside society and, consequently, again reveals itself as a *double subjectivity* between certain societal norms and deviations from them” (Vygotsky 1971, p. 233).

In role-play children are both inside the play, being the spider, and can also be outside of the role-play as the audience, or running to find someone to tell and role-play what they have learned about how the spider can camouflage itself. Kravtsov and Kravtsova (2010) argue that in role-play the child “is at the same time *situational* and *supra*-(above) [the] *situational*. This positioning allows the player to comprehend the imaginary situation, which is determined by “real” and “sense” fields”. Accordingly, play includes *play relations* that are associated with the logic of a play’s plot and the real relations, which have been formed in the process of person’s real life activity” (p. 29; Original emphasis). For instance, Henry is inside

the play being the spider, feeling himself as the spider, taking on the characteristics of the spider, observed or imagined, whilst also being outside of the play relating the characteristics of the spider to another child. This *two-positional perspective* helps the child to see the same situation from different perspectives—being inside the play or being outside of the play; being inside the play as an actor, being outside of the play being the audience. But they are also dialectically related, being inside of the play whilst also responding to the audience, acting above the situation (e.g. consciously making the audience weep or laugh). This was captured in the early works of Vygotsky (1971) when he said, “To understand the peculiarity of the structure of a tragic hero we must bear in mind that drama is based on struggle...” (Vygotsky 1971, p. 231). “...in any drama, we perceive both a norm and its violation...” (Vygotsky 1971, p. 231). “The protagonist of a drama is therefore a character who combines two conflicting affects, that of the norm and that of its violation; this is why we perceive him [sic] dynamically, not as an object but as a process” (Vygotsky 1971, p. 231).

The concept of *two-positional perspective* captures another dimension of emotions not necessarily detailed in *The Problem of the Environment* (Vygotsky 1994), but which could be found in *The psychology of Art* (Vygotsky 1971). This is in keeping with the links made between early and later writings suggested by both Gonzalez Rey (2009) (see also Gonzalez Rey, this volume) and Smagorinsky (2011). The concept of a *two-positional perspective* helps to explain the unity of emotions and cognition as discussed by Vadeboncoeur and Collie (2013) in the act of role-play (Fleer and Hammer 2013b), where the child is in and above the imaginary situation simultaneously. In this analysis *perezhivanie* helps consider in unity both the raw expressions of emotions and the cultural development of a feeling state (see also Chen, this volume). Here, the child has a very special imaginary relation with the environment, as s/he gives new sense and meaning to objects and actions that constitute that lived environment (e.g. Vygotsky 1966 conception of play). S/he is not just experiencing, not just consciously bringing emotions and cognition together for a conscious awareness of the situation, but in being in role-play for a young child represents a particular relationship that the young child is having with her or his environment. That is, a level of consciousness of the child’s feeling state begins to emerge through the relations between interpsychologically investigating the spider with others (children and teacher), and role-playing the characteristics to another (intrapyschologically) as a form of emotion regulation. In being in and out of role-play we “*ought to be able to find the relationship which exists between the child and its environment, the child’s emotional experience [perezhivanie], in other words how a child becomes aware of, interprets, [and] emotionally relates to a certain event*” (Vygotsky 1994, p. 340; original emphasis). In doing so, we can identify the conditions that support emotion regulation during free play activity. Here the teacher’s contribution is important. As has been noted in the reading of *perezhivanie* in Sect. 5.1 of this volume, that interpsychologically (with others), Henry notes how Jasmine and the teacher together share a confidence and curiosity about the spider they are observing. Even though Henry role-plays being the spider, where there is a contraction in his

emotional state and therefore an emotional struggle—happy role-playing and frightened by what he is role-playing—he draws upon the collective experience of observing the spider with others to enact being the spider. He uses the word ‘camouflaged’ to capture aspects of what he has collectively experienced with the teacher and the other children. The other children’s emotionally charged enthusiasm, kept the group observing until it was time to go in for snacks. It was possibly the collective emotionally charged enthusiasm that was brought to his subsequent role-playing. As such, it can be argued that role-play of dramatic events as *emotionally imaginative situations*, can give the unique conditions for emotion regulation in free play settings, where emotion regulation arises through the relation between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning (two-positional perspective, requiring emotional imagination). This expands the work of Fleer and Hammer (2013a) and Riquelme and Montero (2013) who only studied intervention programs in preschools and schools respectively, and speaks directly to the theoretical insights afforded on the study of emotions by Chen (this volume) and Fleer and Gonzelez Rey (this volume).

5.5 Conclusion

This study sought to find out what kinds of conditions support children’s emotional development when engaged in self-directed activities where teachers and other children spontaneously respond to the dramatic moments found in everyday play practices. It was learned that the *play of children during self-directed activities in preschool gives the possibility for emotion regulation, but only under the condition of emotionally charged situations*. Whilst this finding is not definitive for all free play situations where role-playing of everyday practices as a photographic negative of everyday life (Lindqvist 1995; Vygotsky 1971) is observed, it is theoretically interesting because it nuances what is known about organised intervention programs on storytelling (Riquelme and Montero 2013), the role-play of fairytales (Fleer and Hammer 2013b) and the playworlds literature (Lindqvist 1995).

Like the work of March and Fleer (this volume), the findings suggest that the role-play of emotionally charged situations can be conceptualised as a form of *emotional imagination* when supported interpsychologically. *Emotional imagination* as a construct captures this unique relationship that is both experienced (spider observation) and re-experienced (role-play) in social relations. Nillson (2010) points to the significance of imagination in the playworlds research through drawing attention to the “relationship between the internal emotion and the external world” where imagination is said to develop (p. 19). A theoretical likeness of this *emotional imagination* can also be found in the study of online avatar play and the lived world of the players by Talamo et al. (2009) who did not find a boundary between the real and virtual worlds. They argued for a conception of these as a dynamic integration where players “act in both the real and virtual world in order to pursue the same motive” (p. 32). In keeping with the concept of perzhivanie, the

present study also draws attention to the unity of the lived world and role-play, but where some form of drama is key for children's development (see Veresov, this volume).

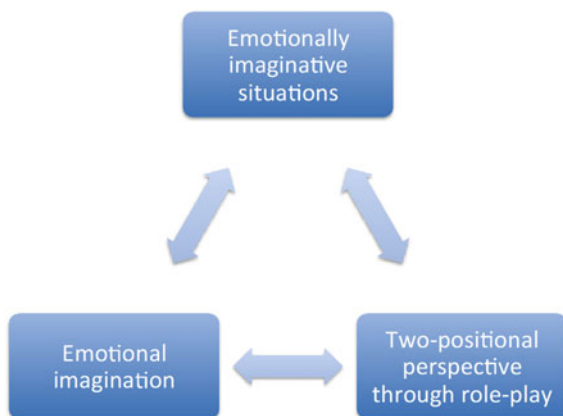
Further, the unique prism that children bring to each situation (see Veresov, this volume), as their own personal social situation of development (Vygotsky 1994), means that the same event is experienced differently by each child. These feeling states in *emotionally imaginative situations* are made conscious through the social process of role-play, where as we saw in this study, a child can reproduce his or her emotional drama to another child in the form of a role-play (of the spider in this case). That is, their unique prism captured as an emotional image (*emotional imagination*) can be made public to another. This extends the work of Damasio (2003) by illustrating how feeling states are not just the private domain of the person, but rather through the role-play of very young children, can be consciously considered through the act of a public performance.

Key here is that not only can a recently observed event (i.e. the spider) bring forward an existing feeling state of being frightened as the unique prism of the child, and through role-playing feelings already built, can reproduce explicitly a previous emotionally charged experience (of being frightened in this case by the spider). The child makes conscious the emotional expression as a particular feeling state of 'being frightened' (unique prism of the child) through sharing it in a social situation with another child. The unique prism brought forward through social relation is also captured in Sect. 5.3 by Gonzalez Rey through the concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration.

Further, the child has built an image of the spider and its particular characteristics, as he reproduces 'being the spider' where the characteristics of the spider are shown to the other child. But this image is not just the characteristics of the spider, which are necessary to show so that the other child can interpret what is being presented, but the image is emotionally charged (in this case with fear), thus constituting more than an emotion, more than imagination, and more than cognition. Rather the example illustrated in this chapter exemplifies *emotional imagination*, as an important quality of emotion regulation, realised through role-play. As such, it can be theoretically argued that *emotional imagination* is the essence of what constitutes emotion regulation in self-regulated or free play settings because it is the smallest unit of the lived experience re-lived through role-play. This is shown below in Fig. 5.1. The child's *perezhivanie* is understood when the essence of the child's environment and the child's activity are examined in relation to the *two-positional perspective* of the child during those moments in free play settings where dramatic events are unfolding.

The latter theoretical reading, re-introduces one of Vygotsky's (1971) earliest conceptions of art and play in *The psychology of art*. It was found that in play a *two-positional perspective* by the child is evident when the child is both in the play and above the play consciously considering their feeling state. This *two-positional perspective* that is unique to many young children in play, can also be found in the theatre as a conscious act. A *two-positional perspective* in play/art helps theorise how *emotional imagination* supports emotion regulation, and this adds to our

Fig. 5.1 The essence of emotion regulation



understandings of emotion regulation in ways which go beyond a Cartesian conception and draw upon dialectical logic to introduce new theoretical insights about how dramatic free play situations can and do support emotion regulation of preschool children. Consciousness, self-reflection and self-awareness as argued by Michell (2015) relate directly to the “acting I” and the “reflecting I”, which together show the movement from interpsychological functioning to intrapsychological functioning that Veresov (2014) has argued characterises the front and back stage performance areas, when discussing what appears on the stage twice, on two planes. Taken together, this chapter has shown that emotion regulation can be achieved in free play settings when children have opportunities to experience emotionally charged situations. Emotional imagination (see also March and Fleer, this volume) captured the essence of how raw emotional expressions become culturally formed feelings that children emotionally regulate in free play settings.

Acknowledgements The Australian Research Council (2013 DP1311438) provided funding for the research reported in this chapter through their Discovery scheme. Research assistance was provided by Sue March (Field leader), Hasnat Jahan, Carolina Lorentz Beltrão, Yijun Hao, and Megan Adams. The educators, children and families generously gave their time for realising the outcomes of the research.

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Author Biography

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Chapter 6

The Role of Imagination and Anticipation in Children's Emotional Development

Sue March and Marilyn Fleer

Abstract A cultural-historical reading of emotions foregrounds the dynamic relations between emotions and feelings. But this relation has not been fully studied from a cultural-historical perspective in contemporary contexts, particularly in preschool settings where young children's emotion regulation is in the process of development. Emotion regulation is theorised in this chapter as the dynamic interplay of interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning during moments of emotion expression. In this chapter, the findings of a close study of the conditions for supporting one child's emotional development is presented. This study draws upon the overall findings of the first named author's PhD, which investigated the conditions for child development in multi-age group settings where the cultural device of fairy tales was used (three educators and 25 children age range 1.8–5 years, mean age 3.4 and three focus families). An analysis of one child's experiences during emotionally charged situations taken from the data set of 40 h of preschool and 20 h of focus family video observations highlighted the importance of imagined, anticipatory emotional situations for the process of emotion regulation. Specifically, the findings show how the expressive pattern for each emotion (anticipatory and present) is held in tension. Invoking the imaginary situation seems to be an effective strategy for adult help in calming raw emotion expression and making emotions more conscious for the child as a particular feeling state. It is argued that a cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation contributes to a better understanding of children's emotional development where *imagination* and *emotional anticipation* were found to have a central role for supporting a child's emotion regulation.

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© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2017
M. Fleer et al. (eds.), *Perezhivanie, Emotions and Subjectivity*,
Perspectives in Cultural-Historical Research 1,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-4534-9_6

6.1 Introduction

‘Feeling is always conscious’ (Vygotsky 1925/1971, p. 200), but how do children become conscious of their emotions as particular feelings? This chapter aims to present the findings of a cultural-historically informed study that examined the development of emotion regulation for one child during role play situations at home and in preschool. A cultural-historical conception of the development of emotions (Vygotsky 1933/1999) foregrounds the dynamic relation between emotions and feelings, and it is this dynamic that has informed the analysis of how the focus child emotionally regulates. Specifically, the concepts of emotional anticipation and emotional imagination are discussed because these concepts were key for understanding how the focus child became conscious of her emotions as particular feelings, supporting the process of emotion regulation and contributing to her emotional development.

This chapter begins with a cultural-historical review of these theoretical concepts, followed by the study design, findings and the conclusion.

6.2 A Cultural-Historical Interpretation of Emotional Development

Emotional development when conceptualised from a cultural-historical perspective examines the relations between feelings and emotions where emotion regulation is theorised as the dynamic interplay of interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning during moments of emotion expression. This conception aligns with Vygotsky’s conception that, ‘Every higher mental function was external because it was social before it became an internal, strictly mental function; it was formerly a social relation of two people. The means of acting on oneself is initially a means of acting on others or a means of action of others on the individual’ (Vygotsky 1931/1997, p. 105). A cultural-historical reading of emotional development, as advanced by Holodynski (2013; see also Holodynski 2009; Holodynski and Friedlmeier 2006; Holodynski and Seeger 2013; Holodynski, Seeger, Kortas-Hartman and Wörmann 2013) centres on the dynamic relation between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning as key for understanding emotion regulation (Holodynski 2013).

In Holodynski’s theorisation, it is bodily sensations, experienced subjectively through body feedback that are experienced as the *subjective feeling* of the ongoing emotion (Holodynski and Friedlmeier 2006, our italics). Building on Leont’ev (1978), Frijda (1986), Ratner (2000) and others, he arrives at a definition of emotions as a dynamic, functional psychological system which involves the synchronic interplay of four components (appraisal, expression, body regulation and subjective feeling) and serves to ‘regulate actions within the macrostructure of activity in line with a person’s motives’ (Holodynski 2013, p 11).

Holodynski (2009) when drawing upon a Vygotskian conception of inter and intrapsychological functioning in relation to his conception of emotions has discussed how emotions become consciously realised. For example, an infant's distress as expressed through crying, transforms through interaction with caregivers, and through participation in society, into the 'fully functioning' emotion of sorrow or sadness (Holodynski 2013, p. 25). Holodynski (2013) shows how culture, rather than an infant's biology, is key for the emotional development of humans. He draws upon the term interiorisation (Vygotsky 1931/1997) to describe the process of moving from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning in relation to emotional development. In Holodynski's (2009) reading of emotion regulation, he suggests that when regulation is achieved, a child demonstrates 'the ability to modify emotions in terms of their quality, intensity, frequency, course, and expression' (p. 145). Additionally, he argues that emotions regulate actions. Holodynski et al. (2013) define *emotional action regulation* as a process whereby emotions trigger a spontaneous action readiness in order to change a situation in a motive-serving way (p. 32). This contemporary work highlights how emotions regulate actions and, importantly for the study reported in this chapter, how actions regulate emotions (Holodynski 2009 p. 146).

Hammer (this volume) points to emotion regulation as essential for children's social competence and their ability to navigate the structure of society (p. 94). Emotion regulation has also been theorised by Damasio (2003), who like Vygotsky and Holodynski (2009), draws upon cultural-historical theory to conceptualise a dynamic reading of emotions. Damasio (2003) conceives of emotion as a raw expression where movement, body language, facial expression, voice (prosody) and language are used to express emotions. Damasio (2003) has shown experimentally that 'emotional states come first and feelings after' (p. 101) as with the subjects in his study who, as they recalled and relived a highly emotive memory, registered changes in skin conductance prior to registering that a feeling was being felt. Damasio artificially, for the purpose of research, describes the 'emotion-to-feeling cycle' (p. 54) as developing from homeostatic processes to background emotions (e.g. excitement), primary emotions (e.g. sadness), social emotions (e.g. sympathy) and conscious feelings. More developed emotions, such as contempt, 'borrow' facial expressions from primary emotions, such as disgust (Damasio 2003).

Building on this line of enquiry, Holodynski's (2013) research sees the relation between emotion expression and subjective feeling as the basis for his theory of emotional development (p. 23). He raises the interesting question of 'how children learn that particular *patterns* of expression (a smile, a pout, a submissive body posture, etc.) and particular *patterns* of speech can be used as signs for regulating social interactions' (p. 24, our emphasis). In the relation between emotion expression and feeling, expressive patterns take on a symbol function, analogous to Vygotsky's (1934/1987) conceptualisation of the symbol function of words in the relation between speech and thinking. 'Development proceeds from body signs that outsiders can perceive to mental signs that are perceivable for the individual him- or herself' (Holodynski 2013, p. 19). For the preschooler, expression transforms

(becomes ‘interiorised’), through interaction, from expression as appeal to others to expression as appeal to oneself (p. 23). Children appropriate expression signs as a means of self-regulation. Holodynski, together with colleagues (Silkenbeumer et al. 2016) has also examined how caregivers ‘play a constitutive role in the child’s social-emotional development, especially by co-regulating emotionally challenging situations’ (p. 11; see also Chen this volume). We are interested in Holodynski and colleagues’ research because it highlights the cultural development of emotions through social interactions. It is these social interactions that this study sought to examine, so that the relations between interpsychological and intrapsychological development of emotions could be determined.

6.2.1 Emotional Imagination

Along with contemporary cultural-historical scholars developing Vygotsky’s work on emotions (e.g. Holodynski 2009, 2013) we also draw on his early writing on emotions in *Psychology of Art* (Vygotsky 1925/1971) where he notes that emotion requires ‘some expression of our imagination’ (p. 209).

The connection between emotion and imagination as captured by Vygotsky in *Psychology of Art*, suggests that emotion, as well as requiring some expression of our imagination, ‘is expressed by the mimic, pantomimic, secretory, and somatic responses’ (Vygotsky 1925/1971, p. 209). Vygotsky notes Zenkovskii’s name for this phenomenon as the ‘double expression of feelings’ (p. 209). By this he means that ‘an emotion is serviced by imagination and expressed in a series of fantastic ideas, concepts and images that represent its second expression’ (p. 209). This idea was considered by Zaporozhets to be very important in understanding the genesis and process of development of emotional anticipation, which is taken up further below.

Zaporozhets (1986/2002) argues that ‘*the activity of emotional imagination* (makes) it possible for (children) not only to imagine but also to experience the distant consequences of their behavior, feeling its significance for those nearby and the importance of the children’s role in this matter’ (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 60, original emphasis). Fleer and Hammer (2013) theorise how teachers can use emotionally imaginative situations (fairy tales) to help children make conscious their feeling state through consciously considering emotions and their expression. In this system, the dynamic unity of emotions and intellect takes place through imagination.

6.2.2 Emotional Anticipation

The concept of emotional anticipation (Zaporozhets 1986/2002), which is an important aspect of children’s emotional development, has not featured largely in the literature. Russia’s Golden Key school system (Kravtsov and Kravtsova 2014)

seeks to develop the whole child, rather than focusing on specific subject matter areas. It uses a pedagogical framing for emotional anticipation. Dramatic events are created by the teachers in this system, such as when a favourite fairy tale character of the children is introduced to them crying (role played by a teacher or parent) because he cannot remember when his birthday is (Kravtsova 2009). In supporting the development of empathy, a whole series of activities were then constructed by the children and adults, designed to stimulate the fairy tale character's recall. Kravtsova (2009) suggested that children begin to empathise with the fantasy character through this repeated engagement with the story. According to Zaporozhets (1986/2002) empathy is important for the development of emotional anticipation.

The process of *emotional anticipation* is intricately related to the concept of *emotional imagination* (see Fler, this volume), and occurs when the potential results of an action are imagined and experienced emotionally before being carried out. Thus imagination is central to emotional anticipation. Children are able to anticipate the emotional dimensions of the story through participation in known fantasy scripts, such as fairy tales in collective contexts like preschool, as they experience the events with the fairy tale character over and over again. When the story plot is emotionally charged, then children come to anticipate the actions of the main character (Fler and Hammer 2013). The repeated role play of emotionally imaginative situations which are very meaningful to the child (see Kravtsov and Kravtsova 2014) also provide opportunities for emotional anticipation, as children repeatedly experience and re-experience these highly motivating events in the imaginary sphere.

Zaporozhets (1986/2002) demonstrated two important changes that take place in the emotional processes that regulate children's activity as they transition to preschool institutions where they develop 'a new social motivation for activity' (p. 64). The first change is that the child finds they can do something useful for others around them and the content of their affective processes begins to include forms of co-experiencing and empathy for others (see March and Fler 2016). The social motivation becomes important in collective social situations such as preschools. The second change found by Zaporozhets (1986/2002) as children transition into preschool institutions results from the increasing complexity of children's activities in these settings and the distance imposed between the initial stages of an activity and the final results of that activity, for example when an imaginary role play session is interrupted by the routines of the centre such as lunch time, and then resumes later. In such cases

the place of emotions in the temporal structure of activity also changes and they begin to *anticipate* the course of a given task (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 55, our emphasis).

The resultant shift in emotional processes from the end of the activity to the beginning requires 'a substantial change in the composition and structure of emotional processes' (p. 55) and this can only happen gradually over time and with considerable external support from adults. Zaporozhets (1986/2002) also noted the regulatory role of emotional anticipation in the 'complex composition and

motivation of forms of play' (p. 57) in the lives of preschoolers. He elaborates on this, reminding us of the social motivation

...in order to carry them out the child must not only *imagine* the distant results of the action, but also must *feel* the meaning his actions will have for himself (sic) and for the people around him (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 57, our emphasis).

It is significant that Zaporozhets uses the word 'feel' as this emphasises the emotional nature of anticipatory processes. El'koninova (2001a) also emphasises that 'the function of *emotional anticipation* is in the emotional, not the intellectual anticipation of consequences emanating from some human act' and involves a *presentiment* of what this would lead to (p. 85, our emphasis). El'koninova (2001b) suggests that anticipation develops as children take part in collective imaginary situations, such as role play, especially when a known script (such as a fairy tale) is enacted repeatedly and the children emotionally experience the consequences of their actions for themselves over and over again. The process of emotional anticipation involves the formation of a 'unique functional system ... which integrally combines both affective and special cognitive processes,' and,

Developing within this system, the emotions are intellectualized, they become intelligent, generalized, and anticipatory, while cognitive processes functioning in this system, acquire an affective nature and begin to perform a special role in meaning discrimination and meaning formation (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 57).

Here Zaporozhets points to the relation between affective and cognitive processes during emotional anticipation where '...an emotional idea, emotional anticipation ... is initially formed ...as a result of the material, practical activity, realizing the child's real interactions with reality, and first of all, with people' (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 64). In this chapter we examine the idea of *emotional anticipation* to show how adult support for children's development can be enhanced through a deeper understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of the development of emotions and imagination in early childhood settings.

A cultural-historical understanding of emotions, where the concepts of emotional anticipation and emotional imagination are central, gives new directions for understanding the nature of children's emotion regulation in preschool settings. The study reported in this chapter draws upon this cultural-historical conception of emotions and through this reading seeks to investigate the process of emotional anticipation for one child participating in a repeated role play scenario.

6.3 Study Design

6.3.1 *Perezhivanie as the Unit of Analysis*

We use the concept of *perezhivanie* as the unit of analysis to examine a dramatic moment in which one focus child expresses raw emotions and where a collective imaginary situation in her childcare centre is used to regulate her emotions.

We present data of the dynamic relation between expressive patterns for interpsychological and intrapsychological emotion regulation in relation to the imaginary situation.

Vygotsky wrote

... 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 1935/1994, p. 343).

Here Vygotsky asserts that, in contrast to much of the literature which considers perezhivanie as a phenomenon, an emotional experience (e.g. Ferholt 2010), perezhivanie can also be considered as ‘an *analytical tool, a theoretical lens* to study the process of development’ (Veresov, this volume). Veresov elaborates the theoretical content of this concept within cultural-historical theory in order to clarify how this tool can be further developed and used in research design and data analysis. In this chapter, we use the concept of perezhivanie as a unit of analysis to highlight how, in emotionally imaginative situations (Fleer and Hammer 2013), young children can be supported in exploring and becoming more consciously aware of their emotions as named feeling states. In explaining *perezhivanie as a unit* which retains all the characteristics of the *unity of the complex whole*, Vygotsky elaborates that it is a ‘vital and further indivisible part of the whole’ (Vygotsky 1982, p. 47, Veresov translation, this volume). Vygotsky (1935/1994) explains that perezhivanie is a unit which retains all the characteristics of the unity of environmental and personal characteristics, as experienced by the individual child. He relates the idea to a molecule of water as the unit of analysis of the complex whole as a unity (i.e. water). Veresov (this volume) elaborates that Vygotsky conceives of perezhivanie, not as a unity, but as a unit of the individual and the environment, as ‘an *internal* relation to reality’.

We argue that a child’s emotional relation to a collective situation, such as a repetitive role play in their children’s centre, can be examined by considering perezhivanie as the unit of analysis. But how to identify such units for analysis? In the next section, we consider the concept of *drama* or *emotionally experienced social collision* in this regard.

6.3.2 *Perezhivanie and Drama*

Another important aspect of the concept of perezhivanie for the study reported in this chapter is the notion of *drama* or *emotionally experienced social collision*, which forms part of Vygotsky’s general genetic law of cultural development. The general genetic law of cultural development explains how

...any function in the child’s cultural development appears on stage twice, that is, on two planes. It firstly appears on the social plane and then on a psychological plane. Firstly it appears among people as an inter-psychological category, and then within the child as an intra-psychological category (Vygotsky 1983, p.145).

Veresov considers that ‘drama (social collision) and perezhivanie are essential for understanding how the general genetic law of development works, how the social becomes the individual’ (this volume). These concepts are therefore essential for understanding the process of interiorisation considered by Holodynski (2013). The *drama* is experienced by the child interpsychologically as a *contradiction* or category (see Veresov 1999). Chen (this volume) also found dramatic collisions in everyday family practice to be a source of emotional development, particularly of the development of emotion regulation. In this chapter, we are particularly interested in the contradiction between affects experienced in a moment of *drama* and their potential effects on the course of child development. The concept of *drama* is important for explaining the data presented in this chapter.

6.4 Situating the Study

Context This chapter presents data from the first named author’s PhD study which investigated the conditions for development created in a multi-age context. The study took the form of a fairy tale festival held over a period of six weeks in a childcare centre in a middle class, coastal area south east of Melbourne, Australia. The childcare centre forms part of a community centre, pseudonym Seaview House, which offers a range of other services to the community including exercise classes, clubs for the elderly and community education. The childcare centre was led by a degree qualified director and teacher and a team of vocationally qualified educators.

6.4.1 Summary of Participants and Method

Participants In line with the cultural-historical research methodology (see Fleer 2014; Kravtsova 2010), the first named author was the instigator of the research and both a participant in it and an observer. Participants in the overall study comprised three educators and a multi-age group of 25 children (age range 1.8–5 years, mean age 3.4). Three focus families also participated, including the family of Angela reported in this chapter. Angela (4.2 years) has two much older siblings, Rosie (18) and Seb (15). They live with their mother, Sandra and father, Marcus in a nearby coastal town about 15 minutes’ drive from Seaview House. Sandra teaches yoga classes in another part of the community centre, while Angela attends the childcare group.

Data gathering The first named author/researcher, accompanied by a colleague, visited Angela’s family twice and video recorded her interactions and play at home. In addition, Angela’s parents and sister volunteered to video record a range of family activities for the researcher. Data generated in the study includes 40 h of video data in the centre and 20 h of focus family video data, including 5 h of

Angela's family, the researcher's field notes and reflections, correspondence with staff and informal semi-structured interviews with family and staff.

Analysis In line with the digital video methodology, three iterative layers of analysis (Fleer 2014) were used in analysing the video data. Initial attention was directed to identifying instances of emotion expression as an indicator of *perezhivanie*. The selected data were then organised into video clips which provided instances of the categories for analysis. From this analysis, a set of data protocols was developed. In the second layer of analysis, clips were linked together in relation to the themes evident across the data set using the emerging concept of *emotional anticipation*. It became evident at this stage of analysis that gesture seemed to play an important role in emotion regulation in the collective imaginary situations in the study. One dramatic moment which involved similar emotion-expression patterns to those observed in the childcare centre was identified. Consistent with the cultural-historical approach, the data were re-analysed to trace the development of these expressive patterns over the course of the study to try to identify the genesis of the dramatic moment. The examples uncovered in this third layer of analysis were then analysed across the data set using the categories of *emotional anticipation* and *expressive patterns*. Other categories in the analysis are beyond the scope of this chapter. In Table 6.1, examples of instances of expressive patterns during moments of emotional anticipation are presented to give an overview of the full data set.

Analysis of the fairy tale festival is beyond the scope of this chapter and has been documented elsewhere (March and Fleer 2016). However, we wish to highlight the adult involvement in the examples presented in Table 6.1 in contrast to the lack of adult involvement in the children's birthday party role plays in the childcare centre. In this chapter, we examine one incidence of an expressive pattern used by Angela during emotional anticipation in her childcare centre (interpsychological function) and one example from the family data (intrapyschological function). The data selected offer in a condensed form an intense (dramatic) moment of family-centre relations, where *perezhivanie* as the unit of social and personal characteristics helps to explain the importance of invoking the imaginary situation at a particular moment in time. Both contexts are presented first, as background information, then analysed and discussed in relation to the aim of the chapter—that is, to examine how emotion regulation develops during emotionally anticipatory role play situations across home and preschool contexts for one child.

6.4.2 Background to Findings—Emotional Anticipation in Australian Preschool Life

Focus child, Angela, had recently held her fourth birthday party at home, to which Oliver (4.6 years), a child at her childcare centre, was invited. The fourth (and fifth) birthday are dramatic events in an Australian preschooler's life, heralding a change in their participation in the cultural and institutional practices of their society

Table 6.1 Expressive patterns during moments of emotional anticipation in overall PhD study

Subset of the data	Dramatic moments (example)	Emotional anticipation	Expressive patterns observed	Position of adult
Frog King fairy tale festival storytelling sessions. (<i>N</i> = 3, hours = 2)	Frog appears from well (in the fairy tale)	Princess drops ball in well—anticipation of frog's appearance	Gesture of tossing the ball in the air employed ahead of pronouncement by storyteller Sad facial expression (downturned lips) Crying gesture—hands over eyes	Teachers model emotion expression
Frog King fairy tale festival dramatisations (<i>N</i> = 3, hours = 1.5)	Faithful Henry arrives with white horses (in the fairy tale)	Focus child's action readiness to stand up and play role, when chosen	Pushing self up from cross legged position in anticipation (sits back down as educator overlooks her)	Teacher directs fairy tale plot Teachers model emotion expression, e.g. awe at beauty of white horses
Frog King fairy tale festival castle building play episodes. (<i>N</i> = 3, hours = 5.2)	Frog knocks on door (in the fairy tale)	Focus child builds green frog from Lego	Delay in story development as focus child constructs Lego frog develops anticipatory nature of emotions	Researcher narrates story to support play development
Birthday party role plays in centre (<i>N</i> = 3, hours = 3.9)	Time for lighting candles and eating cake—the party itself (in role play)	Role play anticipates this moment Delaying and accelerating tactics used by children increases anticipation.	Broad arm gestures, jumping up, indicates excitement to play ensemble and those around	No adult emotional involvement Teachers only facilitate role play e.g. through provision of materials
Preparation for role play at home and on car trip (<i>N</i> = 1, hours = 1.5)	Imagining opening the presents (in role play) Realising she had forgotten the party hats (in reality)	Anticipating culmination of the birthday party role play later that day Negative anticipation of role play not taking place	Broad smile, vigorous clapping (indicates excitement for self/others) Clapping stops, mouth pouts, cries tears, rubs eyes with hands	Family actively encourages emotional anticipation Family models emotion regulation through tone of voice, suggesting alternatives/solutions

(Hedegaard and Fleer 2008), a change that is ‘associated with the emergence of new meanings in the child’s self-awareness, meanings that help him (sic) to regard his own actions in new ways’ (Kravtsova 2006, p. 7). In the multi-age childcare environment at Seaview House, several of the children already attend ‘big kinder’ (preschool) and the fourth birthday party seems to be associated with the institutional path towards adulthood, as noted by teacher, Carol, ‘I think there is a big thing with the three year olds turning four because that means they go to ‘big kinder’ and they might have siblings and they understand that there’s a progression of kinder, three to four year old kinder, then there is school then I’m a big person, you know’ (interview data). On the first visit to the family home, Angela related her understanding of the sequence of birthdays and institutions

Angela On my next birthday I’m going to be five. I just turned four now
Sue Really?

...

Angela I don’t go to school until I am five

We can see from this visit to the family home the motivational aspect of the sequence of birthdays, turning four and turning five in the context of going to preschool and school and growing up. Thus *emotional anticipation* is built into the subject matter of a series of role plays of the birthday party by Angela at home and in her childcare centre with Oliver and Gemma (4.3 years). On asking about the role play of Pooh Bear’s birthday party that the first author had observed at the centre, mother said that Angela had been playing that at home and that the play would go all day. ‘She does that here. It’ll be an all day thing. We’re gonna have the party and have the food and we’ve got to have this and she’ll ... I’ve had to make cakes and all sorts of things.’ Her special toy Pooh Bear had played the role of the birthday child. This has been since her recent birthday ‘Yes, since then it’s been a thing. Candles, the whole lot.’ Here the support of Angela’s family for her relationship with the special toy and for the repeated imaginary situation of the birthday party is evident. According to El’koninova (2001b) repetition in play alerts us to the interests and motivational sphere of the child and the child ‘singles out human relations specifically and emotionally experiences the sense and purposes he (sic) has discerned in them.’ In this way ‘play actions are generalised’ (p. 32). In this chapter, we are interested to examine how emotion expression is generalised. During the period of data collection, three extensive role play events of birthday parties and their preparation were video recorded. Detailed analysis of the 3.9 h of video data of the repeated role play events in the centre has shown that in addition to using physical affective indicators of emotion expression, such as sharply drawing an intake of breath or jumping up and down with excitement, the children in this role play situation used a number of devices to build anticipation into the play script, such as building a shared motive for repetition of the preparations. As in Vygotsky’s (1925/1971) analysis of the tragedy of Hamlet, in this role play ‘a dance with complex movements’ was evident, involving a ‘driving force and a delaying force’ rather than a ‘simple movement’ (p. 175) towards the enactment of the

birthday party itself, ‘Candles, the whole lot’. The delaying tactics introduced into the play script by the children, chiefly by Angela, as in those of Shakespeare, served to hold back the action and increase the anticipation of the ‘final act,’ and build the background emotion of excitement.

During these role play events the prop of the party hat emerged as an emotionalised object (Kravtsov and Kravtsova 2014) for Angela, possibly signifying shared membership of the play ensemble and that the role play was in progress. One example of emotion expression patterns used to build excitement and *emotional anticipation* in the collective imaginary situation is presented in the next section.

6.4.3 *Background to Findings—Interpsychological Regulation: Collectively Making Emotions Conscious as Feelings*

During one of the three birthday party role play events filmed during the observation period, Angela, Oliver and Gemma (joined at various times by two or three other children) were negotiating the repetitive play script of planning for and enacting a birthday party for Angela’s soft toy Pooh Bear. Following a lunch break outside, the small group of children had come inside and resumed the role play at the drawing table. All the children and the toy were wearing party hats. Seven minutes into the role play, Oliver presented a ‘party bag’ that the children had made earlier to Gemma, role playing Pooh Bear, but accidentally ripped it as he tried to open it to show Pooh Bear the contents. The children momentarily looked at each other with worried expressions on their faces, then Oliver said tentatively (testing out the idea) ‘I think we need to make another one.’ Angela (accepting the proposal) drew a sharp intake of breath (denoted here as ‘oh’), saying in an upbeat tone, ‘Oh, we could have another party then!’ Oliver appeared to accept the proposal, looked at Gemma-Pooh-Bear with a wide-eyed, eyebrows-raised, smiling facial expression, flicking his hand towards her, completing the expressive pattern in role by saying, ‘Yeah, you can have another party’ with excited intonation (high pitched, fast paced speech) (Fig. 6.1a). He then looked towards Angela, still with exaggerated wide-eyed, eyebrows-raised, smiling facial expression, saying, ‘Let’s make more pressies’ (Fig. 6.1b). (Making presents for the party had occupied most of the morning’s role play preparations for the birthday party). Angela’s response involved extensive use of arm movements and body posture, coordinated with language which together expressed (in the imaginary situation) the underlying emotion of excitement in anticipation of the birthday party (Fig. 6.1c–f): ‘Yeah, (opens hands out and springs up then crouches down, bringing hands together in front of her) *and then we can* (claps hands and spreads arms wide to the side) *have another* (raises hands up, springs onto tip toes) *party!*’ (brings hands down and holds them out to the side for 11 seconds, Fig. 6.1f, as Oliver begins the process of making presents). As she raised her arms up and wide (Fig. 6.1e) the gesture

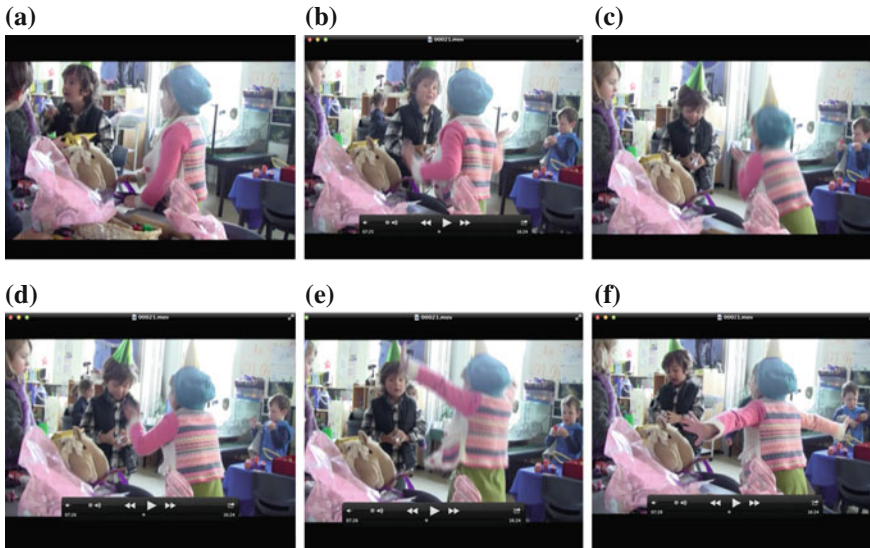


Fig. 6.1 Emotion expression for intersychological regulation during *emotional anticipation* **a** Oliver’s expression pattern of excitement directed, in role, to Gemma-Pooh-Bear, ‘Yeah, you can have another birthday’; **b** Oliver’s exaggerated wide-eyed, eyebrows-raised, smiling facial expression to Angela, suggesting continuing the preparations; **c–f** Angela’s exaggerated arm and body movements to Oliver and the room at large, expressing excitement in anticipation of another party

attracted the attention of other children standing nearby. Thus the interplay of Oliver’s expressive pattern and Angela’s body posture and movement, as part of her expressive pattern, helped this group of children collectively to consciously consider, and experience the emotions of joy and excitement associated with the birthday party, in anticipation of the actual event (in the imaginary situation). Together with Oliver, Angela has potentially reoriented the collectively experienced emotion of disappointment at ripping the party bag, towards a collective feeling of excitement and *emotional anticipation* of the next iteration of the birthday party itself (intersychological regulation) (Holodynski 2013).

Expressive patterns for others’ (intersychological function), such as Angela’s exaggerated body movements during the extensive and repeated role plays in her children’s centre, would, according to Damasio (2003) help her to form a mental image of her body state, as part of the emotion-to-feeling cycle. ‘Experiencing a certain feeling, such as pleasure, is perceiving the body as being in a certain way’ (p. 88). In the next section, we introduce excerpts of data showing Angela using a similar expressive pattern in the process of self-regulation during a moment of drama in the family car with her mother and siblings on the way to the children’s centre the following week as she again anticipated a birthday party role play event with her play ensemble.

6.5 Summary of the Data Set

Analysis of the 5 hours of video data recorded by the researcher in Angela's family home and by the family demonstrated the family's support for the imaginary situation of role playing the birthday party. On the morning of the final role play event recorded in the childcare centre, mother had laid extensive preparations, and filmed Angela from the time of waking up and searching for the 'birthday doll,' Madeline, throughout a mother and daughter role play over breakfast, to handing the camera to Angela's 18-year-old sibling Rosie to film the car trip to the centre. Thus the forthcoming role play in the centre had been rehearsed and anticipated at home. In the car, mother encouraged Angela to recap the plan and rehearse (anticipate) the day's events and recall previous role plays (reminding her of the social situation at childcare).

Mother Now, what's happening today, Angela?

Angela Madeline's birthday (smiles, pats the air with left hand, in time with the syllables in the words just uttered, pauses). Blow up balloon, aah (brings left hand in air to tap right hand, as if remembering a list of things, another pause, gasps), and ooh (gasps again, makes clapping sound as the two hands come together more forcefully) make a present! (now vigorously clapping hands together in imagined birthday party excitement, smiling and using a pretend voice) (Fig. 6.2a)

...

Rosie What sort of present?

Angela Well, I don't know but Oliver will come and help me, (quietly looking down, mother in front seat does not hear her) Oliver will tell me.

Mother (Interrupts from front seat) And do you all sing?

Angela Yeah. We all sing (smiles, claps hands quietly and exaggeratedly and sings) 'Happy birthday to you,' (then holds hands still and together and speaks in normal voice) like that.

Rosie That was a very good song that you...

Angela And he opens the presents!

Mother Pooh Bear does?

Angela Yeah.

Mother But it's not his birthday today.

Angela No, it's Madeline's (smiles broadly, seemingly falsely)

Mother (To Rosie) Pooh Bear nearly missed out on coming, Rosie, did you hear?

Rosie Did he?

Mother (To Rosie as Angela looks out of the window) Yeah, because Angela thought maybe there wouldn't be enough hats for him, so he couldn't come

- Rosie Oh, no. (To Angela) Who are the other hats for?
- Angela Um, I've not got much party hats (Looks towards her bag, quizzical facial expression) (Fig. 6.2b)
- Rosie You've got a couple
- Mother Share them round
- Rosie Who are they for?
- Angela Huh, (Draws a sharp intake of breath (gasps)) did you.. (looking towards her mother then sister, hopeful facial expression—eyebrows raised, eyes and mouth wide open), did anybody bring the party hats? (claps her hands quietly together in rhythm with the question). (Fig. 6.2c)
- Mother I don't know, did you?
- Rosie Did you?
- Angela (Sad tone, pouts) No (Fig. 6.2d)
- Rosie and Mother (Sympathetic tone) Aw
- together
- Mother (Happy tone) You might have to make them (Angela's hands come together, holds them still, tears come to eyes). Do you think you can make party hats?
- Angela No, no, no (pouts, starts to cry and looks around as if to see if the hats are there) (Fig. 6.2e)
- Mother I'm sure someone could help you make really good party hats if you wanted to
- Angela (Inaudible) wanted the party hats from home (cries, clenches fists and rubs eyes with them) (Fig. 6.2f)

Rosie and mother proffer possible solutions such as using hats from the dress ups, or making party hats, but Angela continues to cry saying repeatedly 'I can't make a party hat by myself.' Mother continues to try to assure Angela that she can still have a 'fun party' and explores some possibilities for solving the problem of the lack of hats, but this does not seem to assuage Angela. Then mother changes tactics and invokes the emotional imaginary situation by referring to the doll's feelings:

- Mother Oh, but it's still going to be a fun party, isn't it? You can make it a fun party. (Angela still looks sad and says nothing). Maybe Madeline doesn't like wearing party hats and so she hid them?
- Angela (Shakes her head, pouts lips) She didn't.
- Mother She didn't?
- Angela Nooo. She didn't. (Looks to the doll Madeline on seat next to her). She does like party hats
- Mother Does she?

- Angela Yes.
- Mother I think she likes her hat. (The doll is wearing a school hat like the one the character wears in the books). She doesn't like bad hats, I know that
- Angela She likes party hats. (Rubs hands together). She does.
- Mother Does she?
- Angela Yeah. (Looks out the window and looks back). She likes the strings of them.
- Mother (Surprised) The strings of them? That's the bit I don't like. Because that always hurts... I get nervous that they're gonna flick me in the chin. Those elastics, I've never liked them
- Angela (Listens. Seems less upset now. Notices something out of the window and exclaims) A rubbish truck!

Angela continues to name things she sees out of the window, periodically returning to the theme of not being able to make party hats, but with decreasing intensity.

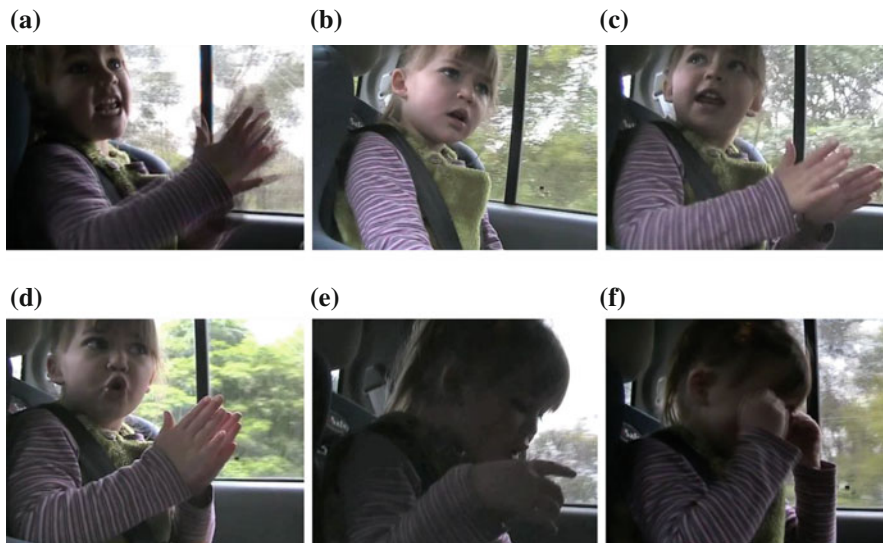


Fig. 6.2 Emotion expression for inter and intrapsychological regulation during a moment of drama **a** Expressing imagined excitement through vigorous hand clapping; **b** Quizzical facial expression as Angela realises she may have forgotten the party hats, clapping stops; **c** Hopeful facial expression, clapping resumes for intrapsychological regulation; **d** Pouting and holding hands still, tears come; **e** Looks round in disbelief, no longer clapping; **f** Crying in disappointment using hand gestures to invite sympathy from others

6.5.1 *From Co-regulation to Self-regulation: Supporting the Development of Angela's Emotion Regulation Through Imagination*

In this section, three important aspects of this vignette are examined: First, the use of expressive patterns (Holodynski 2013) to regulate others and self; second, a moment of drama (emotionally experienced social collision—see Veresov this volume) is seen as Angela realises she has forgotten the party hats; and finally, an adult (mother) enters into the imaginary situation which helps Angela regulate her emotions (Silkenbeumer et al. 2016). The concept of *perezhivanie* as the unit of analysis unites these three aspects together as an indivisible whole.

First, it is noticeable that the clapping gesture is used throughout the car trip as Angela expresses emotions associated with excitement in anticipation of the role play. In the more constrained situation of being strapped into her child safety seat, Angela is unable to use her body freely to express her feeling state (Damasio 2003), for example by jumping up and down as in the role play events in the centre. The physical movement of her hands and arms, however, seems to play a role in making conscious emotions and hence helping Angela to self-regulate. It also makes her *emotional anticipation* visible to others (Holodynski 2013). In the car situation (with mother driving and not being able to see Angela's physical expression in the back of the car) no adult actually names the background emotion as excitement at his stage. However, later as mother was about to leave Angela at childcare, she hugged her saying, 'Give me a big kiss and be very good and have so much fun. You've been so excited, haven't you?' Angela jumped up and down with Pooh Bear and Madeline in each hand, again expressing pretend excitement in anticipation (of the rehearsed role play mother has just reminded her of) with body movement as she had in the role play events with her friends. This expressive pattern seems to confirm the meaning for herself and her family of the clapping gesture in the car as one of imagined (anticipatory) excitement.

Second, the moment of drama (emotionally experienced social collision) (Veresov, this volume) comes as Angela realises she has left the party hats at home. Klavir and Leiser (2002) have shown that younger children believe the birthday party is not a party/not a birthday without certain key props. Here the party hats seem to be a central pivot (Vygotsky 1933/1966) to the imaginary situation of the birthday party role play events, a pivot that has become *emotionalised*, an object linking centre and home, a prop that has been central to the formation of the new friendship with Gemma and enriching the friendship with Oliver. Anticipation of taking the party hats to the centre is indicated as mother tells Rosie 'Angela thought maybe there wouldn't be enough hats for (Pooh Bear), so he couldn't come.' Forgetting the party hats may signal to Angela that the role play event with all its implications (e.g. new friendships) may not be able to take place. As she voices her concern in the turn, 'Did anybody bring the party hats?' (Fig. 6.2c), Angela's speech delivery was punctuated by short intakes of breath and her hands, that had been clapping in imagined excitement, came together and opened again more

slowly and in silence. This moment of drama, which we consider as the unit of analysis, includes all aspects of the concept of *perezhivanie* envisaged by Vygotsky (1935/1994), uniting Angela's constitutional characteristics and her social and material environment resulting in an 'unfolding of an occasion of feeling' (Damasio 2003, p. 132). Angela's hands stopped clapping and she was just holding them together motionless with a very sad facial expression. In this 'dynamic engagement of the body' arising from the repeated experiences in her childcare centre 'we sense an interplay, a give and take' a 'series of transitions' (Damasio 2003, p. 92). The affective gesture associated with imaginary excitement (*emotional anticipation*) seemed to give way to the more immediate affect (Vygotsky 1933/1999) associated with the prospect that the birthday party role play event might not be able to take place. This is important because Zaporozhets and Neverovich (see Zaporozhets 1986/2002) found that as children anticipated the events of a fairy tale, there were physical manifestations of anticipation. Here, there is an affective contradiction for Angela which is reflected in the juxtaposed expressive patterns of the imaginary situation of anticipating aspects of the birthday party in role play (expressed through the clapping gesture, smiling) and those of the real (present) sorrow of having forgotten the party hats (expressed through pouting, sad tone of voice), holding the previously clapping hands together, giving way to crying, which is the expression of the precursor emotion of distress (Holodynski 2013). For a moment, Angela seems to occupy two emotional positions at one time. Vygotsky (1925/1971) discussed the association between fantasy and feelings and concluded that 'all our fantastic' experiences 'take place on a completely real emotional basis' (p. 210). However, Zaporozhets (1986/2002) found that the intra-organic shifts observed in emotions caused by imagined events (anticipating singing 'happy birthday to you') were weaker and less externally expressed than those of 'impulsive affective reactions to directly received stimuli that are highly valued by the subject' (crying at forgetting the party hats) (p. 63). Vygotsky (1925/1971) asserted that 'our reactions slow down and lose intensity as soon as the central element of the emotion becomes more complicated... both in play and aesthetic activity' we are dealing 'with a *delay, but not with an inhibition of the response*' (p. 210, original italics). More needs to be known about emotion expression during *emotional anticipation* in emotionally imaginative situations, and its role in regulating present, real, emotions.

Finally, we turn to the role of the adults' co-regulation (Silkenbeumer et al. 2016) in this situation. Initially, Angela's increasingly worried expression was eliciting a certain kind of response, for example the voice and language of her sister and mother who used an optimistic tone and offered solutions to the problem such as, 'You can *make* party hats!' Angela's crying and helplessness, 'I can't make a party hat by myself,' an appeal (Holodynski 2013) or a form of affective subject positioning (Kravtsova 2009), encouraged both her sister and mother to offer reassurance and solutions to the problem. But an important moment came in the midst of the emotional drama, when mother changed tactics and reminded Angela of the imaginary situation by inviting her to empathise with the doll, 'Maybe Madeline doesn't like wearing party hats and so she hid them?' In this way (as

El'konin 2005, did when his daughters would not eat their porridge and he pretended he was a teacher and it was time to eat at preschool), she invoked the 'emotionally imaginative situation' (Fleer, this volume) such that Angela had the opportunity to mentally transform the situation and discover a 'previously hidden' value (Zaporozhets 1986/2002), 'she likes the strings of them' in both the circumstances and the actions that can be performed, 'You can make party hats this time.'

The reminder of the imaginary situation (pivot) seemed to transform the moment of drama. As Vygotsky (1925/1971) noted, emotions in play, artistic emotions, 'are released by extremely intensified activity of the imagination' (p. 211). Emotions in such repeated role play situations, as in art, are 'intelligent emotions' that are usually released in images of fantasy (p. 212). As Zaporozhets pointed out, 'External and internal experiences merge in the emotional image into an integral whole' (p. 62). Thus the *emotional image* of Madeline liking the 'strings' (elastic) of the party hat is an emotional reflection of reality for Angela. 'We see, therefore, that emotion and imagination are not two separate processes; on the contrary, they are the same process' (Vygotsky 1925/1971, p. 210). This dynamic interplay of emotion and imagination is central to *emotional anticipation* in collective social settings such as preschool and childcare.

While solving meaningful problems, the child (tries first to) mentally ... *act out* diverse variants of actions and to feel the sense that their consequences may have for people around him (sic), and, therefore, also for himself as a social being (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 64).

The 'complex mental activity' that has taken place here 'provides the basis of *emotional anticipation* of the results of one's actions, (and) plays an important role in the moral development of personality' (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 63, our italics).

Later in the data, Angela did appear to begin to regulate her emotions (disappointment/sorrow), first, as she anticipated the researcher meeting the car on arrival, as pre-arranged, and said to herself (captured by the camera that was still recording), 'Sue will help me make party hats' and later during the party preparation role play in the centre, when Oliver asked,

Oliver Do you have party hats?

Angela No, but we can make party hats this time.

In this utterance the positive upbeat attitude of her mother and sister during the car trip can be noted in Angela's tone of voice. This imitation, not just of the words, but of the affective tone of her family members, further supports the idea that in repetitive role play, such as the repeated birthday party scenario, what is being repeated is the social relations between people. This is taken up further in the following section.

6.6 Conclusion: *Emotional Anticipation* as a Dialectical Relation Between the Child and Her Environment as Key for Emotion Regulation

In this study of one child at home and preschool, drawn from the overall data set outlined in Table 6.1, we have shown how *emotional anticipation* as a dialectical relation between the child and her social environment is key for emotion regulation. As Vygotsky noted

The emotional experience (*perezhivanie*) arising from any situation or from any aspect of his [sic] environment determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child. Therefore it is not any of the moments¹ in themselves (if taken without reference to the child which determines how they will influence the future course of his [sic] development, but the same moments refracted through the prism of the child's emotional experience (*perezhivanie*) (Vygotsky 1935/1994, p. 339).

Entering the imaginary situation, such as when the mother appeals to Angela about Madeline not liking party hats, seems to be an effective way of introducing a means of emotion regulation, modifying the 'quality, intensity, frequency, course and expression' (Holodynski 2013, p. 145) of emotion, making it more conscious through imagination. Fleer and González Rey (this volume, p. 203) discuss the relevance of the 'emotional richness' of the adult's communication for the young child's emotional and overall development. Here, Angela's mother demonstrates not only the emotional richness, but the emotionally *imaginative* richness, of her communication with her daughter, calling on Angela's (family-supported) relation with the special toys and literary characters in her life. This act is not just a distraction in the present moment, but affords (see Mok, this volume) an opportunity for Angela to distance herself and consciously consider her affective state, provides an opportunity for her to take a 'point outside' (Lewin, in Kravtsov and Kravtsova 2010) by identifying with the toy, an opportunity to 'flicker' (El'koninova 2001b) between real relations (with her family in the car) and role relations (with the special toy in the imaginary situation of the birthday party role play). We argue that through this 'imaginative act,' as in the second case study presented in Fleer and González Rey (this volume, pp. 220–221), this moment of emotionally imaginative co-regulation (Silkenbeumer et al. 2016) is potentially pivotal in Angela's continuing development of emotion regulation. In using *perezhivanie* as the unit of analysis, we can see that here the prism (Veresov this volume) is coloured by the emotional imagery invoked by Angela's mother. The 'decisive' determinant of her *perezhivanie* has been revealed empirically (Mok, this volume) and opened up for further investigation.

¹Veresov (this volume) points out that in the original Russian text the word 'moment' is used, rather than 'factor' as published in Vygotsky (1935/1994, p. 339). 'Moment' is used here as it helps to make sense of the importance of *perezhivanie* as a 'moment of drama.'

This all happened in a moment of drama, through the mother's understanding of Angela's social situation of development. Veresov (this volume) states that, 'In overcoming social dramatic collisions (the dramas of life) a human being creates his/her unique architecture of personality. There is no development without drama, there is no drama without *perezhivanie*.' Invoking the emotional imagery at this critical point seemed to give Angela the 'opportunity to define the basic line of (her) subsequent behaviour' avoiding 'erroneous actions that do not correspond to (her) needs and values' that might happen under the influence of 'fleeting desires and chance circumstances, if their results were not previously imagined and experienced emotionally' (Zaporozhets 1986/2002, p. 64), such as telling Oliver that they can *make* party hats, rather than crying because she had forgotten them. As such, collective imaginary situations that foreground the development of *emotional anticipation*, foreground emotions, cognition and imagination, afford a realisation of a consciousness of emotions as particular feelings through the support of both the imaginary role play and the adults.

Through supporting a child's imaginary role play, where *emotional anticipation* is foregrounded, opportunities for emotional development are afforded. Therefore it can be argued that a cultural-historical reading of emotion regulation contributes to a better understanding of children's emotional development. Central for this conceptualisation are the concepts of *emotional imagination* and *emotional anticipation* for supporting children's emotion regulation in role play situations with the active support of adults.

Acknowledgements The authors would like to acknowledge the support of the cultural-historical research community at Monash University, Australia.

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Chapter 7

Everyday Family Routine Formation: A Source of the Development of Emotion Regulation in Young Children

Feiyan Chen

Abstract This chapter focuses on young children’s development of emotion regulation in everyday family life. Correlational studies on emotion regulation in laboratory settings have been dominant in the field. Little is known about the development of emotion regulation in naturalistic contexts. The study investigated how daily parent–child interactions created the conditions for the development of emotion regulation from a cultural-historical perspective. A total of 61 h of video data were generated from four families in Australia. Findings showed that forming everyday family routines in parent–child interactions contributed to children’s development of emotion regulation. It is argued that the collective process of routine formation is a source of young children’s development of emotion regulation.

7.1 Introduction

Emotion regulation as part of social-emotional development plays an essential role in children’s early learning and development (White 2008). Emotion regulation is defined as “the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross 1998, p. 275). The development of emotion regulation includes various aspects, such as moving from extrinsic to intrinsic emotion regulation, that is, emotion self-regulation (Thompson and Goodman 2010).

Research in emotion regulation has been drastically rising in the last 25 years (Gross 1999, 2008). Most empirical research on early emotion regulation is correlational studies (e.g. Cohen and Mendez 2009; Herndon et al. 2013) and conducted in laboratory settings (e.g. Dollar and Stifter 2012). Little is known about the development of emotion regulation in naturalistic everyday family settings. Additionally, few studies have drawn upon a cultural-historical framework in study

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emotions, as has been noted by Fler (this volume) and Fler and March (this volume). Gross (2013) suggested that future research on emotion regulation should shift its attention from individual emotion regulation to emotion regulation between people (i.e. extrinsic emotion regulation). It is, therefore, necessary to investigate early emotion regulation between people in daily settings by taking a cultural-historical perspective.

This chapter aims to investigate how parent–child interactions in everyday family life can contribute to the development of emotion regulation in young children. The chapter starts with an empirical literature review on routines and early development, followed by a cultural-historical view on the development of emotion regulation. After that, the study design, findings and discussion are presented. The conclusion offers practical implications of the study for families.

7.2 Everyday Family Routines Support Early Development and Intervention

What are everyday family routines? Most researchers who study family routines found it is hard to define routines (Fiese 2006). However, a working definition of everyday family routines in the study refer to connected sequences of activities that are repetitive and their contexts in daily family life, for example, mealtimes, bath times, bedtime, chores, talking on the phone, shopping groceries (Bernheimer and Weisner 2007; Fiese et al. 2002). Routines have three features, including “instrumental communication conveying information that ‘this is what needs to be done’”, “a momentary time commitment” meaning that little conscious thought would be available after the completion of act, and “continuity” in behaviour that is directly observable (Fiese 2006; Fiese et al. 2002, p. 382).

Research has found that routines play a significant role in early development, including early literacy (Spagnola and Fiese 2007), children’s language development such as vocabulary enrichment (Fuligni et al. 2012; Spagnola and Fiese 2007), social skill building (Spagnola and Fiese 2007) and the development of self-regulation that encompasses an aspect of emotion regulation (Brody et al. 1999). Regarding emotion regulation, Thompson and Meyer (2013) pointed out that organising children’s everyday routines is one of the ways in which parents use to “make the everyday emotional demands on children manageable and predictable” (p. 177) in order to manage emotions of their young children.

Family routines are also helpful in intervention. Family routines can build *a sense of safety* in children (Arvidson et al. 2011; Crespo et al. 2013; Larson 2006). The sense of security is an *emotional support* to children in treatment, which was considered one of the essential functions of routines (Crespo et al. 2013; Larson 2006). Additionally, family routines provide opportunities for the development of emotional bonds with family members (Spagnola and Fiese 2007) and support positive emotional exchanges during mealtimes (Fiese et al. 2006). These emotional bonds and exchanges contribute to children’s well-being and mental health.

Although research has investigated daily routines and child development and intervention, little attention has been directed towards young children's development of emotion regulation in everyday family life from a cultural-historical perspective. This study sought to answer the following question:

How do parent-child interactions in everyday family life can contribute to the development of emotion regulation in young children?

7.3 The Development of Emotion Regulation: A Cultural-Historical Perspective

7.3.1 Social Environment as a Source of Development

Vygotsky (1994) in his lecture entitled “the problem of the environment” argued, “environment is the source of development” (p. 347). “Environment” in this argument is not merely the still physical environment but indicates *the presence of the ideal form* and its *interactions* with the child's present form (Vygotsky 1994). The present form is the rudimentary or primary form that signifies the starting point of the child's development. The ideal form does not mean a perfect but a more advanced form, also known as a final form, that is, the child can achieve at the end of his/her developmental period (Vygotsky 1994). Vygotsky (1994) pointed out that without the ideal form available in the child's environment, only very little or slow development takes place.

He also emphasised that the presence of the ideal form is not enough. The ideal form has to interact with the present form so that the environment can become the source of development (Vygotsky 1994). A similar idea appeared in his collected work,

The social environment is the source for the appearance of all specific human properties of the personality gradually acquired by the child or the source of social development of the child, which is concluded in the process of actual interaction of ‘ideal’ and present forms (Vygotsky 1998, p. 203).

The term “source” indicates the origin of development, differing from an influential factor or a setting of development (Vygotsky 1994). The general genetic law of cultural development discussed in the following section further stresses the idea that the social environment (or social interactions) is the source of development.

7.3.2 *The General Genetic Law of Cultural Development*

The general genetic law of cultural development states that

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 people as an intermental category, then within the child as a [sic] intramental category. This pertains equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, to the formation of concepts and to the development of will (Vygotsky 1997, p. 106).

The term “cultural” in the principle refers to the social that has a broader sense than the ethnic culture (Vygotsky 1997). As mentioned earlier, this law first indicates that the social interaction is the source of development (Vygotsky 1994). In other words, child development has its origin in the child’s social relations with the environment. Second, the principle describes the *process* of development moving from the social to the individual. In explaining this process of development, Vygotsky (1997) introduced the concept of *conflict*, also known as drama or dramatic collision, meaning “contradiction or clash between the natural and the historical, the primitive and the cultural, the organic and the social” (p. 221). He claimed that the process of child development is the conflict. That is, development takes place in “a continuous contradiction between primitive and culture forms” (Vygotsky 1997, p. 222). This idea is the essence of Vygotsky’s (1997) dialectical approach to child development, contrasting to the old theory that assumes the cultural development is simply a smooth movement and continuation of the natural development of the child.

7.3.3 *Perezhivanie and the Social Situation of Development*

The concepts discussed above, i.e. the interactions between the ideal and present forms and the general genetic law of cultural development have broadly explained the idea of the social environment as a source of development. To further understand how develop occurs from the social to the individual, it is important to bring out the concepts of perezhivanie and the social situation of development. Instead of making a comprehensive discussion of these concepts that has been done in previous chapters (see Mok this volume; Veresov this volume), this chapter briefs the key points of the concepts that are related to the study.

The concept of perezhivanie, in the study, is understood as a unity of personal and environmental characteristics (Vygotsky 1994; see also Veresov this volume). As explained by Vygotsky (1994),

An emotional experience [perezhivanie] is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced – an emotional experience [perezhivanie] is always related to something which is found outside the person – and on the other hand, what is represented is how, myself, am experiencing this, i.e. all the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristics are represented in an emotional experience [perezhivanie] (p. 342).

The quotation indicates that *perezhivanie* is an indivisible whole of what is experienced and how it is experienced. Vygotsky (1994) further states that the influence of environment on the development is *refracted* through the personal characteristics. That is, neither the environment nor the individual alone determines development. Rather, “the environment determines the development of the child through experience of the environment” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 294). The child as a part of the social situation and how s/he is related to the social situation occurs through *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky 1998).

A system of dynamic relations between the child and the environment is called the social situation of development (Vygotsky 1998). It marks

the initial moment for all dynamic changes that occur in development during the given period. It determines wholly and completely the forms and the path along which the child will acquire ever newer personality characteristics, drawing them from the social reality as from the basic source of development, the path along which the social becomes the individual (Vygotsky 1998, p. 198).

The social situation of development that takes place through *perezhivanie* determines child development, that is, how the social becomes the individual.

In the study, the development of emotion regulation was explored in parent–child interactions. The study aimed to find out how everyday parent–child relations create the conditions for the development of emotion regulation.

7.4 Study Design

7.4.1 Participants

The study involved four families (Families A–D) in Australia. These families shared similar family profiles, including medium socioeconomic status and well-educated parents who hold Bachelor or higher degrees. Each family had two children. Those who aged between three and six years became the focus children. There were four boys and two girls (see Table 7.1 for more information). They attended different early childhood programmes, either full-time or part-time, such as sessional play-group, long day care, kindergarten and pre-primary school.

Table 7.1 Participants information

	Family A	Family B		Family C		Family D
Children	Nash	Mike	Sue	Otis	Sara	Dell
Age (years)	3.3	5.6	3.8	6.4	4.8	3.9

7.4.2 Data Collection

Before the recruitment of participants and data collection, the Institutional Ethics Committee granted ethical approval for the study. Ethical issues were highly concerned in the whole process of data collection. For instance, the author recruited families through child care centres, preschools, kindergartens and schools rather than directly approaching families. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants permitted the use of data in scholarly work. Their names are pseudonyms in the article.

There were a total of 61 h of digital video data collected via digital video observations and interviews over a period of 6 months. During this period, the author visited families 23 times at their family homes, supermarkets, places of outdoor activities and parents' offices. Each visit lasted about 1.5–4.5 h.

Digital video observations The researcher and parents gathered 48.25 and 7 h video observation data, respectively. The researcher filmed parent–child interactions in everyday routines and activities, such as mealtimes, bath times, preparing for bed, getting up and transitions between home and schools, as well as shopping and outings over the weekend. Parents taped their everyday interactions with children when the author was not present. They were co researchers in the study.

The researcher used two cameras to record the data. One camera was placed on a still tripod, filming the whole situation of everyday routines from a distance. The other camera operated by the author was roaming. It continuously followed the focus child and centred on a close study of parent–child interactions.

Interviews The researcher gathered interview data ($n = 12.75$) in three different ways, including informal interviews, semi-structured interviews and a group interview. After each video observation session, an informal interview occurred with parents. The researcher asked parents to clarify some details or invisible information regarding the observation filmed. After all visits of video observations had been completed, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each parent for about 30–45 min at their home, followed by a group interview with the whole family (both parents and children) for around 30–45 min. The group interview was a stimulated recall interview (see Lyle 2003). In the interview, parents and children firstly watched three to five video clips selected from the observation data. After watching each clip, a group discussion took place. The researcher invited parents and children to recall and share their previous thinking and feelings in the video clip, as well as their comments in the moment of interviewing.

Field notes The researcher took field notes during or right after each family visit. The notes documented information that was not recorded by videos and the author's thoughts at the moment. For example, meaningful parent–child interactions happened before the video camera started. Field notes compensated the data of video observations and interviews.

7.4.3 Data Analysis

The three levels of analysis Data analysis started with the review of all data and the selection of parent–child interactions in routine activities and the transitions between them from the entire data set. The selected data were then uploaded to the iMovie project to be edited into small video clips. These clips were analysed by the use of Hedegaard's (2008) three levels of analysis, that is, the common sense interpretation, the situated practice interpretation and the interpretation on a thematic level.

On the first level (i.e. the common sense interpretation), the central of the analysis was on parent–child interactions in a *single* situation or activity. The researcher made the understanding to and comments on these interactions. The second level of analysis, the situated practice interpretation, went beyond a single situation and examined parent–child interactions *across settings*. Several concepts in cultural-historical theory, including conflicts, motives and demands and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) were used as analytical concepts that are discussed in the next section. The interpretation on a thematic level is the third level of analysis. On this level, the research questions, the data materials and theoretical concepts were brought together to find patterns for answering the research question.

Analytical concepts: Conflicts, motives and demands The general genetic law of cultural development discussed earlier emphasises the importance of social relation in child development (Vygotsky 1994). In the social relation, the conflicts or dramas between the rudimentary and the cultural forms are the basis of development (Vygotsky 1997). A drama can be a contradiction between a child's spontaneous or natural response (i.e. the primitive form) to a parent's demand and a voluntary/regulated reaction (i.e. the cultural form). It can also be a collision between a child's motive and an adult's demand. In the study, the concepts of conflicts, motives and demands were used to analyse parent–child interactions in everyday family routine activities to find the answer to the research question.

ZPD In order to understand children's status and the process of development in emotion regulation, the concept of ZPD was used as a concept of development (rather than learning) to diagnose the level of development of emotion regulation in children. Different from stage theorists such as Piaget and Erikson who use age-related milestones to identify the actual level of development, Vygotsky (1998) pointed out that the chronological age is unreliable to determine the development and that the actual level of development only reflects the results of development. These results of development are the *matured processes* of psychological functions that represent merely part of the whole picture of development. Along with these matured processes, there are other processes maturing. Therefore, Vygotsky (1998) claimed that a true diagnosis of development is to capture not only "the fruits of development" (p. 200) but also the processes that are in maturation. He named "the area of immature, but maturing processes" (p. 202) as ZPD (Vygotsky 1998).

Vygotsky (1998) introduced the concept of imitation to identify maturing processes. Imitation indicates the maturing processes of development (Chaiklin 2003; Vygotsky 1998). It means

all kinds of activity of a certain type carried out by the child not independently, but in cooperation with adults or with another child. Everything that the child cannot do independently, but which he can be taught or which he can do with direction or cooperation or with the help of leading questions, we will include in the sphere of imitation (Vygotsky 1998, p. 202).

The concept of imitation means differently from its everyday understanding as copying. Instead, as explained in the above quotation, central to this theoretical concept is cooperation or collaboration. Collaboration refers to any social interactions a child is involved in to solve a problem (Chaiklin 2003). Anything children cannot do independently but can do in collaboration with others means that they can imitate, which indicates their maturing functions, i.e. ZPD.

7.5 Findings and Discussion

The major finding of the study showed that the process of establishing everyday family routines supported the development of emotion regulation in young children. This section reports and discusses the finding of the study. It begins with dramatic collisions led to emotionally charged situations in everyday routine formation, followed by the data showing dramatic collisions resulted in the emergence of the ideal form and parents' use of preemptive reminders. After that, a discussion on how routine formation became the source of development in emotion regulation is provided.

7.5.1 *Dramatic Collisions Led to Emotionally Charged Situations in Everyday Routine Formation*

Findings showed parents' belief in the importance of everyday routines for children's wellbeing. They required children to follow daily routines such as meal-times, bath times and bedtimes. However, children often did not want to do these. Instead, their motives were doing something else including watching TV and play. Therefore, dramatic collisions occurred between parents' demands and children's motives. In the collision, children's spontaneous reaction to parents' demand was to refuse. They got upset. As Father C mentioned, children used to cry if they were asked to take a bath (Interview Ki50, see an observation example in Chen and Fler, 2016). Parents also reported that when children refused their requirement, they became emotional as well. Vignette A below shows an emotionally charged situation during lunchtime in Family D. The child Dell did not want to have lunch when his mother required him to do it.

Vignette A

- Dell I don't want, I don't want ... (*screaming and crying loudly*)
- Mother I am asking you if you want to eat ...ok, you get off the chair, don't eat anymore. (*She took the food away from Dell.*)
- Dell No ...(*screaming*)
- Mother Enough! Do you want to eat? I am asking you if you want to eat. (*with a very firm and a bit of threatening tone, using one finger to point to Dell a couple of times*)
- Dell Wuwuwu ...still crying (*He continues to cry and tells the mother he is still crying.*)
- Mother Do you eat or not? (*She raised her voice with a very firm tone.*) If you want to eat, help yourself! Or don't eat!
- Dell Wuwuwu ...running tears! (*He continues to cry and tells the mother his tears are running.*)

In vignette A, the collision occurred when the mother wanted Dell to have lunch but he did not want to, resulting in an intense emotionally charged situation where both Dell and his mother became emotional and expressed their negative emotions. Dell's refusal made the mother more emotional. The mother showed her emotions (e.g. raised her voice). It did not help with the situation. Dell was still crying.

7.5.2 *Dramatic Collisions Resulted in the Emergence of the Ideal Form: Calmness*

Almost all parents reported that they had reflected on the conflicts described above and learned that showing their negative emotions in front of children could only make the situation worse. As described by Father A, "if I look very upset, he is getting more upset". Mother D added that it never worked if she raised her voice and yelled at Dell to stop him playing for going to bed on time. After their experience of and reflection on the emotionally charged situations, parents learned to regulate their emotions and to keep calm in collisions with children. As mother C explained in a stimulated record interview, it was her conscious decision not to show her emotions in a conflict with her son during breakfast. When parents regulated their emotions, they realised that children gradually became calmer in the conflicts (e.g. Interview & Observation K4 & D5).

Interactions of the ideal and present forms Parents' calmness became the ideal form that supported children's emotion regulation in the process of routine formation. The routine formation was a process of social interactions. Parents as the ideal form of emotion regulation interacted with children who were the present form. In contrast to the prior situation where parents did not regulate their emotions, the ideal form was missing. Although there were parent-child interactions, children's expression of negative emotions increased, showing little emotion

regulation. This finding reflected what pointed out by Vygotsky (1994) that only very little or slow development occurs without the ideal form in the child's environment. Vygotsky (1994, 1998) also stated that the interaction of ideal and present forms is the source of development. That is, both the presence of the ideal form and its interactions with the present form together create the source for development. In the study, the process of everyday family routine formation involved both the emergence of ideal form and its interactions with the present form, becoming the source of children's development of emotion regulation.

7.5.3 *Dramatic Collisions Resulted in the Use of Preemptive Reminders*

In addition to showing calmness, parents' dramatic experience urged them to learn other strategies to develop the routine. They used preemptive reminders to let children know what would happen next. In Family B, there was a book reading routine before the shower. Mother B reminded children a few times in the reading session, "after this is shower" (Observation G 11). Father B used preemptive reminders in the morning. He said, "just have to say, to put the message out there, make them aware of that" (Interview Ggi5). The following vignette showed how parents in Family A used a preemptive reminder to support Nash's transition to a bath.

Vignette B

Nash was playing with a toy in his bedroom. His mother was tidying up his room

- Mother (Mother A) Ok Nash, in about 5 min, it's gonna be time for a bath.
 Nash *(He focused on playing with the toy and did not respond to his mother.)*
 Mother All right? In 5 min, it's bath time. Ok? *(She touched his head to collect his attention.)*
 Nash *(Nash continued to play and ignored his mother.)*
 Mother Nash, what's happening in 5 min?
 Nash Five minutes is bedtime.
 Mother Not bedtime. What's happening in 5 min, remember?
 Nash In 5 min?
 Mother Bath time. *(She stressed the words.)*
 Nash Bath time.

Mother left the room. Nash kept playing with the toy. After a while, Dad spoke to Nash from another room opposite to Nash's

- Dad Nash, in 1 min, and we are gonna have a bath, ok?
 Nash Have a bath?
 Dad (Father A) Yeah.
 Nash Ok. (Observation D1)

In Vignette B, parents' preemptive reminder supported Nash's transition from play to take a bath. Nash accepted the inevitable. No emotionally charged situation occurred. Parents said that by using the preemptive reminder, they tried to help him know what would happen next. Instead of getting him to do what he did not want to straight away, the reminder also gave Nash 5 min to prepare for the transition to the next routine. The period was an opportunity for him to work out the demand of taking a bath and his emotions. It was a process for him to practice emotion regulation.

However, Nash's father reported that the preemptive reminder did not work in the past. Nash refused to follow the routine and got upset. After experiencing conflicts for a long time, he managed himself to regulate his emotions and to follow the routines as what was showed in Vignette B. Similar situations happened in Families B and D.

In Family C, children do not need parents' preemptive reminders anymore. Rather, they knew and could follow the routines by themselves and reminded parents if they skipped some routines. As Mother C described,

So they know exactly what's coming. Sometimes on the drive on the way home, Sara says to me 'what we do when we get home? And what we do after that? And what we do after that?' She wants to know the map of the whole evening. Ahm, and sometimes if I skip a bit, she says 'no, mummy, you forgot. After dinner is vitamins.' (Interview Ki42)

Although there were no conflicts when children got to follow the routines in Family C at this stage, they used to disagree with the routines and cried (Interview Ki50). They had gone through a process of routine formation from the emotionally charged situations when they rejected parents' demand to accept the routines without any external support. Their emotional experiences were also changed from intense negative emotions to calmness and pleasant emotions. In the process of routine formation, they had learned to regulate their emotions.

7.5.4 Routine Formation as the Source of Development of Emotion Regulation

Levels of development in emotion regulation The data demonstrated three levels of children's development of emotion regulation in the process of routine formation. In the beginning, severe emotional collisions frequently occurred. Children were unable to regulate their emotions even if with parents' support (i.e. calmness and preemptive reminder). Chaiklin (2003) emphasised Vygotsky's (1998) idea that "in an interaction situation (collaboration) ... If the child had no capacity to imitate, then this would be taken as an indication that relevant maturing mental functions were not present" (p. 53). Children could not regulate their emotions in partnership with parents indicated their immature function of emotion regulation at the start of the routine formation. They were on the actual level of development in emotion regulation. After their experience of dramatic collisions and emotional tensions, children became able to regulate their emotions. In Families A, B and D, children were able

to manage their emotions with collaboration with parents. For example, as what was showed in vignette B, Nash calmly managed himself to follow the routine in collaboration with parents who used the preemptive reminder, contrasting to his previous experiences of emotionally charged situations when Nash refused to take a bath. He is now in the ZPD of emotion regulation. According to Vygotsky (1998), what children can do in collaboration (or imitation) indicates the maturing process of development. Nash's development of emotion regulation is maturing but immature. Vygotsky (1998) stated, "the area of immature, but maturing processes makes up the child's zone of proximal development" (p. 202). When children could be able to follow the routine with no emotional tensions (such as Nash in Vignette B), they are in the zone of proximal development of emotion regulation.

Compared to Families A, B and D, children in Family C have reached a higher level of development of emotion regulation in the context of routine formation. Findings showed that routines were more steadily formed in children in Family C. At present, they knew and could follow the routines smoothly without emotionally charged situations and the assistant from parents most of the time. They demonstrated better emotion regulation than those in the other three families who still needed parents' support.

The source of development As aforementioned, the data demonstrated children's development of emotion regulation moving from the immature, through the maturing (i.e. ZPD), to the matured process in the course of routine formation. In other words, the development of emotion regulation began from the conflict between parents' demand to follow the routines and children's motive to play or doing something else (e.g. Vignette A). The collision resulting in emotionally charged situations then led to changes in parents including the emergence of the ideal form of calmness and the use of preemptive reminders. Children could not regulate themselves with their parents' support at the start but could do it later (e.g. Vignette B), and then do it alone. This change shows the process of development in routine formation and emotion regulation from the social to the individual. As what was described in Vygotsky's (1997) general genetic law of cultural development, the cultural development is moving from the inter-psychological to the intra-psychological function. The development started in the collision between parents and children then turned to children's self-regulation. Therefore, the social is the source of development (Vygotsky 1994). In the study, dramatic social interactions between parents and children in the process of routine formation became the source of children's development in emotion regulation.

7.6 Conclusion

Findings of the study indicated that everyday family routine formation occurred in parent-child interactions created the conditions for the development of emotion regulation in young children. At the beginning of routine formation, parents' demand of routine formation changed the social situation of the child. Dramatic

collisions occurred between the demand and children's motives in participating in other activities. The collisions indicated the contradictory relation between parents and children. The data showed that this dramatic relation led to changes in both parents who learned to be calm and to use preemptive reminders and children who could regulate their emotions. This new relation is the social situation of development of children. As what was claimed by Vygotsky (1998), the social situation of development signifies the starting point of development. In the study, it is the development of emotion regulation in children.

This finding echoes Hedegaard's (2014) argument that it is not enough to conceptualise learning and development as the change of the individual as what was emphasised in situated learning theory. Instead, learning and development are "processing through conflictual relations between demands and motives that both change the child and his environment", that is, "the dialectic between persons and environment" (Hedegaard 2014, p. 193). This conceptualisation of learning and development reflects Vygotsky's wholeness approach in study child development (Hedegaard 2014). Specifically, it is not the environment in itself, nor the child alone leads to development. Rather, it is the relation of the environment and the person decides development (Vygotsky 1998). The relation occurs through *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky 1998). Vygotsky (1998) suggested that we should examine development in the unity of person and environment (i.e. *perezhivani*) instead of separating them. The concept of *perezhivanie* suggests a holistic view of understanding development.

The study examined the contrary relation of parents and children in the process of routine formation and found children's development of emotion regulation in the experience. It is argued that the collective process of everyday routine formation, where there are contradictory relations between parents and children, is a source of child development in emotion regulation. In everyday practice, it is wise for adults to become aware of the importance of routine formation in supporting children's development of emotion regulation. Adults should also interpret conflicts as opportunities for development rather than problems in adult-child interactions.

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Chapter 8

Beyond Pathologizing Education: Advancing a Cultural Historical Methodology for the Re-positioning of Children as Successful Learners

Marilyn Fleer and Fernando González Rey

Abstract The field of early years education has in recent times received increasing policy and research attention due in part to the growing evidence that investing early in education increases the lifelong chances of children. Emerging from this focus on early education has also been a multidisciplinary approach (e.g. educators, speech therapists, psychologists, social workers) for supporting children and families. Unfortunately, in some situations this has meant that particular theoretical models for interpreting children's behaviours at school have pathologised their everyday interactions. In this chapter we report on two case examples, where a medical model is used to explain children's behaviours, resulting in a deficit view of the children. In contrast, we argue for a holistic conception of the child in the context of family and community for interpreting children's behaviours in school. In drawing upon the concept of *perezhivanie*, communication, spaces of socialisation, emotions, and forms of subjectivation, we show how an alternative reading of the children in the case studies can be made when different theoretical and research lenses are used. We argue for the need to move away from a traditional medical model for explaining school behaviours where education becomes pathologised and children are *othered*, and suggest that a cultural–historical methodology allows for the reinterpretation of children who are positioned in deficit as successful learners.

8.1 Introduction

The topic of *othering* has traditionally not been the focus of cultural–historical psychology. *Othering* is taken to mean that individual processes should not be defined as inherent to the individuals or as separate from the complex social

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networks in which social life takes place. Even though the topic of *othering* from other theoretical traditions has been studied, we believe that a cultural–historical examination of this ongoing problem can foreground the social practices and personal orientations of individuals in new ways. Through the presentation of two case studies, we make visible how a traditional medical model when used in education generally, positions children in deficit. Our focus is not on special education per se, where a medical model predominantly features (see Bottcher 2012 for a critique), but rather on general education, where a medical model appears to be increasingly being used for understanding children who interact in ways that are different to teachers’ expectations (Daniels and Hedegaard 2011; Gindis 2003; Portes and Vandeboncoeur 2003).

We specifically advance the topic of children who are positioned in deficit during the learning process, and who are until today *treated* in schools as if they carry a learning difficulty pathogen. Instead of being conceptualised as an educational problem, perceived difficulties are treated as a medical problem and these children are excluded in one way or another from the mainstream pedagogical practices of the school. The problem is still more complicated when the teachers convince parents that their children should be medicalised to deal with the perceived learning difficulties.

In this chapter our proposal is to draw upon and advance concepts that were first introduced by Vygotsky, but which we believe are helpful for making visible in research how some educational settings have medicalised the education process and *othered* children who have learning difficulties. The concept of *perezhivanie*, communication, spaces of socialisation, emotions, and forms of subjectivation are used to analyse the case studies, and to advance a methodology that pushes against a traditional medical model that is increasingly being used in education contexts. We begin this chapter by discussing the genealogy of these concepts, followed by a presentation of the case studies, concluding on the methodological principles for making visible the deficit positioning of children. It is through making visible the relations between the researcher/adults and the children in each case study, that we advance our cultural–historical methodology for researching and re-positioning the participants as successful school learners.

8.2 The Historical Foundations of Cultural–Historical Research

The field of psychology has increasingly advanced the cultural and social dimensions of human practices as the basis for studying the development of humans, and this brings to our urgent attention the need to clearly define the specific characteristics of a cultural–historical approach as originally introduced in Soviet psychology. As a rigorous treatment of the topic is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Sect. 8.3 for further details), we simply acknowledge here that we define cultural–historical approach as that which characterises trends found in Soviet

psychology which recognises the cultural, social and historical genesis of human consciousness whilst simultaneously centred on the richness of individuals as active agents of social life. Scholars such as Vygotsky, Rubinstein, Ananiev, Miasichev, Bozhovich and Zaporozhets belong to the old generation of soviet psychologists, including Zinchenko and Davydov, who were active in Vygotsky's last period of research, whilst Abuljanova, Lomov, Brushlinsky and Chudnovsky belong to a younger generation of soviet psychologists (see Sect. 8.3). Their scholarship is representative of the works we collectively draw upon in conceptualising a cultural–historical view of development.

In this chapter we draw upon Vygotsky's definitions as found in "Psychology of Art" and those that he came back to between 1932 and 1934, and which he advanced further in the last years of his life, introducing new concepts, such as sense, social situation of development, and stressing the relevance of emotions. These developments represented an important step forward for overcoming some constraints that up until today are considered as the main concepts in cultural–historical research, but which are often represented as an expression of a mechanical social determinism (e.g. concepts of reflection, internalisation and the identification of psychological processes as internal activities). The concept of *perezhivanie* was retaken by Vygotsky in his last works, principally in "The problem of Environment" (Vygotsky 1994) and in "The crisis at age seven" (Vygotsky 1998), which represented an important premise for a new comprehension of human development (see Sect. 8.1). Elkonin (1971) stated, "Until today the main insufficiency in the study of the child's psychological development is the gap between the cognitive and affective processes" (p. 9). In turn, Zaporozhets pointed out another deficit mainly associated with activity theory:

Essentially for as long time we were forced to be content with the fact that some external correlations were established between activity and mental processes ... although the mechanism of these changes and the very nature of these mental processes were never studied in particular. (Zaporozhets 1995, p. 14)

Both quotations address two of the main consequences of an objective and instrumental psychology; the exclusion of emotions and the ontological "vacuum" of the psychological processes, which are replaced by its identity with external operations.

As has been discussed in Sect. 8.1 and drawn upon by others in Sect. 8.2 of this book, the concept of *perezhivanie* developed by Vygotsky represented a new moment in the study of human motives that considered both the psychological operations and performances that characterise themselves in the person's *perezhivanie* at that moment in which they are socially interacting. According to Vygotsky (1994), *perezhivanie* is the unit of environmental and personal features of the child: "any event or situation in a child's environment will have a different effect on him [sic] depending on how far the child understands its sense and meaning" (p. 343). Vygotsky (1994) carefully examined the relations between emotions and cognition through illustrating how the same children in the same situation can be experiencing the same environment differently, because of how they consciously

relate to that same environment (see also Sect. 8.1, and Fleer and March and Fleer in Sect. 8.2).

Perezhivanie makes clear the motivational character of any human performance, but as has been made explicit in the first session of this book, *perezhivanie* remained open in Vygotsky's work, allowing the concept to be sensitive to new uses and interpretations. This has also been noted in the recent works devoted to this concept (see the special issue of *Mind, Culture and Activity*, Volume 23, Issue 4, 2016).

One point we advance in our study, is the concept of communication. Communication is understood as a dialogical field and not as a linear and sequential relation. The relevance of the adult for the child's development is given by the emotional richness of their communication: the adult is never a mere support of operational activity with objects. The relationship between the early communication of children and adults, and the emotional development of children, has been a weak point in many long-standing explanations of the child's development. Today it continues to be mistreated. The omission of communication in Leontiev's theoretical position was noted by Lomov and Abuljanova, but also from researchers who worked under his influence, such as Smirnov (1993) and Davydov (2002).

In our theoretical interpretation, the child lives through different relational contact with adults, and with a high level of emotional involvement. Scholars like Spitz (1945), Bowlby (1958) and Emde (1983) in psychoanalysis, and Bozhovich (1968) in educational psychology, have stressed that the child very early on begins to react to the affection received from adults, which in turn support and provoke relevant emotional expressions. Bozhovich in drawing upon Vygotsky's theory explained these early emotional behaviours, as part of the child's early relational impressions and system of relations, while Spitz emphasised the quality of the affective relation with the adults. Smirnova (1996) criticised the way in which communication was treated in cultural-historical psychology:

According to the positions of Vygotsky the social world of the adults that surround the children represents the necessary condition for the human development.... It is clear that this comprehension of the process of psychological development implies to consider in the foreground, the role of the communication with the adults. Therefore, for the proper author and his followers, the adult acts only as mediator between the child and the culture, like an abstract "carrier" of signs, norms and forms of activity, but not as a concrete and alive person. Despite the recognition by all of the role of communication with adults in the child psychological development, the process of communication in itself was not subject of research in the cultural-historical approach. (Smirnova 1996, p. 87)

In providing this historical background, we seek to show how there is still much need for developing the existing concepts in cultural-historical theory, and for researching contemporary problems. As we will show through the case studies that are presented in the next section, we seek to foreground the many new questions that emerge during fieldwork, which need to be conceptualised and developed in new ways. The contradictions that emerge in the fieldwork and analysis require a level of border crossing that is not commonly undertaken. The methodological perspective of Soviet psychology was generally experimental and naturalistic and

gives some theoretical guidance for the problem posed in this chapter. However, it is also possible to identify a constructive–interpretative research approach within a cultural–historical tradition. As Zinchenko (2009) explicitly stated, “Since the subject domain that is called consciousness is by far not always given directly, it must be defined and constructed” (p. 53). This is a clear and important reference to a constructive–interpretative methodology in Russian psychology, and which we take up explicitly through our elaboration of our perspective of a cultural–historical methodology for understanding more holistically the child in school as a learner.

In this chapter we are joining forces to present two ways of conceptualising in practice, qualitative research from a cultural–historical standpoint. Although we have used different devices and even different concepts, there are a lot of convergences in our goal to make visible the dynamic of *othering*. As will be shown in the first example, capturing the child’s affective relationship and their subjective and affective position at home and at school in unity is a key for understanding the child’s perspective on entering into the practice tradition of schooling. In the second example, we show a broader conception of *perezhivanie*, adding to what has been presented in Sect. 8.1. We make visible through the dialogue between the researcher and a child, the perceived learning difficulties, and the new understandings and positioning of the child.

Both case studies take as their focus the relevance of the adult in their affective relations with children. Affective relations are seen as an important device for opening up new social spaces, practices and activities in the school. In the first example, the focus is on the relations between the mother and the child. In the second example, it is the relations between the researcher and the child. Both communication and the new social spaces in the classroom that open up are essential for the emergence of new *perezhivani* and the corresponding network of subjective resources. In this study, these are conceptualised as inseparable from the children’s performances in school. The active communication of educators and children, as well as between children are important processes to be attended to in educational setting. Without a holistic conception of research which takes into account the psychological and affective dimensions between the researcher and the participants, the aim of understanding learning in educational settings can never be fully reached.

8.3 Case Study 1: Beginning School

We begin this section by introducing a case study of a family whose eldest child Andrew (5 years) begins school in Australia. The observations began in May and concluded in October in the second year of the research. Schools in Australia begin in February and finish in December. Over 50 h of video observations were recorded across three observation periods (where approximately 5 visits were made to the family home or school) (see Fleer and Hedegaard 2010; and Hedegaard and Fleer 2013 for further details).

The focus of the research methodology was on following the children's perspective through documenting their everyday life practices. This meant capturing at different times, Andrew getting ready and going to school in the morning, the morning walk to school, the evening meals, breakfast routine, going to bed, going shopping, eating snacks, and playing inside or outside of the house. Hedegaard et al. (2012) state that, "Children's perspectives involve *children's experiences*. When the notion of children's perspective is used in this way, an important goal is to explore individual children's lifeworlds and subjective meaning-making" (p. ix). In line with Bozhovich (2009), subjective meaning-making in this case example, includes affective imagination.

8.3.1 *Observation Period 1*

During the first observation period Andrew had been at school from February to May (which included Easter holiday period of 2 weeks).

When we first visited Andrew at home, he and his siblings greeted us with great enthusiasm in the entry hall and took us into the family room. The family room was furnished with a cupboard that held a large screen and DVD player, a long fish tank that took up most of the wall room on one side of the room, two single soft chairs and a 3 seater lounge chair. Andrew greeted us with smiles and moved from one end of the room to the other, often jumping up and down in the same spot, and pirouetting his body in small circles, but always observing us, the mother and his siblings. From time to time the father would appear in the family room, contribute to the conversation, and then disappear into another room. This was also the practice of the mother, however, she stayed talking to the children and the researchers for longer. After a brief period in the family room, the children also expanded their movement to the other parts of the house, but always returning to the family room within a few seconds, as though no walls separated them from the researchers. When the researchers showed the children the digital cameras, the children each confidently took a camera, and held it by its cord, and moved about the house, swinging the cameras in small circles, as well as swinging the cameras through the air as full arm movements, narrowly missing each other as they walked and swung. The mother and father at different times, showed the children how to look into the camera and to click the button to take a photograph. Andrew showed interest in this, and took a number of photographs, whilst his siblings swung the cameras around in constant motion as they moved from room to room. His siblings at the commencement of the study were aged approximately 16 months, 2 and 4 years.

The subsequent observations in the family home did not involve using the still cameras, but rather the researchers video recorded everyday family, school and childcare activities. The children showed some initial interest in the digital video cameras, but usually spent their time moving about the family home—inside and outside. The children's experiences over the 18 months, showed continual

movement at home and this appeared to be the common practice tradition, and the accepted way of living everyday life for Andrew. His lifeworld and subjective meaning-making were all tied up with movement (see also Hedegaard and Fler 2010).

How the family practice traditions create the conditions for children's development when they enter other institutions, such as when starting school (where a different practice tradition exists, such as being seated most of the day to listen and work), can give different conditions and create an emotional response to the new social and material environment. On one of the observations made of Andrew during the first observation period, the Mother reported the following to the researchers:

- Mother: He's had a few problems [at school]. But—he's, got a problem with not focusing. Which is causing a lack of concentration.
- Researcher: Right yeah yes.
- Mother: But he's just got to like learn to focus a lot more on more concentration and I think—he'll be right.
- Mother: ... but yeah, of a night time when I pick him up I ask her [the teacher] how he's going. She said today he wasn't focusing properly. He had a bit of trouble focusing—but, I mean, he's still only, like in the end of May.

Included in the empirical material gathered by the researchers, is not just what the child is personally experiencing, but also the “explorations and analyses of children's life conditions” (Hedegaard et al. 2012: ix) that are emotionally experienced (Vygotsky 1994). If we are to understand Andrew's perspective, we must also determine his social participation and affective relations under the different social conditions that are beyond family life. The mother's interpretation of what appeared to matter in school—being able to focus—continued to be a source of distress for the mother, which then influenced her interactions with Andrew at home—as we see in the following example from Observation Period 2.

8.3.2 *Observation Period 2*

In the next observation period the concerns for Andrew's behaviour by the school, as perceived by the Mother, had emotionally intensified. As will be seen in the following extract from a home observation, Andrew's *behaviour* was now linked to the need for “expert testing” and potential chemical intervention—to support him focussing. The terms attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or attention deficit disorder (ADD) syndrome are now featured in the Mother's discourse:

It is 6.30 in the morning. Andrew is in his pyjamas. He goes into the kitchen and looks for a cloth to wipe his legs. His mother comes into the kitchen and asks him what he is doing, to which he replies, “Wash my leg”. His mother asks, “What for?”. Andrew explains, “They got yucky on them”. The mother leaves the kitchen to find a cloth to dry his legs. As she

returns she says, “Andrew you are disgusting”. The mother then turns to the researchers whilst addressing Andrew and says, “I said to Gloria and Marilyn [the researchers] you do this for attention, more than anything at all”. The mother dries Andrew’s legs whilst saying, “What did you smear the honey all down your legs for? It is disgusting”. Andrew smiles and laughs. His mother replies, “You think it is funny. I don’t. No one else is laughing at ya”. The mother explains to the researchers, “He does what he does, more for the attention. He follows, there are a couple kids in his class, in prep, they got, ADHD, ... one boy stayed down in prep, I noticed a difference.... hyperactivity, see what it does to them”.

Andrew moves around the kitchen area and the mother follows his movement and says, “He does this for the attention; he doesn’t do it because he is hyperactivity; he does it more for attention; he knows who is here, you or friends, he will just do it and knows standing around and he will do it for seek that attention he is not getting; that’s what they are they are telling us [at the school]; they can work on that; its just a matter of not seek that extra attention, and focus on what everyone else is doing... they did the assessment; Alison the speech pathologist, we got a speech pathologist at our school and they actually is on there; on the school assessment that he’s got a learning disorder, which is what the ADD is; a learning disorder, has trouble sitting down and concentrating on one thing; he has to be up going off and doing something else; and they take send info to AusChild; and they get their results; and now waiting to get results back from AusChild; and then they probably want to speak to me after school, and then we will work out we can go from and help sit down and focus; to get him to sit down and do anything; he will do something and in 5 min will want to change and do something else”.

The mother notices that Andrew has thrown the towel to the ground. She yells at him: “Cut it out. What have you been told at school? Don’t try and seek attention. It doesn’t work Andrew!”. (Home observation, Period 1 Visit 3)

The authority of assessing Andrew through AusChild, through the school speech pathologist, and through explaining to the Mother that Andrew’s continual movement was attention seeking, together created a home situation in which the Mother was now naming Andrew’s behaviours at home as attention seeking, and changing their personal and emotional relationship. As has been argued by Fisher (2011), when a problem is seen “as within the child or the home background” this can “give rise to reductive remedial measures that locate blame” rather than seeking to try and “understand the nature of the problem by considering the perspective of the learning within the learning context” (p. 49). As was shown in Observation Period 1 and as was found for the whole study (Hedegaard and Fleer 2010), Andrew’s subjective position in everyday family life at home was for him to continually move about. However, sitting still and focusing on educational content is an institutional expectation when attending school. Blaming Andrew—as the source of the problem—did little to help him with learning the new practice traditions in the school. Solving the problem through chemical intervention appeared as a medical rather than an educative solution. In order to understand Andrew’s development, we need to look at him within the practice traditions he experiences, as well as how he understands the practice traditions of the home and the school. But the child’s practice is not static. It is dynamic and changing as Andrew’s understanding of the new school practice develops. The differences in practice traditions, created new conditions for Andrew, but also for his mother, and this changed the interactions between Andrew and his mother, who was now blaming Andrew for what was a difficult transition to school.

8.3.3 *Observation Period 3*

In the second year of school, the focus on Andrew's behaviour continues and the Mother's concerns move beyond the school, as she looks for advice from other sources. The Mother speaks to her family doctor, and she is advised to look at his diet, as a potential reason for Andrew's continual movement. Whilst a more holistic view is being sought, the focus is still on "health" and a medical model as the source of authority. In the extract below we see that the mother also speaks to friends, who give alternative suggestions. However, the Mother maintains her concern about the need for chemical intervention recommended by school psychologist.

Our family doctor, we were talking to him about Andrew and his ADD and all additives in food and stuff...Once a year I buy bottle of cordial at Christmas time, and after that they don't get any of that. Since we tried cutting out the cordial; on the whole, since I been doing that for a couple of weeks; they actually have been a lot better; I give 'em water, give 'em milk, still giving them a bit of apple juice, now and then, as a treat. Noticed the difference in their behaviour - just how they behave; if I give them some lollies or some chocolate, they just go hypo! Andrew can't have that coloured popcorn. It makes him sick, and not only that he ... anything that's got additives in it.

When I took Andrew to the psychologist towards end of last year, he said he has got a touch of ADD, or a bit of hyperactivity, anyway they wanted to give him Ritalin. I said Nu. I am not going to put him on that crap. That's a speed bust. There is no way I am going to have him going on that, it just gonna make him more awake...

Apparently fish oil is supposed to be good for them, my friend said, to help with the ADD. (Home interview, Period 3, Visit 1)

The advice received from the Mother's friend contrasts with that received in the first year of school where the Mother's extended family suggested Andrew repeat his first year of school:

I rather him repeat than have to go on to a say, special development school or something to be able to learn. But yeah I mean if he has to go repeat a grade, then yeah, we'll let him repeat but, hopefully he doesn't have to. (Home observation, Period 1 Visit 2)

A range of perspectives were presented to the Mother over the data gathering period and they are captured in Table 8.1. Andrew's perspective of experiencing school as behaviour was becoming increasingly emotionally charged. A new kind of relationship was emerging for Andrew at school as well as at home. In the example that follows, Andrew's behaviour at school was also affectively experienced through continuously being reprimanded by the teachers, but also through the children reporting on his behaviours to the teachers, as the following example shows.

Andrew is seated on the carpet at the front of the classroom surrounded by all the children in his class. He is seated towards the back of the group. All the children are facing the teacher. The teacher has a storybook open, and is about to read a story to the group. The area for the children to sit, is marked by a border of masking tape on the carpet. The children sit within the square border and the teacher is seated on a chair outside of the border. Andrew stands and begins to walk back towards the desks away from the group,

>Table 8.1 Pathologising learning

<p>Extended family perspectives on development presented by mother</p>	<p>Teacher's perspective on development as presented by mother</p>	<p>Protection worker's perspective as presented by mother</p>	<p>Paediatrician's perspective (via the speech therapist) as presented by mother</p>	<p>Family doctor's perspective as presented by the mother</p>	<p>Friend's perspective as presented by the mother</p>
<p>Andrew may need to repeat a year of school or go to a special school if he does not catch up</p>	<p>Andrew has problems with focusing</p>	<p>Department of human services in their visits have assessed the physical and mental development of the children, advising them to buy pencils and paper and to do activities and have discussions with the children</p>	<p>Andrew is diagnosed as having ADD and requiring medication</p>	<p>The family advises the mother to consider Andrew's diet, specifically noting food additives, and products with sugar in them</p>	<p>Using alternative health products</p>
<p>Andrew's grandmother lets Andrew's mum read her books on bringing up boys by Steve Biddulph</p>	<p>Andrew is viewed as attention seeking and some form of behaviour management is needed</p>	<p></p>	<p>To avoid medication, the mother discusses the attention management behaviours she must institute in her interactions with Andrew</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

keeping a close eye on the teacher. The teacher notices, and asks him to sit down. He says in a timid and quiet voice, "I want to get something". The teacher repeats firmly, "Sit down please". Andrew appears upset by this, but sits down promptly. After a small discussion about the teacher's name (she is filling in for the regular class teacher), she begins reading, but stops after announcing the title of the text, and reprimands other children to sit and listen. Andrew who is now at the back of the group, kneels and pushes his head up in order to see what is going on and also to see the storybook. One child says, "Andrew is supposed to sit on the cross". Another child points and says, "That's the spot there". The teacher does not respond, but says "Can everyone see", to which the children respond in chorus "Yes". She then continues to read. As the teacher reads the book, Andrew looks down to the taped border for the group and picks at it. The teacher notices and says in a commanding voice, "Stop playing with that sticky tape please, right now". She then says sternly, "Come and sit right here (pointing to the cross on the carpet)". Andrew immediately stands, holding his head down, in what appears to be an embarrassed manner, with his face turning red. He walks with arms stiff and head and shoulders slumped down to the front of the group. As he walks he trips, and the teacher asks kindly if he is OK. He does not respond, and sits on the spot next to the teacher. The teacher checks if he can see the book, and then continues to read the story. After a minute, Andrew turns his back away from the teacher and begins to look through the materials close to him. The teacher asks him to stop. Andrew compliantly turns to her appearing to stop, and then as she goes back to reading the book, Andrew continues to play with the materials. The teacher eventually stops reading and asks him again to stop playing with the materials. One of the other children move the box of materials away from Andrew. He gives a scowling look to the girl, and then plays with his fingers. He does not look at the book that the teacher is reading for most of the session. During the story reading, Andrew tears tape and paper, licks these, and then systemically licks his fingers – all with his back facing the teacher. Once again he moves the materials close to him, asking the teacher if he can put them away, to which the teacher says, "Leave them there". As he goes back to playing with the materials, one of the children reports that he is touching things. The teacher asks Andrew to stop. When he later continues this behaviour, another child reports this, but the teacher says, "He has stopped". Eventually the teacher asks Andrew to move to another spot, where he immediately lifts up and down materials that are lying on the table close to him. The teacher says, "Stop touching things, please". (School Observation, Period 3 Visit 1 T6)

What is constant in the observations of Andrew at school is the focus on his behaviour, where a need for solving the problem through chemical intervention (medical field) or through naming it as attention seeking behaviour (teacher perspective) became part of his affective experience of schooling. The children support this surveillance of Andrew's behaviour, by reporting when he does not "pay attention" or when "fiddling with materials" as was noted in the observation above. Having a special marked spot for Andrew also publically signals that he has to sit still at school. What is missing in the school context, is an understanding of the everyday family practices in the home to explain why Andrew may be moving about so much in school. What emerged through the professionals who supported the teachers in the school that Andrew attended was a form of pathologising of learning. The examples given also characterise the growing trend in pathologising any kind of human behaviour into a disorder (Burman 2008).

8.3.4 Andrew's Affective Relations and Deficit Positioning

The authority of the institution was creating new demands upon Andrew at home through the perspective of the school about how to manage Andrew. Fisher (2011) says that, “it is the child’s interpretation of what matters that orients their actions” (p. 51). When we first observed Andrew at school in Observation Period 1, he wanted to please the teacher, and he wanted to take up the new social position of being a school child as a key “affective relationship between” Andrew “and the environment” (Bozhovich 2009, p. 68). All of Andrew’s interactions with the teachers during the three observation periods focused on his behaviour, and consequently this is how Andrew perceived what it meant to be a successful school child (Hedegaard and Fleer 2010). Focusing on behaviour rather than curriculum content oriented Andrew to aspects of schooling that in the long term would result in school failure. Fisher (2011) suggests that as researchers we need to look at “young children’s participation in institutional practices” if we are to “understand the nature of underachievement” (p. 52). She shows through case examples of children’s underachievement in learning to write, how children:

...clearly concerned to behave as a school child should behave. The types of action that seem to show these children trying to do the right thing as pupils in a writing lesson included the way in which they used the artefacts provided to support their writing and incidents where they seem to be motivated by pleasing the teacher. (p. 54)

Following the children’s intentions as they participate in the institutional practice of doing schooling was a key for understanding Andrew, but also important in Fisher’s (2011) study who found that her focus children were experiencing and emotionally relating to schooling through behaviours of pleasing the teacher. But what is missing here is knowing more about the practice traditions of the children from the home so that interpretations of their school participation can be better understood. Researching holistically the practice traditions of Andrew’s school and his home (Hedegaard 2009), gave different insights and possible interpretations of how Andrew was emotionally experiencing, interpreting and affectively relating to schooling.

The focus on behaviour maintained throughout the three observation periods, gave an authoritative voice to “testing” and “assessment” where the diagnosis is named and recorded, and this created great anxiety for the family, changing Andrew’s interactions with his mother at home. Naming and blaming positioned Andrew in ways that did not support his development across the home and the school: “...actually it is on there; on the school assessment that he’s got a learning disorder, which is what the ADD is; a learning disorder ...” (Mother). Researching the practice traditions of both the home and the school gave insights into a more holistic and affective interpretation of Andrew’s experiences at school. Including in the interpretations the changing emotional conditions for Andrew as a result of the Mother’s understanding of the school situation, also helped with better understanding the affective dynamic and changing interpersonal relationship between Andrew and his mother.

We now turn to another case study taken from clinical research in Brazil where the interpersonal relations between a researcher and a child are studied.

8.4 Case Study 2: Being at School

In the school documentation, Kevin started school when he was two-and-a-half years old. His mother decided to start working again and she opted to register Kevin into a public day care centre half-time. His mother said that his transition into school was easy. When he was 6 years old, he started attending the first year of the second cycle of primary education. This is where the research was conducted.

According to some of the school staff, Kevin soon attracted the attention of teachers and coordinators as he displayed shy and distant behaviours. He did not maintain relationships with his classmates and spent breaks alone or talking with staff members at the school. As the year passed by, the attention of the teachers was also drawn to Kevin's learning, as it was reported that he was not capable of following the content delivered by the school.

The researcher meets Kevin at the end of October, in his second year of school and in the second cycle of primary education. Kevin is the kind of student that does not cause any type of trouble in the classroom: he is a shy, reserved child whom we could hardly hear as his voice was really soft. Despite the fact that Kevin did not cause any trouble regarding his behaviour in the classroom, he became a big mystery to the pedagogic team due to his learning difficulties. However, the teachers made no effort to establish emotional contact with him, nor to facilitate his contact with the rest of the children. The teachers were only centred on trying to move forward on the problems that they perceived in Kevin's school performance, without considering his feelings of shyness and difficulties with making contact with others, and how this made it difficult for him to centre on what was happening academically in the classroom.

Currently, Kevin is in his third year at school and will probably fail this academic programme. He does not read; is barely able to write his name, and appears unable to recognise the letters that compose his name; displays difficulties in identifying geometrical figures and colours; and is not able to perform mathematical operations. There are many speculations regarding the motives determining Kevin's learning difficulties. Each of the school staff members who have been consulted regarding Kevin's case exposed a different view, but each of these views expressed a congruent language that visibly emerges as an expression of the social subjectivity of the school: the language of the intellectual deficit, of the pathology closely associated with an instrumental-cognitive representation of learning. These included: intellectual deficiency, difficulties to process and store information, short capacity of memory, "his mother is the issue"; sinusitis; problems with his eyes and vision; etc. It is interesting to stress the terms used by professionals of both schools to describe Kevin's learning difficulties.

Due to his learning and psychomotor difficulties, Kevin was directed to the “Specialized Service of Learning Support” in the beginning of 2014 in order to undertake a psychopedagogical evaluation. According to the report made available by the school, following a psychodiagnostic evaluation, Kevin was considered to display an average cognitive potential when compared to his age group.

In relation to Kevin’s social and family life, we must say that both are considerably difficult situations. Kevin lives in a very small one-room apartment in the basement of a commercial building, the house having almost no ventilation due to the absence of windows. He currently lives with his mother and a 17-year-old sister. His father abandoned the household when Kevin had just turned 6 years, and after he had just started the first year of the second cycle of primary education. His mother is currently unemployed due to a medical condition, and the household rent comes from a government welfare programme.

Due to security reasons, Kevin is not allowed to play outside the house and therefore has almost no social contact with children of his age group outside the school context. He does not take part in other types of social activities, such as sports, music lessons, etc. Kevin has very few leisure moments and usually spends weekends at home. Issues such as socialisation, social contacts and group integration, make it evident that there is, in Kevin’s case, an affective isolation that represents a loss of psychic development and subjective resources needed by him to develop himself in that period of his life.

8.4.1 Preparation of the Social Setting of Kevin’s Investigation

The researcher participated in the class activities of a group of children undertaking their second year of primary education. At first, she did not aim to achieve a deep emotional contact with the children. The researcher’s main interest was to understand how the classroom functioned and how the pedagogic work was organised. During the second week of observations, Kevin approached the researcher and asked:

K: Uncle, can I tell you a story?

R: Of course!

According to the observations, Kevin felt curious about the presence of the researcher even though he was very shy. He found a way to get close to the new person in the classroom. He wanted to tell me a story that the teacher had told the class the day before. I was quite surprised as I had participated in this activity the previous day and had the opportunity to watch the children’s behaviour during the exercise. Overall, the children were curious, interested and questioned the teacher constantly. Kevin, however, looked distracted. His look was empty and lost, paying almost no attention to the activity. It was almost as though he was not there at all... On that day, however,

Kevin told the researcher whole story in detail, while holding the book in his hand. He was very interested in telling me the story, as whenever a child approached and interrupted us, he would take a position and calmly state: “I am telling to the uncle a story, wait for your turn”. This attitude was amazing given his shy behaviour. However, there was strong evidence that he felt comfortable telling me the story, a fact that permitted him to defend his space of personal relation in a very spontaneous and self-determined way. This gives evidence of how much the emergence of a new position, with its implied affective and spontaneous contact with the other, creates a motivational force for communicating.

Kevin’s behaviour was not inspired from any external requirement, but by his curiosity and by the way he enjoyed the contact with the researcher. This led him to assume and defend his position, something completely unexpected from the logic of how he is being treated in the school.

As result of this experience, the researcher worked directly with Kevin. The teacher mentioned that she often heard that Kevin did not have the ability to retain information, to memorise it and later to address the themes he had learned. However, Kevin was able to retell a story he had heard from his teacher the previous day, which corroborated his ability to store and retain information. We can identify once again the main discourses used to frame learning difficulties: cognitive discourse, which refers to cognitive issues and intellectual limitations as the main fact for explaining the learning difficulties.

Kevin appears to have some inherent disabilities in his operational cognitive–intellectual repertory. However, instead of the school looking at the child as an affective, active and socialised person, the teachers act passively, attempting to subordinate him to an assimilative–reproductive set of learning operations without any attention to the interactive–affective dimensions of classroom functioning. After this first encounter, the researcher accompanied Kevin throughout his school tasks.

During these activities, it was acknowledged that Kevin demonstrated difficulties with learning the letters of the alphabet. He was able to sing the alphabet in the right order and relate sounds and letters correctly. If the letters were shuffled, however, or even if we asked Kevin to pronounce the last letter in the alphabet, he would not be able do so, even if he had just sang the alphabet correctly. He would start pronouncing random letters, state that he is tired or simply that he does not know. The evidence for his lack of motivation was great, however, the teacher did not perceive this and she attributed his lack of interest to his learning difficulties. The teacher pointed out: “It is impossible to be interested if he does not understand the principles to follow our explanations”, and the researcher proposed: “why don’t we invent a game, in which one child’s answer could be complemented with another answer”, giving the opportunity for the teachers to use resources that facilitate the emergence of a more cooperative–participative way of learning. The teacher openly said that the researcher could help her with actioning this proposal, because she had no idea of how to advance this proposal. Far of feeling better, Kevin felt each time worse by his exposition in front of the group, his feeling of failure, and by his feeling of being out from the social group in the classroom. Considering these responses by

Kevin, throughout the moments of classroom activity, the researcher noticed an excessive tiredness in Kevin. Talking with him, Kevin said he usually sleeps quite late because he stays up watching television, and then wakes up very early in the morning. Besides, he constantly complained of untreated sinusitis. A tired child suffering from breathing issues will probably lack the energy to remain 5 h of effective school learning. However, the teachers did not pay any attention to these facts. The diversity of emotions, symbolic processes and feelings resulting from all these classroom practices are inseparable from his familiar and social daily life.

The emergence of new emotions, as result of his relation with the researcher, might change his position in the school as well as change the results of his learning experience. This will represent an important moment in the transition of the child to a more active and curious position, which should represent a first step for Kevin to overcome his learning difficulties. Kevin's main problem, at this moment of his school experience, is that he began school from a familiar life where he was not only understimulated, but where he had very limited opportunities to develop subjective resources for socially integrating into a classroom. Kevin came to the school without the necessary subjective resources for allowing him to respond to the new requirements of this new social situation.

Many times the researcher worked with Kevin for the whole day on a specific letter, but on the next day he would not remember that letter. Teachers said that Kevin was not able to develop learning strategies, with one teacher even stating that his brain resembled a "holed sack", in which things that go in suddenly disappear. We can see how cognitive metaphors dominate teachers' explanations of Kevin's case, creating a framework where the relational efforts to create a bond with Kevin remain out of sight. Even when the researcher was working with him as a substitute teacher, and the teacher realised the efforts made by the researcher while working with Kevin, and approached both and stated: "*You do not need to do that with him. He will not be able to do it. I have tried before, I was his teacher*".

The position of this teacher clearly revealed not only the dominant representations that ruled the school practice, but also the dominant social subjectivity of the school in which the teachers have naturalised that the students with difficulties are not capable of learning, and a belief that nothing could be done. It would therefore be difficult for teachers to realise the individual deficit positioning that was occurring as a result of the low "institutional expectations" of what it meant to be an underachiever. The relationships of the child inside and outside the school were never of interest to the teachers, and therefore the emotions generated in those spaces, and the subjective processes associated with them, were also completely ignored.

These types of statements from teachers would not have a place if there would be effective normative systems for treating children's formative and affective issues, or a capacity-building environment focusing on children's development. How does a child feel when s/he hears from her/his own teacher that s/he is not able to complete a specific task? Which instrument does this child use in order to prove his/her teacher wrong? In Kevin's case, these words affect him in a way that he cannot consciously understand. However, when he faces a learning obstacle he could use the same words his teachers used to affirm that he could not learn. This exclusion of the

affective singular position of the students is one of the elements associated with the growing role of the medicalization evident in the school; if nothing could be done in the educative practice, the child should be medically prescribed as the only way to solve the problem—similar to what was noted in the first case study of Andrew.

Aiming to propose a new activity to Kevin, one different from those traditionally proposed in the school environment, the researcher asked him to bring some board games, like a puzzle, a memory game and a domino, to class on the next day. He was thrilled with the idea. This ludic turn into a new type of task less charged with subjective plots as those usually proposed within school, allowed the researcher to explore the child's cognitive and intellectual repertoire in a new subjective and relational context.

At that moment, our work team had already refuted the idea that Kevin was cognitively incapable of learning. While assembling a puzzle together, Kevin was able to focus while elaborating strategies to pick the ideal pieces to fit the different spaces. He also won several memory games and while playing domino, he practised counting all the dots in the different stones; he did not display any difficulties during those activities. What grasped our attention the most was his performance during the memory game. The cards composing the game had a figure and a name written on it, so the researcher started to ask Kevin about the letters composing the different names on the cards:

Researcher: Kevin, what is drawn in this card?

Kevin: A plane.

Here begin the new and final part of the Kevin's case

R: Can you tell me the letter that word starts with?

K: No.

R: Shall we repeat the word slowly?

N: P-L-A-N-E

R: What about now, can you tell me which is the first letter of this word?

N: Letter P.

R: Well done Kevin! (Bezerra dos Santos 2014, p. 22)

This situation repeated itself with different words. In different cases Kevin would claim he could not identify the letters. His first reaction was to deny himself the possibility of successfully answering the question. However, once the researcher insisted, and created a new path of being in contact with him, Kevin demonstrated that he could identify the letters. Together with the researcher's skill of keeping in emotional contact with Kevin, the researcher provided him with strategies to help him identifying the letters, such as associating sounds to the letter figures. In many different moments, Kevin would just start guessing, naming most of the letters of the alphabet. In doing this Kevin concentrated on the task laughing with the researcher, thus giving further evidence that Kevin was able to do the task by the change in his emotional set, a fact that was only possible as result of his affective relationship with the researcher. The researcher would then address him regarding this:

Researcher: Kevin, stop guessing and think. We just saw that letter. You know it.

During these moments, our advancement was quite restricted as Kevin could not advance properly in the task of recognising the letters. He was not being able to recognise letters that he had himself recognised only minutes earlier. His approach was to guess random letters, repeating constantly the words of the substitute teacher: “I cannot do it, uncle”. At this point, the researcher started looking for other strategies, alternatives to the sound–letter association. He asked Kevin to imagine that inside our heads are different small drawers. Kevin instantly looked at him and smiled. The imaginative act, inside the relational quality within which it appears, had a much stronger potential for generating new emotions associated with confidence and safety, than the formal cognitive set commonly used in all the levels of the teaching practice observed.

The emergence of new subjective senses (see Sect. 8.3), that occurs when emotions evoke new symbolical processes is possible by the dialogical field created by the researcher with the child. It is not our aim in this chapter to study the new subjective senses that emerge in Kevin within his relation with the researcher, but to understand how new emotions emerge in the communication, changing the social position in the classroom, as a process that occurs together with the emergence of new subjective senses.¹ This was also noted in Case Study 1, but as a negative rather than a positive case, because when the school constructed a deficit view of Andrew to the mother, this resulted in a new affective relation between Andrew and his mother at home. In Kevin’s case, the invitation to imagine evoked emotions that were simultaneously related to the anticipation of the child, in relation to that which was proposed by the researcher’s task. The invitation came for a person who created a very good relationship with him, which in turn permitted him to be motivated by the new task, and this liberated his imagination within which emotions were inseparable from symbolical processes.

Dialogue following the researcher’s proposition:

Researcher: Are you imagining Kevin?

Kevin: Yes, uncle.

R: Do you know what the little drawers are for?

K: Yes, to store things.

R: So, Kevin, we will store all the little letters inside these drawers (Bezerra dos Santos 2014, p. 122)

Kevin smiles again, demonstrating that he is enjoying the game. To each word, the researcher asked Kevin to store the initial letter in the drawer, sometimes playing with him: “Be careful so that they doesn’t escape”. Kevin smiled, his facial expression denoting he was trying to imagine the letters kept inside the drawers. The activity continued in this way.

¹Subjective senses are defined by the unity of emotions and symbolical processes, leading to a new unit on which subjective functioning appears as a new ontological reality in relation to what traditionally has been named as psychological. The last chapter in Session 3 will introduce subjectivity, and it is there that this concept is discussed.

Researcher: What about you open the drawer and try to look for the letter inside?

Right away Kevin would confidently state the letter we were looking for. He would stop, think, and in a few seconds state and point to the correct letter. The researcher was able to perceive that Kevin was feeling more confident, getting the letters right more often, he was less insecure. This confidence resulted from a network of subjective senses developed during the course of the task, in which feeling esteem and respect were essential. These feelings were at the same time a result and a condition of Kevin's advancement in the task, contributing decisively to this feeling of pleasure in the tasks he had done. This relation provided him with many affections and symbolical productions that could only be found within the flow of many unfolding subjective senses that emerged during this activity.

The concepts of subjective senses and subjective configurations allowed us to understand with more confidence Kevin's emotional and cognitive state, not as an entity or as an intrinsic characteristic, but as a subjective quality produced within a relational–operational space, in the process of development. This theoretical reading is essential for understanding the configuration of complex productions in a child's personality. Kevin demonstrated that he was interested in, and enjoyed the activity, rarely complaining about being tired and even proposed that they invent stories with the letters. The workday was very productive and Kevin suggested that they repeated those exercises more often.

It is interesting to note that interest, fantasy, and imagination were central in generating a "learning subjective condition", which is one of the most important categories of our current proposal. More than a "proximal development zone", the "learning subjective condition" is the subjective configuration of the student within a dialogic context, which allows an intrinsic and primary integration of the student's emotions, imagination and new psychological states. This subjective configuration within a dialogic context, acts as the ground for intellectual operations, without which the student's intellect is at risk of becoming an operational–formal system that is unproductive, and centred only on cognition.

8.4.2 The Development of Kevin's Intellectual Operations

The possibility of meeting Kevin often outside of the school's social context allowed the researcher to participate in, and investigate other relational spaces familiar to Kevin. While visiting Kevin's house, it was possible to appreciate the complexity and diversity of elements involved in Kevin's subjective dynamics, which influenced the way in which Kevin defined the world around him and himself, as well as his learning process. In this way, the researcher was able to track down Kevin's school learning difficulties and identify new sources of emotions that undoubtedly were organised within the different feelings and emotional states that emerged within the child's social life.

Currently, the meetings are taking place on a weekly basis during the morning period, taking into consideration that Kevin now attends school in the afternoons. However, in most of the sessions Kevin is still sleeping when the researcher arrives, or has just woken up. Upon questioning Kevin's sleeping habits, his mother said, quite embarrassed, that Kevin sleeps very late as he likes to stay up watching television. At this moment Kevin's older sister shouts from inside one of the rooms, that he usually goes to bed around midnight and that nobody is able to put him in bed before that time.

This scenario, unknown to the school staff, reveals itself as an indicator of the way in which Kevin's routine is organised, as well as the nature of his family dynamics. The researcher questions the intellectual deficit diagnosis attributed to Kevin, considering the possibility of the inexistence of such a pathology. Other indicators, as for example, Kevin's health, might corroborate this hypothesis.

In one of their first meetings, while Kevin was trying to complete a Portuguese language exercise with the researcher, she realised that Kevin was lacking concentration and seemed sleepy, yawning constantly. He expressed tiredness and discomfort with how he was feeling at that moment: "Uncle, my eyes are itching. I try not to feel sleepy but I can't".

Kevin's routine significantly influences his learning process. However, his mother is not capable of assuming a firm position regarding Kevin's sleeping habits and thus he does not have the rest that would be recommended for his age. In order to understand more of Kevin's family dynamics, and the way in which it influences his learning process, the researcher proposed a conversation about Kevin's development with his mother. The possibility of discussing Kevin's development and learning process with his mother becomes a fundamental moment for the comprehension of the social context within which the child's learning capacity is being determined. She takes the opportunity to reveal and discuss important information about Kevin's development and routine.

Kevin's mother describes to the researcher how she and her daughter used to treat him as a baby while he was at home: with excessive mime, care and over-protection. As it was mentioned before, during the day Kevin is mostly at home, deprived from social contact and from the sensorial stimulation of natural weather. These overprotective habits started during Kevin's first year of childhood, when afraid that he might hurt himself, Kevin's mother would keep him in the cradle or in his stroller most of the time. This considerably delayed Kevin's development, consequently leading to psychomotor issues.

8.5 Discussion and Conclusion

In the two examples given in this chapter it is evident that a medical model privileges behaviour and silences the child's feelings and social context, and, as we saw in the case of Kevin, potentially, positions children as school failures. We also saw how a focus on behaviour in the case of Andrew meant that his Mother felt anxious because

of the fear of him being medicated as a solution to her son's lack of focus at school. In this case example, movement around the house was a normal everyday practice, whilst sitting still for long periods, as is prevalent in many schools, was not part of Andrew's family practice. In both cases the family conditions were not being considered in the assessment of each child's school performance. The importance of a more holistic methodology for capturing the living conditions of both Kevin and Andrew would have resulted in different assessments being made of their perceived learning difficulties at school. We also suggest that as found by Fisher (2011), that "children's understanding arise both from the practice of the particular institution and their interpretation of this" and therefore "to understand reasons for underachievement we need to focus on the child's activity within the institution rather than on institutional practice" (pp. 61–62) *per se*. But activity alone is not enough.

Emotions in learning was also central in the case studies. The affective dynamic with teachers, families and peers is the first step in advancing a learning process for children with perceived learning difficulties. The creation of "learning subjective conditions" is essential and must be introduced as an initial first step when working with children with perceived learning difficulties. It is also a key for understanding the dynamic and changing relationships that were observed between the researcher and Kevin, and between the mother and Andrew, because the school positioned Andrew as a behaviour problem, and this discourse significantly influenced his relationship with his mother.

The discussion of both case studies showed how Vygotsky's emphasis on *perezhivanie* in his thesis on the Psychology of Art, where he emphasised the inseparable relation between emotion and imagination, does in fact represent a new path for psychology and education, which up until now has not been well understood. This means that any psychological function or process must be conceptualised to include emotions. Here the potential for imagination would appear to be an important part of the process. The present discussion has foregrounded the relevance of imagination as a resource for the Kevin's cognitive development. But this can also be used to explain how Andrew was positioned as a behavioural problem in the school, not just by the teachers, but also by his fellow peers. When considering Andrew's case, the children and teachers had in mind an image of Andrew, initially as moving about and not focusing, to an image of him as a behaviour problem needing remediation to sit still by being placed in a special spot during whole group time.

A methodology that separates out the child from the experiences of schooling and lived experiences of being at home engaged in everyday life, can never fully allow for a holistic analysis of how a child develops a subjective sense of each situation, or even how a child subjectively configures and reconfigures the ongoing affective, social and material experiences of learning in school. Burman (2008) explains this particular problem, "The only available explanation to account for pupil failure or underachievement is therefore in terms of individuals or cultural deficit—blaming the child or the family" (p. 267). What we saw was how the medical model *othered* the children in the case studies and blamed school failure on the children themselves.

A holistic conception of the children's learning and development could not be illuminated though a traditional medical model which privileged individual behaviour in relation to cognitive outcomes. Learning was devoid of context or human feelings and emotions. Through discussing the pedagogical situation as realised through the naming by the teachers of the behavioural and cognitive deficiencies of both children, it was possible to see the methodological problems of researching in the early years of school where deeper insights into perceived learning difficulties are needed. A more dynamic process of learning and development should be captured in both the data generation and the analysis. Vygotsky (1997) discussed this dynamic nature of research as capturing development in motion.

Our elaborated case studies as presented in this chapter, sought to show a dynamic relation between all the participating people in the lives of Kevin and Andrew, including the researcher–child relationship, as was illustrated through the case example of Kevin, and the mother–child relationship as shown in the case of Andrew. The former is particularly controversial in traditional approaches to research, as the dynamics between the researcher and the child would not be traditionally captured in the data set. Yet this dynamic relation that draws upon dialectical logic was central for determining a holistic view of Kevin's development, and for realising important affective and cognitive dimensions of the learning process.

Only a few have conceptualised research in the early years using dialectical logic (Hedegaard 2008a), in relation to the genesis of development (e.g. Veresov 2014), as a dynamic process of development in motion (see Fleer and Ridgway 2014), as a past–present dialectic (see Ridgway 2014) or as occurring across countries (Gillen et al. 2007). Some of this work has captured the dynamics through digital video data gathering (Bird et al. 2014; Fleer 2008; Fleer and Ridgway 2014).

Even fewer have considered the affective dimensions when undertaking research (see Quiñones 2014; Quiñones and Fleer 2011) or the central role of the research as part of the research context (González Rey 1997, 2005; Hedegaard 2008b) as was noted particularly in the second case study presented in this chapter. Bringing to a research methodology the concepts of *perezhivanie* (Sect. 8.1), emotion, imagination and communication (and concepts discussed in Sect. 8.3—subjective sense, and subjective configuration) gives new insights into the nature of the lived experience of children in the early years of school during the process of learning and development. These concepts have supported the process of capturing data that is dynamic and holistic, revealing the affective contexts of both case studies.

What is central here for advancing a cultural–historical methodology, is keeping in unity the affective and cognitive dimensions as understood in the context of shared social practices and lived material conditions and experiences, as we saw in the movement at home for Case Study 1, and the sleeping routines in Case Study 2. We argue that these social processes are always realised as a subjective production, rather than as a simple reflection of reality. The concepts of *perezhivanie*, emotion, imagination and communication, subjective sense, and subjective configuration (see Sect. 8.3) together supported this analysis and showed how the pathologising of the learning situation resulted in deficit positioning of each child.

We see as important the methodological principle of overcoming what emerged in the case studies of positioning subjectivity as an individual phenomenon. Rather we view subjectivity as something that is socially produced, and given meaning during the process of interaction. Further, we argue that these social processes are always realised as a subjective production, rather than as a simple reflection of reality.

Acknowledgements We would like to acknowledge Marília dos Santos Bezerra, a research assistant and doctoral student, for her research work with Kevin, and Gloria Quiñones as the research assistant for the case study of Andrew.

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Part III

Subjectivity

Chapter 9

Advances in Subjectivity from a Cultural-Historical Perspective: Unfoldings and Consequences for Cultural Studies Today

Fernando González Rey

Abstract This chapter outlines a general picture of the phenomenon of subjectivity in Soviet psychology. In order to do this, the author organised a non-conventional group of authors, who came from different traditions of Soviet psychology and made important contributions for development of the topic of subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint. These traditions that historically were presented as excluded to one another, by the classical soviet's official historiography, are discussed in their point of contact and in their complementation as the basis for developing a new representation of subjectivity. It also presents the turn toward the study of the consciousness and symbolical realities of authors who appeared as being followers of the Activity Theory in early moments of their work (Davydov 2002; Zinchenko 2009). After drawing such a picture about the phenomenon of Soviet psychology related to the antecedents of subjectivity, the author develops on his theoretical proposal about subjectivity. He develops a representation of subjectivity as a system that permits to understand how the historical experiences and the simultaneous contexts of the individual current's life experiences appear together in a new units of subjectivity, defined by the author in the intertwined movements between subjective configurations and subjective senses. Finally it discussed the relevance of dialogue for this proposal about subjectivity. On this matter, the author establishes the differences between this proposal and those that characterise the dialogical psychology.

9.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a discussion of some of the more relevant antecedents of the topic of subjectivity in Soviet psychology, as a result of which a new psychological culture began to emerge at the end of the 1970s. Based on these antecedents, I

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advance a theoretical proposal regarding subjectivity from a cultural and historical basis. Different positions within Soviet psychology contributed to the topic of subjectivity from different angles and with different topics. The topics and times through which different Soviet authors contributed to advances in subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint were diverse and complemented one another beyond the intentions of the authors. However, some of these authors were presented as contradictory to one another because of the perspectives and interests by which the history of Soviet psychology was constructed during the Soviet era.

Concepts such as dialogue, communication, personality, sense, *perezhivanie*, subject, social situation of development, unity of consciousness and activity, and consciousness developed by some different soviet psychological traditions, are complementary in the attempt to move forward on the topic of subjectivity at the present time. The aforementioned concepts in their interrelation inspired the position about subjectivity that is discussed in this chapter, bringing to light authors like Vygotsky, Rubinstein, Bozhovich, Ananiev and Bakhtin, as well as some of their disciples like Abuljanova, Bruschlinsky, Lomov and Chudnovsky, who had important point of contacts that gain intelligibility within a new historical interpretation. The historical interpretations are always closely related to the dominant theories that appear ruling certain historical moments. There are the dominant concepts and representations of the subjects of those theories direct the perspectives from which history is interpreted. Because the psychologists and theories that actively contributed to the topics mentioned above were not dominant within the political scenario of Soviet psychology, their contributions to that psychology appear distorted.

The present chapter presents other paths for interpreting that history, emphasising the manner in which these paths complement one another in their various efforts to advance a new theoretical paradigm within Soviet psychology. The topic of subjectivity at present includes that hidden legacy of Soviet psychology among its antecedents.

9.2 The Relevant Legacy of Soviet Psychology for the Study of Subjectivity from a Cultural-Historical Standpoint

The different movements and tendencies that develop in the study of history do not represent objective concepts that are presented once and then remain forever. These movements always represent relative historical paths of intelligibility in one historical moment. History incorporates new theoretical constructions to generate new understandings regarding facts whose existence was ignored by previous theories. This process is what renders new interpretations of the history possible. Such a scenario occurred in the history of Soviet psychology and the versions of that psychology that remain popular in Western psychology. Some relevant works of

relevant authors of Soviet psychology are not prominent in Western psychology even after decades of having been published in English because of dominant Western positions toward Soviet authors. Among the authors whose critical positions have been ignored are Leontiev (1992), Davydov (1999), Bozhovich (2009) and Zinchenko (1995, 2002a, b, 2009).

The same process of excluding relevant authors occurred inside Soviet psychology, in which many important contributions were relegated by decades and did not resurface until recently. Russian psychology represents an amalgam of a variety of movements, many of which are updates of old psychological traditions of world psychology, such as psychometrics, to which many books in Russia are currently devoted. Despite this general picture, the primary traditions of Soviet psychology remain alive and in development in the more relevant journals and institutions of Russian psychology.

This section considers authors grouped by their relevance to the study of subjectivity. In different historical moments, these authors made significant contributions to Soviet and Russian psychology. The groups are organised according to my interest in the portions of their contributions that have mostly been overlooked.

The first group is the Vygotsky–Bozhovich dyad. Vygotsky, in the first and last moments of his work (González Rey 2011), introduced extremely promising concepts for advancing a new understanding of consciousness, personality and psychological development. These concepts were overlooked for decades in Soviet psychology. The relevant concepts are **sense** (Leontiev 1992; González Rey 2000, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014; Zinchenko 2009), *perezhivanie* (Bozhovich 2009a; Fakhruddinova 2010; Fleer and Quiñones 2013; González Rey 2002, 2009, 2011, 2012; Rodríguez Arocho 2010; Smagorinsky 2011; Yarochevsky 2007) and **social situation of development** (Bozhovich 2009a; Fleer and Chen 2015; Hedegaard 2012; González Rey 1995, 2009, 2012). The concepts of sense and *perezhivanie* comprise the complex psychological units related to consciousness, personality and psychological development, and the social situation of development aimed at relativising the role of immediate social influences on child development. Combining these concepts with other ideas from Vygotsky's "Psychology of Art", such as the unity between emotion and imagination being the same process (Vygotsky 1965), a perception of the first Vygotsky's theoretical agenda emerged that was essentially different from the agenda that he developed during his instrumental period between 1927 and 1931 (Leontiev 1984, 1992; González Rey 2011).

Bozhovich was the only author who advanced the legacy of Vygotsky in the study of personality, motivation and human development in Soviet psychology. In fact, the main concepts discussed by Vygotsky in "Psychology of Art" and in his works in 1933 and 1934, were largely ignored by the disciples of Vygotsky. These disciples clustered around Leontiev in the Cathedra of Psychology of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Moscow after Rubinstein was replaced because of accusations regarding his ideological deviation, in which Leontiev and Galperin actively participated (Brushlinky 2001).

Bozhovich transcended Vygotsky's legacy, emphasising the independence and generative character of personality:

Children may therefore strive to once again relive something they experienced previously that became appealing to them. In this case, *perezhivanie* is transformed from being a means of orientations into a goal in itself and leads to the emergence of new needs—needs for *perezhivaniya*¹ themselves. But in this regard as well *perezhivaniya* are not the exception. In the process of development the entire human mind ceases to be a mere apparatus of orientations and adaptation. Gradually, it takes on independent importance and is transformed into a special form of its subject's life. (Bozhovich 2009b, pp. 74–75)

Bozhovich's statement emphasises the subjective character of human personality; if individuals “relive something that [they] experienced previously,” it indicates that the individual subjectively lived that experience through the *perezhivanie* evoked in the present moment. Bozhovich repeatedly stressed the generative character of personality in that book:

...psyche represents a type of reality that can influence both the course of the subjective and of objective processes. Without the recognition of this, it appears to us that it is not possible to understand or study the personality or its functions in the interrelations of the individual and the world. Personality not only permits the stability and independence of the individual from the immediate influences that surrounded him/her but to some extent renders the individual the creator of itself and of the world in which the individual lives. (Bozhovich 2009a, p. 126; my translation from Russian)

Bozhovich further advanced Vygotsky's definition of social environment. Although the concept of communication as such was not treated in depth by the psychologists gathered around Vygotsky and Leontiev as Bozhovich was, Bozhovich defined the fascinating concept of “internal position” that expresses a more complex core of the interrelated psychological features closely associated with the place of the child within the groups that surround that child. As Bozhovich stated:

We were required to introduce the concept of the place of the child among those who surrounded that child and the concept of internal position to which we came in the process of studying individual children, when in front of us stands the task of studying the individual features of their affective relation to reality and determining the conditions that influence the formation of these features. (Bozhovich 2009a, p. 142; my translation from Russian)

Bozhovich attempted to transcend the immediate external influences of the environment and understand the child's psychological features with regard to the system of the child's closest social relations that in Bozhovich's opinion influenced the child's performance in school. The influences of such relations on the child must be deciphered through research. Bozhovich stated:

¹The plural form of *perezhivanie* in the Russian language was taken from Bozhovich's original text in Russian. The entire quotation was compared with the original Russian work.

For example, if children's position within the family and in school, the attitude of other children within the family, and children's own personalities are assessed by those around them based on academic success, and due to insufficient readiness for classroom learning or due to some other reason children are not able to achieve this success, as our laboratory's research demonstrates, they may have a strong affective reaction to these circumstances and may have a negative attitude toward learning, and sometimes toward school. (Bozhovich 2009b, p. 76)

Bozhovich here integrated into the explanation of one type of a child's behaviour two different social spaces of its life, school and family, considering the relationships of a child with other children within the family, etc. However, in so doing, the author did not transcend the immediate comprehension of social relationships as the main unit of the child's social life. Bozhovich considered family and school to be concrete systems of interrelations, as if these social instances could be reduced to the interactions among their members.

In her analysis, Bozhovich omitted that school is only one of the social moments within a child's life. The subjective nature of children's failure is configured by the cosmos of their singular histories, intertwined with the diversity of their current lived experiences. In this sense, it is impossible to define which social spaces are responsible for school failure: social spaces are not responsible for our behaviour; our behaviour results from the subjective configurations that emerge within social experiences.

The logic that supports the unilateral relation between social relationships and behaviour that prevailed in Soviet psychology resulted from the principle of the social determinism of psychological processes that ruled psychology in Russia. Despite Bozhovich's recognising the generative character of personality, by which she defended the important principle of the independence of personality from immediate external influences, Bozhovich, in fact, sought to identify, through family and school, the social reasons that explain the psychological nature of children's behaviour regarding school failure.

The tradition of thinking that developed between the last moment of the legacy of Vygotsky and was advanced by Bozhovich, who decisively advanced the psychological nature of the formations of personality, was an important antecedent of our work regarding subjectivity. Nevertheless, these positions did not lead to significant progress toward a different comprehension of the integration of the individual as an active instance of the social processes. We must remember that the tradition of Moscow, primarily represented by the positions of Vygotsky and Leontiev, essentially addressed the development of general psychology.

The decades-long omission of the category of communication from Soviet psychology did not permit advances in the study of the complex and specific processes of communication, particularly not on its dialogical organisation. Communication as a particular category with its own processes began to be studied in Soviet psychology only after the death of Bozhovich (Lomov 1978, 1984; Gonzalez Rey 1983; Smirnov 1993; Smirnova 1996; among others).

E. Smirnova, who was a disciple of Lizina, the first psychologist who explicitly discussed communication within the framework of Theory of Activity, stated:

According to the position of Vygotsky, the social world of the adults that surround the children represent the necessary condition for human development...It is clear that this comprehension of the process of psychological development implies considering in the foreground the role of communication with adults. Therefore, for the proper author and his followers, the adult acts only as a mediator between the child and the culture, like an abstract "carrier" of signs, norms and forms of activity, but not as a live, concrete person. Despite the recognition by all of the role of communication with adults in the child's psychological development, the process of communication in itself was not the subject of research in the cultural-historical approach. (Smirnova 1996, p. 87; my translation from Russian)

Communication uncovers subjective processes whose study was not possible within the objective theoretical framework that prevailed in Soviet psychology until the 1970s. Therefore, this topic was advanced during the Soviet period by the strong group in Leningrad founded by Bechterev, who, despite his attempt to replace psychology as an independent discipline with reflexology, proposed a systemic approach to the relation between the human being and the social environment, recognising the complexity of human social processes (Valsiner 2001).

Bechterev's co-worker, Lazursky, was one of the founders of the study of personality in Soviet psychology. The "School of Leningrad" began to develop around Bechterev in Soviet psychology, whose main contributors after the Bechterev-Lazursky generation was Ananiev. Unlike Moscow's dominant tradition, the tradition of Leningrad always focused on the relation between personality and social processes.

Unlike the definition of social environment as an external system of influences over individuals, the line of thinkers formed by Ananiev, Miasichev, Lomov and Bodaliev (the last two disciples of the former), advanced simultaneously in social and general psychology. These Soviet authors also maintained the prominence of the cultural, historical and social genesis of the human psyche; however, their emphasis was on the communicative processes and the specific forms of communication generated by a wider representation of social functioning. The idea of an immediate social determinism from external operations and processes to internal was clearly questioned by Ananiev, who stated:

The general problem of social determination, unlike the more general problem of the causal conditioning of consciousness by the material world, includes in itself the quality of the individual as the subject of its activity in a process in which the individual also modifies the social environment. (Ananiev 1977, p. 152; my translation from Russian)

Ananiev stressed an important difference between social determination and the causal conditioning of the consciousness by the material world: social determination is not external to the subject. The individual as subject of his own social relations is also a producer of the social environment within which the person lives. Ananiev established a subtle difference between the principle considered the main problems of Marxist philosophy: the secondary character of the consciousness with regard to the material world and the social determination of the individual, a process that includes the subject himself in the social system.

In his definition of human relationships, Miasichev included individuals as subjects of their own social relationships but also advanced one important step: “The nature of inter-human relations is defined during the course of these relations, which is clear, but it does not depend only on them, but also on external conditions and the positions of the people in these relationships” (Miasichev 1960, p. 216; my translation from Russian). Continuing his explanation of what the external conditions indicate, Miasichev wrote:

Under conditions of free interaction between individuals, these relations can be authentic, but in conditions in which repression prevails, in conditions of the absence of freedom and of the dependency of one person on another, human relations are not authentic; they are hidden and masked”. (Miasichev 1960, p. 216)

Considering that Miasichev’s statements were written some years after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, during which criticism of Stalin was made public, it is evident that repression decreased during that period. However, the rules established by the group in power in psychology, the group headed by Leontiev, did not change. Only Leontiev’s rejection of Vygotsky can explain the late publication of “The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky” in the Russian language.

It was not by chance that the theoretical positions of the disciples of Rubinstein, Ananiev, Miasichev and Bozhovich were the first to make explicit the term *subjectivity* in Soviet psychology. Emphasising subjectivity elicited a different comprehension not only of personality but of the complex dialectic between social processes and personality (Abuljanova 1973, 1980; Brushlinsky 1994; Chudnovsky 1976, 1988; Lomov 1978, 1984). In the 1970s, the disciples of Rubinstein gathered around Lomov in the Institute of Psychology of the Academy of Sciences of the former Soviet Union, representing a new powerful institution inside Soviet psychology. The new winds blowing in Soviet psychology were also expressed in the “V Congress of the Society of Psychologists of the Soviet Union” held in 1977 in Moscow, whose central topic was the “Problem of Activity in Soviet Psychology”. Many of the more relevant psychologists and institutions of psychology from the Soviet Union were represented in that Congress (Galperin, Menshinskaya, Nepomnishaya, Brushlinsky, Pushkin and Talizina, among others).

That new political situation in the country and in psychology as well permitted an open discussion of questions that had remained shadowed for a long time; topics such as subjectivity, communication and the limitations of the Activity Theory were discussed during the Congress in an extremely open atmosphere. The topic of communication emerged with particular force. As Lomov stated,

Representing an essential part of the subject’s vital activity, communication is considered an important determinant of all psychical systems, of their structure, dynamic and development. However, this determination is not external to the psyche. The psyche and communication are intrinsically interrelated with one another. (Lomov 1984, p. 248; my translation from Russian)

Lomov's definition was crucial for advancing the topic of subjectivity in a cultural-historical theoretical framework. The psyche and communication are intrinsically related to one another because the processes that occur in one unfold into the other in many different manners. The individual and communication are not organised as external to one another, but are a unit entailing different psychological consequences for the partners of the communication and for the communication in itself. This complex and recursive comprehension of the social processes that consider the individual as an inseparable component of these processes was an important antecedent to the concept of social subjectivity that will be discussed below.

The characteristic tendency of Soviet psychology to avoid the definition of the psychological nature of its concepts was an attempt to ignore the subjective nature of human psychological processes engendered within the historical–social. With regard to the “ontological vacuum of Soviet psychology,” Abuljanova wrote,

Despite the fierce polemics between those addicted to a socio-psychological explanation of the psyche and the supporters of the physiological or cybernetic explanation, the position of groups is identical. The attempt to materialize the psyche or assign it materiality through its identification with something different reveals the anti-dialectical character of this form of knowledge, the inability to apply dialectic to the discovery of the specificity of psychic phenomenon. (Abuljanova 1973, p. 49; my translation from Russian)

The simultaneous advances of the generative and active character of personality (Abuljanova 1980; Abuljanova and Brushlinsky 1989; Bozhovich 2009a; Lomov 1978), combined with the recognition of communication as a specific process whose psychological nature recursively relates to the psychological structure of the individual, represented a solid and necessary precursor to advancing the topic of subjectivity in a cultural-historical framework. Thus, the tradition of the “Leningrad School” that advanced the first steps of a critical social psychology in Soviet times is paired in this chapter with the vigorous traditions represented by Vygotsky and Bozhovich and by the disciples of Rubinstein. All of these complementary approaches represent an important legacy in advancing the topic of subjectivity within this theoretical account.

At the end of their works, Zinchenko (1995, 2002a, 2009) and Davydov (1992, 1999, 2002), who followed the positions of the Activity Theory for decades, made an important change by bringing to the foreground issues of consciousness, personality and emotions. Davydov (1992) also made explicit the relevance of symbolic processes in understanding the creativity of the subject, an interest that aligned him with Brushlinsky in the last years of his life (Davydov 2002; Brushlinsky 2002).

The creation of new images and things is always considered as a creative act of the individual, developed by the interrelation of the individual capacities, such as imagination, symbolic replacement and thinking. In its coordination, these processes addressed, above all, guaranteeing the creative possibilities of the individual. (Davydov 1992, p. 25; my translation from Russian)

It is amazing that Davydov, who had never before quoted Bozhovich in his work, began the paper from which the previous quotation was taken with two quotations of Bozhovich referring to the independence of the child from immediate external influences after its first year of life. The emphasis on individuals as creative subjects, which stressed the role of emotions, imagination and symbolic processes in intellectual operations, was central to Davydov in his late works (Davydov 1992, 1999, 2002). In this last period of his life, Davydov was closer to Vygotsky and Bozhovich than to Leontiev.

With regard to the subjective nature of consciousness, Zinchenko stated,

To this day, consciousness is being reduced and, accordingly, identified with such phenomena as a distinctly apperceived image, a field of clear attention, the concept of short-term memory, the obvious result of an act of thought, apperception of one own self and so on. In all these cases true acts of consciousness are replaced by its external and often scanty results, that is, by various well known empirical phenomena that are accessible to self-observation. The inclusion of such phenomena in the ontology of consciousness may raise doubts because of their obvious subjectivity. (Zinchenko 2009, pp. 47–48)

Although subjectivity as such was not considered in its specific processes and formations as an open system, the concept began to refer to consciousness and to personality, categories previously established in the theoretical repertoire of Soviet psychology but never before recognised for their specific subjective character. Zinchenko's emphasis (2002b, 2009) on the definition of the ontological nature of consciousness represented an important attempt to overcome the ontological emptiness of Soviet psychology.

The tendencies of Soviet psychology represented by the authors discussed above advanced parallel to the positions of authors who began with psychoanalysis, overcoming the metaphysical dogmas of the works of Freud and Lacan, and bringing to light new forms of understanding subjectivity within the complex dynamics of social life and culture (Castoriadis 1995; Frosh 2002, 2010; and others).

Frosh defending the active subject formed within culture notes:

Put at its most simple, although this is a more complicated argument than it might seem, human subjects may be 'socially constructed', but from that constructed position they exert choices which are never quite reducible to the forces that constructed them in the first place. (Frosh 2002, p. 3)

Recognising the social genesis of the subject, Frosh also stressed its active character that transcends the immediate social conditions within which the individual is formed. The advancement of the topic of subjectivity from a cultural-historical perspective required opening a dialogue with different positions that at that moment shared an understanding of the complex relations among subjectivity, culture and social life. A consequent cultural-historical approach cannot encase a narrow repertoire of concepts that were the foundation of the theory at one historical moment.

9.3 The Cultural-Historical Approach in the Study and Advancement of Subjectivity

The defense of a new theoretical proposal for the study of subjectivity implies discussion and elaboration of topics that represent new avenues within historical-cultural psychology. The arguments that justify the study of subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint are the following:

First, it is important to stress that the human being is the only animal that changes radically from one generation to the next, not only psychologically but also in relation to the world within which each generation lives. Culture is a symbolic system within which various human practices and normative systems foster life for the persons who share one particular culture. Symbolic realities are human productions that embody different histories that objectify themselves in language, discursive practices, social representations, myths, normative systems, religions and other cultural productions. Within these symbolic networks of cultural facts, individuals, institutions and groups develop their complex and singular subjective organisations, which represent truly subjective productions. In these productions, emotions are embedded within symbolic processes, which turn subjectivity into an intrinsic component of culture.

Second, subjectivity is not an intra-psychical phenomenon, but a qualitative characteristic of every human process, reality and system. Subjectivity is as simultaneously intrinsic to social functioning as to individual singular processes. Subjectivity is a distinctive psychological level of the cultural existence of humans.

Third, individuals and social functioning are culturally located subjective productions. However, individuals exist for a shorter time than the duration of cultural development. Therefore, each human generation is born within well-established cultural world that create the illusion of culture as being an objective world. Thus, each generation traces its own paths in its cultural world in such a manner that at the end of a person's life, the culture has radically changed.

Fourth, each human generation shares the same culture. However, each individual, group and institution subjectively lives in different ways within this culture because each generation's historical and singular trajectories are subjectively produced. Experiences are subjective productions rather than a reflection or assimilation of external facts, influences, or objects. Subjectivity is the distinctive characteristic of the historical character of individuals, groups, institutions and societies because subjectivity is the history of each of these instances and what makes each of them different from others within the same culture. Therefore, the study of subjectivity as human production intrinsically associated with cultural life implies developing concepts capable of understanding the complex subjective units that embody the different subjective trajectories of individuals and social instances within one culture.

Fifth, the simultaneous integration of experiences lived in different times and areas of life is possible only by complex subjective productions. Symbolic-affective social relationships are the basis for the emergence of emotions that respond to the symbolic devices that characterise these relations.

Various psychological theories advanced the study of symbolic processes and realities beyond the cultural-historical tradition (Davydov 1992; Zinchenko 1993). This is understandable because the social norms and realities established in the former Soviet Union were the expression of the concretisation of the laws of history, officially represented as “historical truth”. In this respect, the idea of control over human behaviour had a strong presence in Soviet psychology and education.

Some of the advanced theories in social psychology, such as the theory of social representations and social constructionism, emphasise the symbolic character of their proposals. Whereas social representations were defined as symbolic productions (Moscovici and Markova 1998; Jodelet 1989), social constructionism placed at the centre of its definition the concept of discursive relational practices. Despite the different tendencies of the two theories and the reciprocal criticism, both theories stress the symbolic character of social productions. However, neither of these theories focuses on the productive, generative and subversive character of individuals within the social symbolic networks in which human life occurs. The rescue of individuals as active subjects and agents of their own social practices renders them an inseparable component of the social networks within which their lives occur (González Rey 2015).

This proposal regarding subjectivity is grounded in two important theoretical premises: the integration of emotions and symbolic processes in a new type of psychological unit and the complex and recursive subjective configuration of social processes and individual psychological organisation during human experience. From our point of view, social instances are simultaneously subjective systems, within which one individual action unfolds into many social effects, which, recursively, are also configured in the individuals.

The key subjective units whose endless movement engenders other forms of subjective formations are the subjective senses. The subjective senses are the instantaneous emotional-symbolic units that characterise the flux of human experience as life is subjectively lived. Subjective senses are the paths by which the past and the diversity of present experiences lived by the individuals within different social instances are integrated into one subjective configuration.

The flow of subjective senses in its chaotic and endless movement generates subjective configurations: a self-generative formation of subjective senses. The subjective configurations appear in two closed interrelated levels, for instance, subjective configurations of personality and subjective configurations of action. Subjective configurations of personality, rather than being psychological determinants of action, appear in the process of an action through specific subjective senses generated in this process.

This definition of subjectivity leads to a rethinking of personality, understanding personality not as a unified autonomous system comprised of stable and universal traits, but as a dynamic system of subjective configurations that express the most relevant individual experiences as they are subjectively configured. Personality represents the historical moment of the individual during personal current action. The subjective configurations as self-generative subjective units constrain the free movement of the subjective senses during human experiences. Personality is a living

system that is configured in a specific manner within the subjective configuration of the action. Individual and social groups become subjects of their own actions when they are capable of assuming decisions and positions that open new paths within the normative social system within which human actions are developed.

The definition of the subject as was made explicit above is an important concept for the understanding of subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint because the subject emerges as a living agency, whether social or individual, that actively generates new subjective senses during the action, a process that renders it possible to overcome any type of subjective determinism. The decisions, options and paths undertaken by the subject on the ongoing action are a source of subjective senses that stresses the subjective configurations of the action, leading to changes in their organisation. This proposal regarding the subject is different from that proposed by humanism because the subject of humanism is an intentional and rational entity able to exert self-conscious control of its actions.

The subjective senses are symbolic emotional units that exist in an endless movement within which some senses overlap with others and unfold into others, forming a subjective network. Within this network, the subjective configurations, movement engenders the dominant emotions, perceptions, thoughts, fears, fantasies and other dominant subjective states that characterise any psychological function. Human action is never an isolated instrumental action; action is subjectively configured during the action. The subjective configurations are the motivation of the complex blending of psychological processes that emerge during the subject's action within an ongoing experience (González Rey 2014).

In their complementary and contradictory functioning, the subjective senses and configurations integrate the multiple social symbolic productions that develop a subjective character during social relations, such as gender, race, beliefs, norms and other social symbolic productions. In this process, social subjectivity is configured into individual subjectivity in such a manner that social subjectivity becomes many singular paths, some of which appear to be processes of resistance and subversion of the dominant order whereas others unconditionally subordinate the individual to this order.

Soviet psychologists did not understand this complex intertwined dynamic between social reality and individual processes. Until the 1970s, Soviet psychology attributed psychological status only to individuals. The social order was understood as a given reality that should be assimilated rather than questioned. Thus, the more advanced examples of the definition of social reality were limited to the study of immediate relational systems such as the school and the family.

For example, the angry reaction of a child to a bad result in school, a topic whose psychological nature was first studied by Bozhovich and her colleagues, can never be exhausted by one analysis of the child's interaction within the family and the school as the author did. One child could be ashamed of his/her social condition in life, a feeling that may be configured by comments heard from the child's parent, by the manner in which the child perceives the teacher's relationship to him/her through the lenses of that feeling in such a process that at the end, we are far from what it is observable in the current circles of the child's relationships.

The subjective configurations in which the subject's action is embedded represent a relevant concept for understanding the psychological nature of the various individual psychological processes and behaviours, including those classified as mental disorders. The paranoid reaction classified as pathological is not particularly different from the reaction of the child embarrassed by his/her social status, in which the child perceives the positions of others through the lenses of the embarrassing situation. The paranoid individual does not react to the manner in which another person looks at him/her; the individual subjectively produces a perception grounded in his/her subjectivity that has little to do with what others are doing. This does not indicate that the individual is outside reality; it indicates that the individual responds to his/her subjective reality.

The processes mentioned above do not occur exclusively to persons with disorders, but to everyone. The difference is that the persons with disorders are completely dominated by those subjective experiences whereas the rest of us are capable of generating manners in which to live within the established normative system.

Considering that any mental disorder is culturally located within a system of social and institutional practices, persons are always labelled by institutions on the basis of dominant ideological values. Therefore, some persons are capable of generating new manners of subjectivation to address these labels whereas others remain submissive to the labels.

The concept of subjective configuration permits the study of the singular subjective nature of mental disorder on the basis of which therapeutic and the educational work should be oriented. One important goal of therapeutic and educational work is to facilitate new thoughts and emotions through dialogical communicational processes from which new subjective senses may emerge. Focus on the subjective configurations of mental disorders implies working with the persons, not the symptoms. Even in the case of more severe disorders such as schizophrenia, as was shown by Goulart's work (Goulart 2013), the dialogical interaction with the patients was an excellent resource to open new spaces of socialisation within which the patients began to generate new behaviours and subjective options in their daily lives.

Subjectivity is always a production, a manner in which to create our own realities, some of which are compatible with our processes of institutionalisation, development and socialisation whereas others qualify as disorders that do not permit the integration of the individuals into a social life nor the development of the self by alternative paths of life.

One of the primary subversive consequences of the recognition of the subjective character of human processes and realities is to overcome the unilateral rationalism that yet prevails in the analysis of human phenomena and the illusion of control that rules the majority of the institutions that are concerned with education and health. The increasing crisis in the world, the proliferation of "irrational acts" based on different subjectivities, which have complex historical roots, must contribute to understanding the need to advance new theoretical paths capable of advancing the explanation of how different subjectivities related to different cultures are associated with the emergence of human catastrophes.

Individuals live within subjective social networks that result from dominant social discourses, social representations and other social symbolic productions that are configured in different manners in the subjective configurations of their immediate systems of relations. These complex networks of social subjective productions configure social subjectivity. The concept of social subjectivity is addressed to understand the complex subjective configurations of the different social instances and systems of relationships within the more complex systems of social instances that define society. The recognition of a social subjectivity does not entail the definition of social realities as abstract carriers of subjectivity or as fixed entities presented beforehand as living social dynamics.

The concept of social subjectivity implies an understanding of any concrete social interactive space as configured by subjective senses that encloses social symbolic productions related to other social instances. The dominant social subjectivity indirectly appears in jokes, informal conversation and practices that sometimes contradict the ruling principles assumed by institutions as correct in a process that is beyond the consciousness of the workers of the institution.

9.4 The Dialogue as Subjective Process

There has been a gap between authors who share dialogical positions (Shotter 2012; Matusov 2011) and those centred on the traditional individual psychology. In their reaction and critique to that reductionist individual psychology, the authors centred on dialogue completely omitted the individual as subject of its social relationships, its complex subjective configuration formed as part of the social subjectivity, and its quality as an active creative agent of any dialogical structured relationships. The gap between dialogical and individual is overcome in the current theoretical proposal on subjectivity, in which social relationships and individuals are not treated as being external to each other, but as configured into each other. A dialogue between passive persons that do not become subjects of the dialogue is impossible. Together with the active and generative character of dialogue, the active and generative character of the subjects in dialogue is essential for the emergence of the dialogue. The dialogue and its subjects advance together without one being engulfed by the other, in a relation in which the dialogue is constantly configured in their subjects, and at the same time the dialogue is configured by the subjects' creative expression within the dialogue.

Moreno, a brilliant author that rarely appears in academic instances, stated:

Co-consciousness and co-unconsciousness states are by definition states that partners have experienced and produced together and that can therefore be reproduced or reenacted together. A co-conscious or co-unconscious state cannot be the property of one individual alone. It is always a common property that can only be reproduced by a joint effort. (Moreno 1994, p. vii)

Recognising the co-conscious and co-unconscious processes of the partners in communication, Moreno advanced an ontological definition of communication that includes the partners of this process. However, communication takes place within a given social subjectivity that is also configured in the interactional shared states beyond the consciousness of the partners in the process, something that Moreno did not consider because it was not part of the theoretical repertoire of the epoch.

Bakhtin and his disciples consider the psychological processes of the partners in dialogue as inseparable from the dialogue itself: “This world, where the acts take place is a unique and integral world, concretely felt (experiences): visible, audible, perceptible and thinkable, all of them penetrated by a volitional-emotional tone” (pp. 124–125; Bakhtin, cited in Leontiev 2001, p. 66). The dialogical act is part of this definition, in which Bakhtin stressed this individual blending of functions as penetrated by a volitional-emotional tone, what implies to recognise the subjective productions of the partners in dialogue. The subject of the dialogue is implicit in such a definition.

Social and individual subjectivities are configured recursively through the interactions of active subject’s in the functioning of groups and social institutions. The dialogue between individuals is only a moment within these subjective social dynamic systems that integrate social practices and relations; systems within which the individual is an author rather than a recipient in the dialogical processes. These dynamics represent particular configurations within the broader scenario of social subjectivity.

The social environment cannot be considered as a system of immediate and concrete social relations or influences; individual actions are subjectively configured within the social networks in which they take place, what defines the simultaneous social and individual configuration of any individual action. The effects of individual actions unfold in different ways in social and individual subjective configurations. There are not immediate relations of determination in this process of simultaneous individual and social subjective configurations.

Despite the overemphasis on discourse and dialogue that prevails in Bakhtin’s circle, in some of their positions it is possible to identify their considerations on the issue of subject of dialogue. Thus, for example, Voloshinov stated also in “Marxism and the philosophy of language”:

Language is not the function of the speaking subject, it is the product passively registered by an individual (...) Speech, the contrary, is an individual act of will and intelligence, in which it is important to stress: 1 – The combination by which the speaking subject uses language codes with the intention of expressing his/her own personal thinking; 2 – The psychophysical mechanism that permits the subject to exteriorize these combinations. (Voloshinov 2009, p. 99; my translation from Spanish)

The prior quotation explicitly emphasised the subject of the speech and the involvement of his/her thinking and psychophysical mechanisms in the speaking subject. Speech is a function that implies active subjects in their creative position during the dialogue. The continuous references to psychophysical mechanisms throughout the entire book, and the differentiation established by the author

between the ideological and the psychological are an expression of his very limited comprehension of both psyche and ideology.

Through their actions, decisions and imaginary constructions, individuals generate new paths in their transit within the normative social spaces within which human performances takes place, in a process in which the individual emerges as subject of its social relationships. Dialogue is only possible between subjects, between persons empowered by their capacity of assuming singular positions in the relations with others. The dialogue is a generative and creative process between subjects, whose positions within the process always transcend the current limits of the dialogue, generating its new qualitative moments. The dialogue is a social process subjectively configured within the recursive relation of social subjectivity and individual subjectivities.

As Shotter states:

In what follows below, I want to explore a radically better alternative: the idea, following, that what is special about all communicative exchanges is that they are dialogically-structured exchanges, and that they occur within the unceasing, intertwined flow of many unfolding strands of spontaneously responsive, living activity- an idea that occurs to us, not by reflecting on what is immediately occurring round us, but on what the larger circumstances of our exchanges must be like, for what we know what can happen within them, to be possible. (Shotter 2012, p. 134)

It is amazing that the living and generative character attributed by Shotter to dialogue is the same that characterises the dynamics of subjective configuration and senses through which the different expression of the subjects in dialogue are subjectively configured. These subjective configurations do not replace and do not determine the unexpected processes that emerge during the dialogue, but they are inseparable of the way in which the subjects in dialogue experience it. While the author emphasised one side of the dialogical process, this paper emphasises another, its subjective side that represents a living process within the dialogical dynamic. Our definition of subject also refers to a “dialogical subject”, but not to a subject that exhausts itself in the dialogue.

Not all the communication spaces are dialogically structured. The autocratic social spaces and institution never open space for dialogue and not all individuals become subjects of dialogue in social dynamics that are favourable to its expression. In any society, asymmetric social relations that are not dialogical at all tend to prevail. In living social life, individuals can or cannot become subjects of their relationships. Society, to a great extent, imposes a process of domestication that overrides the majorities that live without critical consciousness and follow in an unthoughtful way the normative systems of the different instances of social life. The subject emerges during its action and is capable of generating new paths of subjectivation during this process.

Dialogues and social relationships, dialogical or not, are the most complex processes of the social condition of individuals and social instances. The presence of the adult during early childhood is responsible for the relational networks within which affections emerge and socialisation takes place, setting the basis for the child’s development. The emergence of this early emotional “comfort” of the

children with the adults is essential to their development. Only Bozhovich gave attention to this fact in Soviet psychology. If Freudian psychoanalysis was very deterministic in its understanding of early childhood, establishing a close relationship between early sexuality and adult personality, the cultural-historical approach relegated the complex affective processes of early childhood in favour of the representation of adults as mere supporters of the different child's activities, as defended by Elkonin (1971). The others and the processes of socialisation represent the most important facts for the development of subjectivity.

The research of Bezerra (2014) evidenced how two children with learning difficulties, one of which was diagnosed with deficit of attention and hyperactivity, advanced in their intellectual acquisitions once a new space of socialisation was founded in the school with the support of the researcher. In her relation with them, the researcher structured a dialogical space within which new subjective senses configured another way to experience learning activities. In a year of work, the advances of both children in their school tasks were significant. The advancement of children with learning disabilities is impossible without creating a dialogical space as condition for the development of subjective processes that are inseparable of the performances demanded by the school.

This research, along the work of Goulart (2013), who researched institutionalised patients diagnosed with chronic mental disorder, and achieved results similar to those obtained by Bezerra, permits to come to the conclusion that the quality of communication as a dialogical process, and the creation of new spaces of socialisation within institutions regardless of their nature, are decisive processes for human development. Communication, socialisation and their subjective implications are three processes that advance together. Once affection emerges, regardless of its character, different symbolical processes emerge within the child, determining the production of subjective senses and the articulation of subjective configurations.

The topic of subjectivity not only has theoretical and methodological relevance for the development of the cultural-historical approach, but also it is quite relevant for advancing further on a definition of dialogical processes that were historically confined to an "internal mind".

9.5 Some Final Remarks

- Soviet psychology represented an important antecedent, in its different versions, to the development of the topic of subjectivity from a cultural-historical standpoint. In this paper, the contributions of different trends of Soviet psychology to the topic of subjectivity have been discussed within the cultural-historical theoretical perspective.
- The definition of culture stressed by Soviet psychology was narrow because of the absence of the topic of the symbolic in that psychology. The symbolic processes were reduced in Soviet psychology to language, speech and sign as mediator. However, the symbolic character of human realities and human

psychological processes and formations was ignored. Culture is always historically situated and thus represents a system in continuous movement that impedes the consideration of human reality as a static given, a concept that was quite subversive during the Soviet era.

- The recognition of the cultural, social and historical genesis of psychological processes implies understanding these processes as symbolic processes in their unity with emotions. Human emotions are capable of merging with symbols and dialogical symbolic processes within which new symbolic emotional units emerge. These symbolic emotional units, functions and formations are defined in this proposal as subjective senses and subjective configurations. Subjectivity, from this point of view, is not reduced to individuals but characterises all human phenomena and processes, which is why social and individual subjectivities are defined as recursively interrelated systems.
- Social subjectivity is not external to individual subjectivity; social and individual subjectivity are configured into one another during ongoing individual and social actions. In this process, simultaneous subjective senses are generated in social relations, an essential moment of social subjectivity, and in the individuals who interrelate within these social relations.
- Human communication is the most complex expression of the cultural and social existence of the human being. The subjective senses associated with the subjective configurations upon which human development is grounded always result from the process of communication. In this process, the presence of different others is a component of the paths chosen by each individual within the different social networks of their lives.
- Affection, communication and acceptance from others are essential for advancing in any field of human activity. Activity in its instrumental operational character is never the driving force of human development.

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Chapter 10

Epistemological and Methodological Issues Related to the New Challenges of a Cultural–Historical-Based Psychology

Fernando González Rey and Albertina Mitjás Martínez

Abstract In the last fifteen years, new theoretical topics developed by different Soviet psychology authors in different moments of its development have been elucidated. Among these topics, Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* and sense are particularly relevant because these signalled questions were not in focus in Soviet times; these concepts have remained in shadow for decades. These topics permit advancements in new psychological and complex systems, such as consciousness, personality and subjectivity, that are based on a new foundation. However, this advancement presupposes new epistemological and methodological challenges that, until today, have not been developed within this theoretical account. The present paper discusses the Qualitative Epistemology on which the basis of a constructive interpretative methodology is developed as a path for the study of subjectivity from a cultural–historical standpoint. This paper discusses one case study to make explicit the procedures that rule the construction of knowledge in this methodology.

10.1 Introduction

Until now, there has been no consensus among authors regarding how to classify the different psychological trends that are organised as Soviet psychology; all of these trends share the cultural, historical and social geneses of human psychology. Soviet psychology was founded as a psychology that is grounded on culture and social relationships that are historically placed. Thus, we consider all of the versions of Soviet psychology to be cultural–historical psychologies because, in addition to their theoretical differences, these versions understood psychology, in one manner or another, as being a cultural–historical science.

In the West, Soviet psychology has primarily been represented through Vygotsky, Leontiev and Luria (Bruner 1995; Cole 1998; Werscht 1985) and some of Vygotsky's disciples, such as Galperin, Zaporochets and Elkonin, who later

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joined around Leontiev in Kharkov. After a complex historical path that is beyond the scope of the present paper, this theoretical orientation was defined as cultural–historical activity theory in recent decades, despite the increasing level of criticism aimed at this definition (Zinchenko 1995, 2007, 2009; Yasnitsky 2010, 2012; Lektorsky 1999; González Rey 2011, 2014).

From our perspective, the richness of the legacy of Soviet psychology has yet to be explored in depth based on the numbers of authors and theoretical orientations that have remained unexplored in the West for decades, such as Lomov, Bozhovich, Bruschlinsky, Abuljanova, Chudnovsky and many others whose names have relatively recently entered into the lexicon of Western authors. Despite authors such as Lomov, Bozhovich appearing in some isolated papers were translated into English more than twenty years ago, the dominant representation of cultural–historical activity theory in the Western countries has not allowed for the perception of the relevancy of their positions. In recent years, a “Revisionism of Vygotsky’s interpretation” has openly been declared (Yasnitsky 2012). Even authors who have not explicitly referred to such revisionism have in fact begun to make new interpretations related to those that are dominant in the so-called “Vygotskian studies” (Miller 2011; Flear and Hammer 2013; González Rey 2011, 2014, among others).

The revisionism proclaimed by Yasnitsky brought to light some of the less known of Vygotsky’s concepts in Russian and Western literature. In this manner, the concepts such as *perezhivanie*, sense and social situation of development begin to be increasingly discussed and cited in the literature and in the Congresses that historically have centred their interest on the cultural–historical activity theory, such as ISCAR (Leontiev 1992; Yarochevsky 2007; Fakhрутdinova 2010; Gonzalez Rey 2009, 2011, 2014; Flear and Hammer 2013, among others). The discussion of these concepts has in turn been one of the factors contributing to the openness of the cultural–historical psychology to new topics such as consciousness, communication and subjectivity (Abuljanova 1973; Akopov 2009; Lomov 1984; Neliubin 2009; González Rey 2009, 2014; Zinchenko 2009).

The last concepts and problems raised by Vygotsky, such as sense, *perezhivanie* and their relation with psychological systems (personality and consciousness) began to be discussed in Soviet psychology in the 1970s. Only Bozhovich and her team advanced on the legacy of those concepts in relation to the development of personality. Despite the fact that these concepts continued their development in Russian psychology, their epistemological and methodological demands have been mostly overlooked until now.

Undoubtedly, the advancements in these new topics imply epistemological and methodological discussions; these topics always remained underground in Soviet times and have continued to receive little attention within the cultural–historical tradition in psychology. Only very recently, in the 2000s, Russian authors began to draw attention to the epistemological and methodological questions related to clinical psychology. These questions have been discovered in Western epistemological discussions, and attempts have been made to identify Vygotsky with the epistemological versions of complexity (Zinchenko and Pervichko 2013); however,

at the same time, these attempts have begun to advance the epistemological and methodological challenges of clinical practice.

Cultural–historical psychology should be divided into the positions that represent politically dominant versions of Soviet psychology in different moments of its development and the theories that have remained outside of the politically accepted versions. The dominant theories in different historical moments of Soviet psychology were as follows: Pavlov’s theory of conditioned reflexes, Bechterev’s reflexology, Kornilov’s reactology and Leontiev’s Activity theory. All of these theories have been defended in different manners by the objective and the natural character of psychology as central attributes that defend Marxist psychology. This chapter centres on one epistemological and methodological proposal developed in our research regarding subjectivity from the cultural–historical standpoint.

10.2 The Epistemological and Methodological Gap in Soviet Psychology

Despite the fact that Soviet psychology has progressed on important theoretical matters in its history, the attention has been given to the epistemological and methodological challenges implied by those theoretical advances that have been completely overlooked. Vygotsky, in his foundational work “The Psychology of Art”, introduced the concept of *perezhivanie* and the unity between emotions and imagination and provided a central place for emotions and creativity and advanced topics that, from 1928 onward, disappeared from his work and from the works of other relevant Soviet psychologists. In the “Psychology of Art”, Vygotsky made interesting epistemological observations that have been largely ignored by Soviet and Western psychology.

Against this proposal, I will frequently objected to what is often said in relation to the study of the unconscious: unconscious, by the meaning of this word is something not recognizing by us and therefore not clear for us and for this reason it could not become object of scientific research. Starting from this erroneous premise that “we can study only (and in general can know only) what we directly recognize. However this statement has not any support because we study and know many things that directly we don’t know, on which we only know with the support of analogies, constructions, hypotheses, conclusions, deductions and so on, in general by indirect ways” (Vygotsky 1965, p. 32–33; my translation from Russian).

In the quotation above, Vygotsky defended a very important epistemological principle for human sciences: the study of the unconscious processes that cannot be known by direct means. The emphasis on the need to produce knowledge via indirect means is a very important methodological principle for the study of those concepts introduced by him in “The Psychology of Art” and the concepts discussed at the final moment of his work between 1932 and 1934. In a different manner, as Soviet psychology relates to the methodology by default, Vygotsky thought the methodological demands from the new concepts introduced by him early in his career.

In another of his stigmatised works, “The diagnostics of development and the pedological clinic for difficult children”, Vygotsky also noted the relevance of advancing beyond the explicit empirical features in relation to the knowledge production. He stated

In practical pedological research, one must begin by absorbing a simple methodological truth: Often a scientific researcher’s primary task is to establish some facts which cannot be found directly in reality. The path of research leads from symptoms to that which lies behind them, from the constitution of the symptoms to developmental diagnostics (Vygotsky 1993, p. 276).

However, after Vygotsky to be part of Kornilov’s group in 1925, his position drastically reoriented to an objective natural psychology, as both a theoretical point of view and a methodological point of view. A clear example of his position in that time is the following: “Marxist psychology is a synonym for scientific psychology and in this sense the creation of a Marxist psychology is the culmination of the lengthy historical process of transforming psychology into a natural science” (Vygotsky 2012, p. 98).¹

This objectivistic, empirical and natural representation of psychology that Vygotsky explicitly defended above was the official position defended by Kornilov and his group as the basis for a Marxist psychology. That position was to some extent responsible for the type of problems related to the official tendencies within Soviet psychology including subjects matters as the study of the neurophysiology of higher forms of neurological processes and reflections and later, the study of cognitive functions, as understood by as internalised operations. In both cases, the use of experiments implicitly prevailed based on positivistic epistemological principles. As a result of this climate, the inquiries of the cognitive functions that have prevailed since the 1950s–1970s upon other positions have been oriented to the study of topics such as personality, motivation, creativity and consciousness. The more notable exception in this picture was L.I. Bozhovich and her group, which actively worked on new methodological devices for the study of personality and motivation using qualitative approaches. However, even as addressed by the qualitative research of Bozhovich and her team, the epistemological problems raised by their research were never discussed.

The experimental view has been the only legitimate path for the study of topics such as emotion, motivation and personality as rooted in Soviet psychology and one of its more relevant authors, A.V. Zaporochets, who was always interested in the study of emotion and stated: “This can be explained (the author referred to the problems of the study of emotions in Soviet psychology. My note, FGR) partially by considerable methodological difficulties that arise during attempts to simulate affective situations under experimental conditions” (Zaporochets 2002), p. 46.

¹This text originally was published by Vygotsky in 1928.

It was only in the 2000s when several relevant Russian psychologists focused on the study of consciousness that the matter of interpretation as a methodological device began to be shyly introduced into Russian psychology from a cultural–historical standpoint. In this regard, V.P. Zinchenko stated “Since the subject domain that is called consciousness is by far not always given directly, it must be defined and constructed” (2009, p. 53). The word “constructed” in psychology, was historically oriented towards experimentation and a search for objectivity. This was closely associated with an idealistic psychology during the Soviet times. This phenomenon is clear in Vygotsky’s statement during his more instrumental–behaviourist moment:

Dilthey draws a distinction between descriptive and explanatory psychology. Along similar lines, many authors have divided the field into analytical and inductive psychology. Munsterberg called one psychology teleological and intentional and the other causal. The former has also been called the psychology of spirit or “understanding” psychology, as opposed to physiological or explanatory psychology and so on. But whatever they are called, the meaning of the distinction remains the same; one is natural, scientific, materialistic, and objective psychology, and the other is metaphysical, idealistic, and subjective psychology (Vygotsky 2012, p. 87).

Dilthey and the other authors mentioned by Vygotsky in his paper, such as Brentano, were the first to emphasise the value of interpretation to understand processes that are beyond the consciousness. Despite the differences in the theoretical principles that sustained the positions of Dilthey, Brentano and Spranger with Vygotsky, those authors had much in common with the methodological positions that Vygotsky made explicit in “Psychology of Art” and in his writing devoted to pedagogy. It is paradoxical that a psychology such as Soviet psychology that has attributed so much relevance to language and speech omitted both as methodological devices for the construction of psychological knowledge.

10.3 An Epistemological and Methodological Proposal for the Study of Subjectivity from a Cultural–Historical Standpoint

Once we advanced the study of subjectivity based on my prior studies on personality, we became more aware than ever before about the epistemological and methodological challenges that this new moment implied. Writing my doctoral thesis in the laboratory headed by Bozhovich (González Rey 1979), my fieldwork was performed with qualitative procedures, a tendency that in the 1970s was widely utilised by Bozhovich and her collaborators including Slavina, Chudnovsky, Neimark and Konnikova, among others, who were highly influenced by the methodological positions developed by K. Lewin and his team. However, many epistemological questions arose during my doctoral studies, such as what should be considered a legitimised knowledge, what is the relationship between reality and knowledge, i.e., the limits of human interpretation, and how to discriminate one

interpretation as being better than others, which remained unanswered. The epistemological questions were to a great extent absent from Soviet psychology due to the philosophical implications that its discussion could bring to light.²

As a result of the absence of epistemological discussion in Soviet psychology, we decided to advance an epistemological proposal that was able to support our methodological experiences in the study of personality (González Rey 1983, González Rey and Mitjans Martínez 1989). In the 1980s, the first texts on qualitative research began to be known in Latin American countries (Bogdan and Biklen 1982; Denzin 1970; Glaser and Strauss 1967, among others). All of these texts originated in other theoretical fields of the social sciences. The majority of the authors were devoted to qualitative research in that period based on their work on a narrow phenomenological definition according to which one of the main characteristics of qualitative methodology was its inductive, i.e., descriptive character. However, that definition of phenomenology did not consider the complexities that each philosophy implies for its use as the basis of the methodologies developed by the sciences. As M. Ponty stated “What is phenomenology? It may seem strange that this question has still to be asked half a century after the first works of Husserl. The fact remains that it has by no means been answered” (Ponty 1962, p. 88).

There is a close relationship between theory, epistemology and methodology in science, such that a new theoretical creation often must involve new epistemological and methodological challenges. Based on the questions that emerge in our research, for which González Rey had not found suitable alternatives in the different versions of qualitative research that were dominant in the 1980s, he decided to formulate the Qualitative Epistemology (1997). This epistemology *defends a constructive–interpretative* definition of knowledge as the basis for our studies on subjectivity.

Our definition of subjectivity from the cultural–historical standpoint is centred on the symbolic-emotional units, processes and configurations that characterise human experience. The constellations of facts that emerge in each cultural context are infinite, but the subjective senses and subjective configurations³ through which those experiences take life for individuals, groups and institutions are limited by the histories of each of these instances as well as the decisions and options taken by individuals and social instances whose subjective effects are beyond their consciousness. The social and individual subjective processes in human experiences are integrated in such a manner that the subjective configurations of both levels

²In this paper, Epistemology is defined as the needs and qualities that theoretical construction demands for consideration as “valid” as knowledge. The Theory for us is a system that enables the generations of intelligibility about the studied subject of a question that has a cultural, subjective and historical character.

³Subjective senses are the symbolical emotional units within which one of these processes evokes the other without becoming its cause. These subjective senses represent the way in which the historical experiences of the person become present in a presently lived situation. The subjective configurations represent the organisation of these subjective senses that define the emotions and the general psychological states that are dominant in each human experience.

configured reciprocally through subjective senses evoke by the presence of one level into the other.

The study of the processes by which this constellation of facts converges in space and time in one human experience is subjectively configured and demands to go beyond conscious responses or reactions to external influences. All of the concepts through which we advance the study of subjectivity at this moment, such as social and individual subjectivities, subjective configuration, subjective senses, and social and individual subjects configured as a complex opening systems within which each of them is organised into the others⁴ without losing its relative autonomy.

In the Latin American psychology of the 1980s, qualitative research was used as an alternative to the empirical–quantitative paradigm that was dominant in psychology at that time. However, currently, the multiple types of qualitative methodologies make it necessary to specify which type of qualitative research we are referring to. The differences between qualitative and quantitative research are more closely related to the processes of the construction of information than by the instruments used by both types of research.

Many researchers who define themselves as conducting qualitative research are supported by descriptive inductive procedures that aim to legitimise their theoretical constructions through statistics. A prominent eclecticism characterised the qualitative research in psychology in the 1980s. As I. Parker noted,

Statistical knowledge is of existing regularities, of patterns that are open to reinterpretation and change. This means that if we take statistics seriously it is not possible to use those descriptions to make any claims about universal fixed qualities of human behavior and experience (Parker 2005, p. 9).

The definition of knowledge as a constructive–interpretative process, as the *first attribute* of Qualitative Epistemology, necessarily breaks down some theoretical principles that characterised the cultural–historical approach because of its foundation in Soviet psychology, including the comprehension of scientific knowledge as a reflection of reality and the concept of law that is so widespread in cultural–historical psychologies up to the present. Moving in the opposite direction, the constructive–interpretative approach is centred on the production of intelligibility on matters, which progressively lead to new concepts, new problems and new theoretical representations, and is sensitive to enrichment from new sources and problems that emerge during the research process. Such knowledge could be

⁴Despite the fact that those concepts have been widely defined in my other works, we would like to point out that the subjective senses are the flux of the symbolic-emotional process that defined the subjective character of any human experience; meanwhile, the subjective configurations are the organisations that emerge on the course of that flux in the course of human experiences through which are defined the main subjective states that characterise any human relation or performance in a particular moment of its development. The subjective configurations characterise both the social and individual subjective processes in such a manner that during any individual action within one concrete social space subjective senses configured, simultaneously, reciprocally and differently in social and individual subjectivity.

considered valid when it extends to new areas and issues that can be assembled into one theory as a production of intelligibility that extends the theories to new problems and practices in such a process that continuously leads to new concepts and new questions.

Theories are living systems that are in constant movement; when the production of thinking stops, these theories turn into dogma. Theories are not abstract truths; they should continuously enrich researcher's ideas and at the same time to be enriched by these ideas. As Koch stated,

More particularly, a meaningful thought or inquiry regards knowledge as the result of "processing" rather than of discovery; it presumes that knowledge is an almost automatic result of a gimmickry, an assembly line, a "methodology"; it assumes that inquiring behavior is so rigidly and fully regulated by *rule* that in its conception of inquiry it sometimes allows the rules totally to displace their human users. (Koch 1999, p. 234)

What this author defined as "a meaningful thought" is precisely the not consideration of the researcher's ideas regarding knowledge production. The "assembly line of procedures" never replaces the researcher as the producer of knowledge. The new spaces of intelligibility that are opened by one theory are never the last version of one studied issue. Theories never exhaust the question studied by them; they only represent one human version of knowledge about that question. Science is as subjective as other human productions in different areas of life; the differences between science and other areas of knowledge production are given by the employed methodology and by the historical character of their constructions, which succeed one another in generating new theoretical representations about the studied subject.

The second attribute of the Qualitative Epistemology involves considerations of the dialogical and opening characteristics of the process of knowledge production. This principle moves in an opposite direction as that of the extended principle of "data collection". It is not possible to "collect data" because data are not objective fragments of a given reality; they are not ready to be collected. Data always depend on human codes that antecede the process of their definition. The idea that existing objects can be grasped through our concepts is in itself an epistemological position that implies one definition of reality and knowledge.

The dialogical and opening character of the research based on the Qualitative Epistemology does not follow an instrumental logic that is oriented toward understanding research as a sequence of instruments to be applied. The comprehension of research as a dialogical process leads to focus on the creation of a dialogical climate that demands from the researcher the ability to engage, provoke and stimulate the reflections and interest of the participants in the investigation.

This dialogical definition implies that the wide spectrums of expressions of the participants during the research, including those that arise in informal moments of the research, are relevant for the construction of knowledge. What defines the value of the research material is not its instrumental provenance, if it results from validated, standardised and reliable instruments or not, but its relevance to the theoretical model developed by the researcher, whose ideas and hypotheses are the

cornerstone of the theoretical models. There is not a direct correlation between the researcher's ideas and the meaning of the empirical facts; the ideas should always be informed and based on the meanings constructed from the empirical material, but the ideas are always beyond of that empirical material; they are the source of meaning from which empirical material gets meaning

The dialogue is a spontaneous process in which the researcher and participants are engaged in such a manner that new processes of subjectivation emerge, which is an important condition for the subjective engagement of the researcher and the participants in the research course. The use of methodological tools is another dialogical resource that addresses the provocation of new moments, ruptures and contradictions during the dialogue.

The third characteristic of the Qualitative Epistemology is the consideration of the singular case, whether individual or social, as a relevant source for scientific knowledge. The value of the singular case is also given by its relevance to the theoretical model in development, so that the singular case is one more moment in the advancement of the theoretical constructions of the research. The theoretical models are based on general theories but do not represent an application of theory; they represent new theoretical constructions that are inspired by the main concepts offered by the general theory. These new constructions are specific to each piece of concrete research. Theories as sources of intelligibility cannot be applied; theories are devices for the construction of new theoretical advances in each piece of concrete research.

Knowledge is always a theoretical process—a meaningful process in which specific, singular theoretical constructions will appear. Empirical material is organised during the research process as meaningful constructions that are compatible with the theoretical model in development, a reason for which the empirical material is considered in this proposal as a moment of the theoretical process. The empirical material is a constellation of many facts within which theory is able to advance new routes of intelligibility through their categories based on relationships and through their correlations to new concepts that are inspired by the studied questions.

The concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration simultaneously embody theoretical and epistemological aspects that could never be used as a priori concepts for the meaning of one problem; they are produced as results of the research. Their meanings always result from the theoretical constructions of the researcher, and these meanings are opened to the confrontation of the other psychological angles that are supported by themselves by the new meanings that are developed on the empirical material. They do not represent the type of categories that can be applied to any new information.

10.3.1 *Advancing Forward on a Constructive–Interpretative Methodology*

The epistemological principles enunciated by the Qualitative Epistemology allow for the advancement of a constructive–interpretative methodology. As K. Danziger noted as referred to by K. Lewin,

Working out the full implications of this insight depended on Lewin’s very intensive studies in the philosophy of Science (the insight referred by Danziger was the Lewin’s insight that merely phenomenal description of psychological events was therefore inadequate (My note FGR)). These convinced him of the necessity of making a general distinction between the surface pattern of events and an underlying causally effective reality (Danziger 1990, p. 177).

The study of subjectivity as a living system is sensitive to the actions and decisions of individuals or social instances in context. The context and the psychological configurations of persons and groups at the beginning of any human action become the subjective configurations of actions that represent a barrier for the study of subjectivity through the “surface pattern of events”, as noted by Lewin. The logic “question-answer” that lies behind the methodological tools that are traditionally used by psychology does not work for the study of subjectivity or for the study of other social issues as social discourses and social representations, as has been widely demonstrated in the psychological literature (Moscovici and Markova 2006; Gergen 2011 and others).

Individuals are never conscious of the complexity of the subjective configurations that emerge in their ongoing experience. Thus, subjectivity only appears indirectly through theoretical constructions based on chains of meanings that are theoretically constructed by the researcher in such a process in which the researcher’s ideas and the meanings produced from the empirical material are inseparable.

The first moment of our methodological proposal was the creation of the *social scenario of research*, which represents the manner in which the researcher establishes a frank and open relationship with the potential participants in the research. This *social scenario of research* must be organised through activities that facilitate the interest of the potential participants to participate in the planned research. The activity used to create the scenario should be sufficiently contradictory to provoke questions, discussions and the engagement of the participants. The *social scenario of the research* could be organised around many different activities, such as films, lectures, round tables and many other concepts, whose definitions depend on the focus of the research and the imagination of the researcher.

The idea of the *social scenario of research* appeared to us in Cuba when González Rey attempted to study the political values and positions of students from different faculties of the University of Havana in the 1990s. At that time, he was vice rector of the University of Havana and a member of the Cuban Communist Party, a situation that could create suspicion among the participants that would prevent them from expressing themselves freely regarding the topics of discussion.

In an attempt to overcome this obstacle, he organised a lecture entitled “Cuba today: Contradictions and possible paths for the future”. To this lecture, he invited the students of the faculties in which he intended to perform the study.

At the beginning of his lecture, many of the students explicitly expressed discomfort based on their prior experiences in topics like those under discussion, which were treated dogmatically based on the dominant political liturgy. However, when the students perceived the critical reflection that he was engaging in due to his experiences as a researcher, their attention began to increase. After finishing the lecture, an interesting, emotional and critical debate emerged, and the participants remained in the discussion until the moment at which we had to leave the auditorium. This was the moment that was used to make explicit the topics of the research and to invite them to participate in this research.

Nearly, all of the participants voluntarily decided to participate in the research. The social climate during the investigation was so positive that, when using the written methodological instruments with issues that we considered to be of high political sensitivity, González Rey offered the participants the option to express themselves anonymously before completing these instruments. Therefore, many of the participants wrote their names, phone numbers and addresses asking for being invited to other similar activities in the future. This experience led us to think about the concept of the *social scenario of research*, which is closely related to the dialogical nature of the knowledge production as defined by Qualitative Epistemology.

When this *social scenario of the research* functions, it represents the first step of the research because of the quality of the information that emerges from this process. There is no fixed system of rules for orienting researchers in the creation of such scenarios; these scenarios result from the imaginative capacity that is necessary to develop the professionals who are devoted to this type of research.

10.3.2 How Are the Methodological Tools in This Type of Research Defined?

The overcoming of the instrumentalist tradition in psychology in which the methodological tools are responsible for the validity and objectivity of the “collected data” implies the reconsideration of what the instrumental tools mean. These tools are devices utilised by the researcher during the constructive–interpretative process that are addressed to discuss materials on which the research is based. One of the characteristics of this approach is that the construction of information begins from the very start of the investigation and not at the time at which the data are being collected. The construction of information is a continuous process that begins with the creation of the *social scenario of research* and continues through the definition of indicators (hypothetical pieces of meaning that are constructed by the researcher based on the empirical elements). The indicators form chains of different

elements that converge according to their meanings. These chains of indicators lead to the formulation of hypotheses in movements that define the theoretical paths that rule the constructive–interpretative process throughout the investigation. Hypotheses are not used as a priori entities to be demonstrated but as intellectual tools for theoretical advances during the research process.

Fieldwork is defined as a dialogical scenario within which the different methodological tools are inserted as particular moments of the conversations that are planned as well as the informal conversations that rule the research. The instruments in this proposal never represent devices to be “applied”; they unfold in different forms in new instruments. For example, the use of free or directive writing in research always implies the return to this writing with the participants or between the participants with the aim of provoking new reflections and conversations through which new information relevant to the research material might emerge.

Research is an innovative process that advances according to the paths and options that the researcher him/herself assumes during this process. There is no fixed package of instruments that can be applied from this perspective. As Parker stated,

There is no overall set of criteria that would work to justify a specific study, (Emphasis of the author) for a new research question calls for a new rationale and combination of methodological resources to explore it, and the terms in which the research question is framed will entail particular methods. (Parker 2005, p. 135).

Methodological devices or tools are a creation of the researcher; they can be written, oral, experimental or based on different types of social or individual activities. We define a methodological tool as any device that is used to facilitate in depth the expressions of the participants. No instrument is a goal in itself; rather, all instruments are moments in the process of the construction and dialogue conducted by the researcher.

10.3.3 The Production of Theoretical Models During the Research Course

The theoretical character of this methodology is defined by its aim that addressed the production of theoretical constructions as the main result of the research. The place of the theory in this type of research is not to be applied to the “data” that is empirically collected. The theory is understood to be a source of theoretical categories and principles that support new theoretical constructions that are generated during the research. The theoretical models are the theoretical constructions, hypotheses, researcher’s ideas and insights that rule the path followed by the research. The empirical material is not anymore defined as an external and objective source that rules the investigation, as something given in reality; rather, it is viewed as empirical material that is only relevant to the research through the meanings through which it becomes part of the theoretical construction.

Our methodological proposal addressing the constructions of the subjective configurations and subjective senses of persons and social instances represents the main theoretical models of our inquiries; the construction of any subjective configuration is always a singular process that can only be defined at the end of the research. Subjectivity is only accessible through theoretical models that seek to generate intelligibility about the empirical material through the chains of indicators that allow the defense of the hypotheses that are generated by the investigation. Subjective senses and subjective configurations can never be defined by direct behaviours; behind each relevant individual and social instance behaviours, there are complex subjective configurations in development that organise and reorganise themselves in many ways during the course of any given experience.

As Prigogine stated,

Therefore, the contemporary physic of Einstein, and with bigger reason the generation of physics after Einstein, took a very different lesson from the achievement of the Theory of Relativity. For them, the relativity teaches that is not possible to describe the nature from outside: the physic is done by the human being for the human being (Prigogine 2004, p. 140; my translation from Portuguese).

For years, psychologists idealised paths for the measurement of psychical processes in an attempt to transform psychology into an objective science; this issue has been strongly criticised by classic authors of psychology such as Danziger (1990) and Koch (1999), who are among the few authors to have examined the historical foundations of psychology and its current practices from theoretical, epistemological and methodological perspectives.

The subjective senses and subjective configurations are theoretical models that are supported by constellations of elements, whose convergence in one hypothetical path results from the theoretical construction of the researcher and permits the integration of different elements into concepts that become paths of intelligibility of the studied question. The meanings that integrate the diversity of empirical elements are not intrinsic to them but are rather a researcher's theoretical construction that is based on the theoretical model developed during the research.

Now, we would like to exemplify in one case study some of the concepts explained above and to exemplify, above all, how a theoretical model can be produced during research. M is a woman who is 35 years old, a secretary, married for 15 years, and with 10- and 8-year-old daughters. She came to our team due to her obesity.⁵ In our first conversation, she stated the following:

I like so much to be at our home in the beach with my daughters, it is really very pleasant, listening to them speaking spontaneously about their fantasies and the way in which they perceive their daily life. The level of spontaneity of our conversations is something that I recreate in my mind many times during my complex journeys of work at the hospital. I changed a lot when I return from a period of holiday after enjoyed my daughters, even my sense of humor is quite different.

⁵The study of the subjective configuration of obesity is one of our lines of research and psychotherapy related to health.

Immediately after this reference to her daughters, the researcher asked the following: “And your husband these periods with you?” She answered as follows:

My husband and me are quite different from this point of view, may be because they are daughters, he does not find the best way to enter in communication with them. He centers on his interests on our holidays. He likes so much to read. Maybe he feels jealous of my relationships with our daughters, something that I tried to avoid all the time.

It is possible to perceive from the above moment of the conversation that M’s authentic emotions were compromised by their daughters and by the moments in which they were together in a very intimate relationship. In addition, her husband did not appear spontaneously in that first conversation, which was very relevant. The emotional, intimate expressions of M in relation to her daughters provide particular relevance to the absence of her husband from her story. This first conversation prompted the researcher to surmise that rose the indicator that the quality of her marriage was in trouble; rather, this indicator should be integrated with other indicators with similar meanings to become a hypothesis of the research. Our work with so-called “chronic diseases and disabilities” addresses the idea of transcending the universal idea of pathology via the study of the singular and changeable subjective configurations of those entities.

Every indicator is, in itself, a hypothetical construction that is limited in both its extension and its potential for generalisation. From our perspective, the generalisation always results from well-supported theoretical models; this is not an inductive process.

The process of the construction of information is a continuous flux of indicators and hypotheses within which the theoretical model in process acquires different theoretical meanings due to the confrontation between the hypotheses inside of the model. In one research, two or more different and contradictory hypotheses can coexist and advance simultaneously until the moment in which some indicators support the pertinence of some hypotheses relative to others. This is the only criteria of validity or legitimacy used in this type of research. There is no criterion external to the research that could be used from the outside to define the value of the theoretical construction in progress during the research. This situation is one of the reasons why the definition of indicators and hypotheses should be explicitly and carefully explained during the research report. It is the congruity between indicators, hypotheses and theoretical constructions that defines the legitimacy and viability of the theoretical models.

The meaning created by one indicator is never explicit in the stories or intentional responses of the participants in the research. In the case under discussion, the methodological tool of the “complement of phrases” is introduced by Rotter in the 1950s as a projective test. However, in contrast to Rotter’s proposal, its use as a methodological tool does not attribute a priori standardised meanings to participants’ constructions in the instrument; rather, the indicators defined from the instrument are closely related to the hypotheses under consideration at the moment in which the instrument is used.

M's complementation of phrases allows the researcher to formulate other indicators: two of which compatible with the first indicator that signalled difficulties in her marriage, and the other signalled a new path that addressed a new possible hypothesis

First She referred to, in 8 phrases from a total of 25 to her daughters, inductors that were both direct and indirect. For example, one direct inductor was "my daughters: my complete happiness". Here, she must say something about her daughters because the inductor directly referred to them. Of course the quality of the expression should vary from one participant to another. An example of an indirect inductor was as follows: "In the future: I will respect the choices of my daughters in their adult lives".

Second In all the complements of phrases devoted to her daughters, M was personally involved in her demonstration of affection toward them and recreated the past and the present through concrete experiences lived together. At the same time, M referred to plans for the future. However, her expressions related to her husband were extremely poor; the husband only appeared in two depersonalised phrases that were completely separated from the living experiences and without emotional engagement:

- The marriage: is sacred.
- My husband: a very good person.

She only referred to her husband prior to direct inductors. A good summary of the hypothesis in process was her spontaneous statement that her "husband is a good person"; she seems to want to say that "my husband is good as person but not as a husband". The path opened by the first indicator made it possible to define the new indicators constructed in the "complement of phrases". The available number of indicators regarding the same conjecture permits a hypothesis about the affections related to her marriage as the source of different subjective senses in her configuration of the obesity. The heuristic value of the concept of subjective configuration is the elucidation of elements from different relevant experiences of the individuals that are lived in different contexts and times of their histories as relevant to current experiences. Subjective configurations permit the advancement of different processes engaged in each human experience, which never result from a single cause.

The *new indicator* can be defined based on her statement that "In the future, I will respect the choices of my daughters in their adult life". This type of expression is frequently a self-biographical expression that has more to do with the person's own stories than with the imaginative situation that has not actually be lived, i.e., with her daughters in this case. This expression might signal M's experiences with her mother, who had strangely not appeared in her story after the first three meetings with the researcher. Altogether, both elements define this new indicator: the specific quality of her relationship with her mother, which also assembled the subjective configuration of depression. As with any indicator, this one was only relevant when other, complementary indicators appeared.

Based on the prior new indicator, the researcher decided to introduce a new methodological tool. The researcher asked M to expound upon the following statement: “My memories of childhood”. Tools such as this are excellent resources for generating indicators about intimate topics or experiences about which a person does not spontaneously speak. The dominant social discourses and social representations about topics of high social sensitivity, such as family, sexuality, drug consumption and others, should be explored in an indirect and open manner.

Using the statement “My memories of childhood” as an instrument for provoking a personal history of childhood allows for the advancement of indirect qualitative elements that are very important for this methodology. Thus, the following elements are relevant for the evaluation of the information acquired via this instrument: the moment of her life in which the story began, the order of the appearance of her closest affections, the quality of the experiences stated by her in relation to her closest affections, and the temporal dimensions used in the constructions of her speaking. For example, some individuals were referred to only in the past tense, and others were referred to in the past, present and future tenses, such as her daughters, etc. All of these elements are beyond the consciousness of the person, which make them excellent resources for inquiry into the topic under study. M stated the following about her childhood memories:

My early childhood was so great because I loved so much my grandfather who lived with us. He was very sweet with me and he took me to walk with great frequency. He sat me on his legs and tells me many stories; I enjoyed so much his company! My first great sadness was his death when I was ten years old. He practically occupied all my happiness and my time before he died. My parents worked a lot and I only saw them at night. He was my babysitter and my grandfather attended to me during the day. My brother wanted to play with my father at night. Our parents always were very concerned with scholarly results. After beginning school, my mother used to support us, my brother and me, with our school duties. This is a general picture of my childhood

Researcher: And what can you say about your friends in the neighbourhood and at school? This type of conversational initiative of the researcher is very important for this type of methodology.

M: “I was very shy at that time, and my best friend and playmate was my brother, who was two years younger than me. I began to have my own group of friends during my adolescence in school”.

Researcher: How was the position of your parents in that moment of your life?

M: “You know, my father was a good man but he was a little absent in our education, something that to some extent I explain today to myself by the strong character of my mother. My mother was so centered on our education; however, in that time, mothers usually did not speak to their sons and daughters about life and human existential challenges. For example, when I had my first menstruation, I was completely surprised and nervous because my mother never explained this process to me. Sexuality was completely omitted in my home. We were a very religious family”

Researcher: Was your mother an authoritarian person?

M: “My mother liked to impose her criteria. She only was different with my grandfather, whom she respected so much. My mother was extremely overprotective, and even in my decision to get married, she influenced me so much. Today, I think that I was very dependent on my mother until I got married as result of that situation in my home”.

First, we want to focus on the manner in which this methodology is conducted. The researcher is consistently in dialogue with the participants, regardless of whether a case study, such as this one, is being conducted or the work is being performed in a group. The researcher provokes and asks questions following the gaps in the stories of the participants and essentially advances the theoretical model in process based on the hypotheses.

M's story about childhood is relevant to the importance of her grandfather in her life. He was the closest familiar relation in that moment of her life. She had a very absent father, who was similar to her husband at that moment of her life. Her shyness and the authoritarian character of her mother were reflected in the difficulty she experienced making her own decisions during her adolescence and youth. Altogether, these elements led the researcher to define the following indicators: the first goes in the same direction of that mentioned before based on her expression "to respect the decisions of her daughters in the future"; the second relates to the possible late sexuality, which supports the position she referred to her mother as holding in regards to sexuality, i.e., her dependency on her mother and the high level of religiosity that prevailed in her home. Following this hypothetical course, it can be concluded that M got married due to the influence of her mother and with a very limited, if any, level of sexual experience. This group of elements can also be taken as one more indicator that was congruent with those raised previously regarding the quality of her marriage.

The growing intimacy between M and the researcher combined with the advances in M's reflections about her life during the research resulted in a climate of reflection and confidence that permitted M to discuss topics about her life about which she had never spoken before.

The theoretical model in this example is the progressive construction of the subjective configuration of M's obesity. As a result of the study, it was possible to construct a system of different indicators that converged in terms of their meanings related to her unpleasant relationship with her husband. Based on the information given by M in the progressive sessions of our work, it was possible to advance in depth about the quality of her marriage. She was married under pressure from her mother, who very much liked her husband. However, M never had an orgasm with him, which is something that she said based on another woman's reflection during a group session. She had never previously reflected on this question in depth due to her high religiosity and the level of brotherly affection she felt for her husband. This shift in her conception of herself as a woman led her to focus on her daughters, who greatly engaged her authentic affections that were designed to avoid sexual contact with her husband, who also accepted this as an implicit marriage contract. As she said in one moment of the research, "We decided to live together as great friends because this is what we are".

The concepts of subjective senses and subjective configurations highlight the manners in which the constellation of facts that intervene in one concrete experience can be raised and configured together not by their objective appearance but by the theoretical construction of the research. Each subjective configuration of obesity is

singular. The case of M could never have been modified without engaging her complex subjective configuration of the obesity.

The subjective configuration of her obesity integrated with her subjective senses that resulted in the simultaneous emergence of her religiosity, rigid concept of family, model of her own family and abandonment of sex combined with her frustrated sexual desires. Based on the subjective configuration in which the complex and diverse subjective senses integrate into one another, a set of highly interrelated behaviours emerges: her lack of interest in physical appearance was closely related to their renunciation of sex, which in turn was related to her disinterest in physical exercise and anxiety that led to overeating. The lack of affection for her husband was hidden by her religiosity, her model of family, her appreciation for the human qualities of her husband and her relationships with her daughters. This complex picture of her affective life was subjectively configured in such a manner that provokes highly contradictory feelings, such as guilt, depression, aggression and disinterest. She unconsciously did not want to face the reality of her affections because the above-mentioned subjective senses did not permit her to develop with regard to this issue.

The concept of subjective configuration is a hypothesis that concretizes itself by a set of indicators that theoretically permits the explanation of complex organisations of behaviours and symptoms whose geneses are beyond the person's conscious representations and beliefs.

This type of research leads to a level of intimacy and shared reflections that makes it a process of self-development associated with intrinsic therapeutic value. This type of research always creates social spaces of reflection as methodological tools that open new alternatives for dialogue with the participants. These activities are proposed as complementary to the research but are, in fact, very relevant to it.

Due to the limitation of a single chapter, the decision to focus on the manner in which the process of the construction of information took place from this methodological proposal was made. The heuristic value of this theoretical, epistemological and methodological approach is the highlighting of new elements that other theories have ignored or overlooked in relation to the studied questions.

10.4 Some Final Remarks

The interpretations presented in this article cannot be considered as an act; interpretation is a historical process that occurs through a sequence of indicators (micro-hypothetical constructions) whose convergence permits the opening of hypotheses as paths through which the researcher's theoretical model advances in knowledge construction. This methodological definition is crucial for legitimising the theoretical constructions proposed by the research.

Once the focus of the research cannot be studied by explicit behaviours and other types of the participants' intentional expressions, it is necessary to work with the individual and social constructions that are behind the intentional beliefs and

representations of the participants in the investigation. This chapter offers an alternative for producing material related to the subjective configuration of the research question—in this case the obesity. This material arose by indirect theoretical paths that were developed through the researcher’s ideas and hypotheses through the specifics of each of the singular theoretical models organised in each research.

This research perspective represents a progressive and complex process of communication within which different methodological tools can be used as resources to advance the depth of dialogue during the research. Therefore, in this proposal tools are never taken as a source of results; the instruments are provocative inductors for the expressions of the participants. The constructive process through which the theoretical meanings emerge results from the complex constructions that integrate indicators and hypotheses that are progressively produced during the research process

The cultural–historical approach demands new epistemological positions and methodologies that can successfully advance the complex theoretical questions that have appeared as central to this approach in the last two decades, such as *perezhivanie*, consciousness as a subjective system and the social situation of development and subjectivity.

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Chapter 11

The Relevance of the Concept of Subjective Configuration in Discussing Human Development

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Abstract The topic of human psychological development has frequently been dealt with by general individualistic, teleological and moralistic theories. However, within Soviet psychology, Vygotsky and Bozhovich advanced theoretical alternatives for the study of psychological development, in which the concepts of *perezhivanie* and social situation of development were central. The importance of that legacy opened new ways of understanding the subjective side of psychological development. The focus of this chapter is to advance a comprehension of subjective development, on the basis of concepts that permit to integrate the diversity of social and cultural conditions of experience into processes and subjective units (subjective senses and subjective configurations), which emerge not as reflection of those social and cultural conditions, but as new qualitative subjective productions. The chapter presents two case studies, one about learning difficulties and the other about severe mental health problems. These case studies show that singularity is not reduced to an individualistic approach. Moreover, they evidence that the emergence of new subjective senses and configurations is closely related to the creation of new spaces of social integration characterised by a dialogical communication, which, in turn, is a condition for the emergence of affective processes. The concept of subjective configuration is presented as an attempt to define a unit of subjective functioning that allows us to overcome the dispersive taxonomy which characterises the history of developmental psychology.

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11.1 Introduction

The topic of human psychological development has been dealt with by psychology using general theories, as has been the case with psychoanalysis, and on the basis of theories specifically addressing particular areas of psychological development, as for example, the theory of Piaget on the development of intellectual and logical operations, the theory of Kohlberg on the study of moral development, and so on. These theories are constrained by two facts that have affected most of the efforts to study human development: first, the standardised representation of psychological development as ruled by regular and progressive stages; and second, the fact of not considering the development of the adult.

Despite the advances made by Vygotsky on the relevance of social aspects in psychological development that characterised the first and the last moment of his work, the understanding of social genesis of psychological processes was very constricted in Soviet psychology for two reasons; the omission of communication as a central concept for psychological development and the exclusion of what the symbolic features in a broader sense represented for the understanding of psychological processes. In his earliest work, Vygotsky understood social relationships as being very relevant in how disabilities affect the life of children. In his final works, through the concept of *perezhivanie*, Vygotsky attempted to overcome the narrow and unilateral vision of the influence of the social environment by Kornilov's group, which included some of the Vygotsky's prior positions. Bozhovich was the only Soviet psychologist who incorporated Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* and social situation of development into the study of the development of motivation and personality.

Aside from the fact that Vygotsky–Bozhovich line of research and Leontiev and his disciples shared a representation of development as being a progressive sequence to higher stages, the positions of both lines of research in psychological development were quite different. In Activity theory, personality was excluded from psychological development. The concept of leading activities was dominant and also the basis on which the dynamics of development was understood. These leading activities were responsible for one particular type of psychological process as the main object of development at each psychological development stage. According to Elkonin (1971), whose periodisation framework was used as a general reference for Soviet psychology, there were stages in which leading activities were oriented towards the development of sensorial and intellectual functions, while others had to do with the development of affective-communicational processes.

In general, the position on development defended by Leontiev and his followers was very individualistic. They reduced the sociocultural character of development to the social character of those objects that motivate activity. This position is clearly expressed by Stetsenko who wrote:

It is not difficult to see that, in the broad sense of object-relatedness, the accent is on the fact that an object is a necessary condition for the development of an activity and for the mental reflection that follows that development. An object is here characterised primarily as

belonging to the external world, as “having been externally posited”, and also as something to which a living being relates and towards which the activity of that being is directed. (Stetsenko 1995, p. 56)

What Stetsenko’s statement makes clear is the priority given by Activity theory to the object, and not to the active agent of the communication process and as a consequence of that, the mental processes emerge as secondary, as a reflection of what happens in activity, which makes the subject–object dichotomy perpetuated by such a position obvious.

The dominant “Cultural, historical activity theory” was based on Leontiev’s individualistic object-based definition of activity. “Cultural, historical activity theory”, a construction of Western psychology, paradoxically, has not taken into account the historical contexts within which the theories under this name, emerged, nor the different historical moments in which Vygotsky and Leontiev lived or their political positions in their respective times.

Moreover, all the dominant theories described above about development centred mainly on the period from childhood to adolescence, overlooking the fact that development is a quality of all human beings, and is only disrupted during some types of psychological disorders and grave physical illnesses, which are always historically, socially and institutionally situated. Psychological development also occurs in extreme situations, for example, with people in treatment because of grave illnesses or with people under severe, threatening social conditions, such as people in jail, in war, and in conflicts or distressing situations, such as divorce, unemployment and other difficult social situations.

This chapter discusses the development of subjectivity as a nonlinear, nonuniversal, nondeterministic and a context-sensitive process, whose main subjective configurations are part of an ongoing process. The topic of subjectivity, as it is defended in this paper, does not reduce subjectivity to a private and individual system. Subjectivity, as well as development, is a quality that characterises human experience in its cultural conditions. Subjectivity from this theoretical position is organised into two different levels recursively related to each other: in both social and individual subjectivities.

In the first part of this chapter, the main concepts of our definition of subjectivity and their relevance for a different understanding of development will be discussed. In the second part, some results of two studies based on this theoretical framework will be presented. It is important to state from the beginning of this chapter that the development of subjectivity does not encompass other forms of development of psychological processes that simultaneously involve biological maturity and sociocultural processes, such as sensorial-motor development, the development of cognitive functions and skills, and others.

Subjectivity is related, first and foremost, to the way in which the history and current contexts of individuals and social instances turn into symbolical emotional processes and formations that have a self-regulative character within which psychological functions, capacities and skills are subjectively configured. Once these cognitive and intellectual processes are integrated into subjective configurations,

they turn into motivational devices. Social and individual subjectivity are productions within a given culture, culture being understood as the subjective legacy of prior generations that is objectified as the human world within which each new generation is born. Culture is the subjective memory of humanity. At the same time, culture represents a history in process, which continuously enriches itself from the new subjective production of each generation.

Differently from what occurs in culture, that the process of change usually takes one whole generation; social subjectivity changes throughout its different subjective configurations, in different moments of the interaction of the protagonists of any social instance. For example, the social subjectivity of family changes during the entire lifetime of its members.

11.2 The Concepts of Subjective Senses and Subjective Configurations; A New Representation of Development in Process

Psychology, in its history, has developed on the basis of a priori theories and concepts rather than being understood as living resources for new advances in the research and professional practices. As such, theories turn into static entities in which the empirical data becomes embedded in a priori given theoretical concepts in a very mechanical way. We understand subjectivity as symbolic-emotional units in process (subjective senses) and formations that are also dynamic and in process (subjective configurations). The subjective senses represent instantaneous flashes that in an endless and contradictory movement define the human experience as a generative process that is always beyond the immediate circumstances in which experience is taking place. The fact that subjective senses do not represent static entities defined by static contents, together with their dynamic and brief temporal presence, enables the recreation of different historical and present contextual episodes as they were experienced by individuals and social instances as subjective senses of the subjective configuration of the present action or performance. This presence is beyond the individual's consciousness.

The way in which the multiple subjective senses configure the present experience by feeling, perceiving and thinking, is inseparable from the subjective configuration of the action that characterises the current moment of the individual in action. This is the way new experiences turn into subjective senses within subjective configurations, caused by the subjective relevance of actions, performances and any other living experience. Subjective configurations permanently generate new subjective senses that represent a complex movement from personality to

action and from action to personality, in such a process in which action and personality¹ result inseparable.

The subjective senses reveal some aspects of living experiences that the individual who is living the experience is not conscious about. Each experience takes place within a complex network of facts and only those from which subjective senses emerge will be relevant for human development. The conscious representations that organise the intentions of individual are grounded in singular subjective configurations. This fact defines the motivational character of representations, intentions and psychological functions in their intertwined movement between individual conscious expressions and subjective configuration. However, the conscious projects, representation and positions assumed by one individual, even if the individual is not conscious of the subjective configuration of these processes, are generators of new subjective senses during the course of the actions that may change the subjective configuration in course, during the action leading to unpredictable changes in the individual's behaviour.

As subjective senses and subjective configurations are always in process, as moments of the individual relationships and performances, the concept of social subjectivity is extremely relevant for studying development. All the individual performances and relationships occur within a complex network of multiple social relationships of the individuals which embody social subjective productions organised at other levels of social functioning different from those in which individual current social relationships take place.

The functioning of different social institutions and instances is subjectively configured in the subjective configurations of the individuals in any local spaces in which their actions are taking place. Each individual behaviour embodies its configuration and specific subjective senses and social subjectivity. For example, the behaviours that recurrently emerge in one child within his/her family never result only from the direct relationships and the social position of the child in the family; these behaviours express subjective senses that result from the family, which at the same time are inseparable from those subjective senses generated by the child's experiences with their peers, at school, and in other relevant social spaces within which the child's experiences take place. Each individual behaviour occurs within a complex network of subjective configurations related to all the social instances in which the child's life develops.

All the successes and failures of one individual in any sphere of life are subjectively configured on the basis of the individual's subjective productions in other spheres of life. This is precisely the relevance of the concept of subjective configuration which focuses on the microcosms of the individual's life taking into account its variable and dynamic nature, and on each concrete experience of their life.

¹Personality in this theoretical proposal is understood as the dynamic system of historical subjective configurations that always participate in the current individual performances through some subjective senses that emerge as the subjective configuration of those performances.

Until today, the dominant criteria for educational, clinical and social interventions and actions have addressed narrow and specific goals rather than human development. All these practices were defined by instrumental and technical procedures guided by the professional who did not take into account spontaneous actions or the decisions of individuals.

As one of the authors stated elsewhere: “(...) they are precisely the new configurations that arise from ongoing experience as a result of contradictions, tensions and overlapping moments between the social and individual world, which become motives for whatever happens within a social scenario” (González Rey 2015, p. 506).

This is relevant for social development and at the same time relevant for individual development. Individuals develop by facing challenges that include the development of new subjective resources that impact, in one way or other, different spheres of their life. In the face of conflict situations, there are individuals that turn into subjects of the situation while other passively subordinate to the situation. This is one example that characterises subjective development and there is not any area of life or activity that could be considered as the sole promoter of development. The development of subjectivity is always a self-generative process. Even in extreme dramatic vital life situations, some people generate subjective configurations that allow them to produce new subjective resources that enable them to transcend their immediate circumstances. There are many examples of this, as for example Viktor Frankl, Einstein and many others.

Human development does not result from the immediate external environment, a topic Vygotsky began to develop through his concept of *perezhivanie* that remained uncompleted, but nonetheless shed new light on the study of human development in Soviet psychology. One of the interesting improvements made by Bozhovich's proposal on personality development was to define some psychological formations of personality that were specifically sensitive to certain moments of development. However, she also reduced the representation of development to standardised stages developed on the basis of children, adolescents and young people attending school.

Relevant evidence in contemporary society that demonstrates the singular character of development as subjective new production on the social conditions of existence is how the multiple types of families are generators or not of subjective development. The idea that there are positive and negative conditions of development that are independent of individuals and their relationship should be discarded once and for all. There are conditions that are more human and favourable to the human being. However, that does not necessarily mean that they will be favourable to human subjective development. Rather than the way in which the family is constituted, for example, the main process of a child's development depends on the quality of the processes of communication inside family. As Erica Burman notes:

Developmental psychology's commitment to a view of children and child development as fixed, unilinear and timeless is not only ethnocentric and culture blind in its unwitting reflection of parochial preoccupations and consequent devaluation of different patternings, but is also in danger of failing to recognise changes in the organisation of childhood subjectivity and agency. (Burman 2008, p. 82)

Our proposal on subjective development represents a way to overcome the shortfalls of the psychology of development to which Burman was referring. This theoretical proposal on subjectivity encompasses a broader understanding of cultural differences and its implication for the study of development. The prevailing unilateral and absolute criteria of standardised children within universal stages do not enhance our understanding of how the diversity of culture and social conditions of life is relevant to subjective development.

The concepts of subjective senses and configurations, subject and social subjectivity enrich our understanding of the diversity of cultural productions through their dynamic and intertwined nature. The recursive interrelations between these concepts allows us to understand subjective productions as complex networks of interrelated social and cultural facts within which individuals lives merge together into subjective units and through which life is experienced by individuals. The prevailing social representations that the dominant discourses spread in a society are important in the process of the genesis of the dominant forms of subjectivity produced by that society. The macro and micro social processes and relationships, and the symbolic devices on the basis of which they function, do not determine subjective productions but represent strong limitations to the process of subjectivation in each society.

Once again the radical and critical reflections of Burman in regard to the traditional and still dominant positions of developmental psychology highlighted a fact frequently omitted in the discussions about psychological development:

Attributions of knowledge to children bound up with images of the child and what we imagine them and ourselves to be. Discourses of childhood function as regulatory both overtly and internally. They produce a sense of adulthood and childhood not only for us but for the children. Accounts such as that quoted above fail to distinguish between a variety of social relations, both within and between cultures that constitute a society. (Burman 2008, p. 83)

The dominant discourses in society on childhood, moral values, sexuality, religion and other social symbolical productions are subjectively configured in many different ways, which means that social realities are the sources on which subjectivity emerges, but at the same time, subjectivity allows us to explain the different subjective senses that social experiences have for different individuals and social instances. This position makes it possible to move away from the subject–object dichotomy that was so dominant in the behavioural imaginary of psychology on which the dominant trends of developmental psychology in the XX century were born.

It is possible to enumerate the main shortcomings of cultural-historical psychology in its treatment of psychological development thus:

- The increasing theoretical confusion created by the definition of CHAT within the so-called “Vygotskian studies” has delayed challenges to the drawbacks of the concept of object-based activity, which has been central to the study of development. The consideration of activity in the same terms as the concept developed by Leontiev, preserved the dichotomy subject–object, objectifying the main concepts of psychology (González Rey 2009, 2014; Kratsova and Kratsov 2012; Zinchenko 1995, 2009).

- The late entry of symbolic aspects as central in the definition of subjectivity as an exclusive quality of human processes which entails a new approach to the topic of development. Bozhovich and her group carried out studies of the development of personality, and this was the only attempt in Soviet psychology to transcend the understanding of psychological development centred on the development of functions. While psyche has historically referred to organisms and their immediate activities related to orientation, adaptation, survival and reproduction of the species, the new psychological order that emerges within culture is not reduced to individuals. The culture in cultural-historical psychology was mainly reduced to language, speech, and the artificial mediators of cognitive psychological functions. A very instrumental view of psychological functions prevailed as the basis for understanding psychological development.
- There has been a decisive rupture between cognitive and emotional processes in the understanding of psychological development. Since Vygotsky's attempt to develop a more integral unity to study psychological development—the *per-zhivanie*—there have not been any relevant advances in the construction of new theoretical concepts in the study of psychological development.
- The concept of leading activity is still used as one of the main concepts to study psychological development, which has contributed to the fact that communication and its role in the emergence of affection, moral values and other processes of clear motivational character were not considered satisfactorily. It was no coincidence that only Bozhovich, who never referred to leading activity, advanced in the study of moral development as an essential process of the development of personality.
- The concept of leading activity contributed to a very linear and fragmented approach to the study of development, a good example of which was the Elkonin's periodisation framework for psychological development (Elkonin 1971). It is not the activity in itself, through its operations, that is responsible for the change of the subjective processes of development. The carrying out of any activity involves the network of social relationships and its subjective dialogical character, which is more relevant to psychological development than the type of operations of activity.
- Finally, the inadequate development of the understanding of the symbolic nature of social processes omitted in the studies of psychological development topics such as gender, ethnical differences, race, religious and other important cultural productions that imply different types of social practices that are inseparable from human development. These processes and many other symbolical productions can be subjectively configured, in one way or other, both in individuals and in social institutions.

The study of development based on this proposal on subjectivity has antecedents (González Rey 1995, 2012; Goulart 2013; Rossato and Mitjans Martínez 2010, 2011, 2013; Muniz and Mitjans Martínez 2012; Rossato 2009; Santos 2010; Arruda 2014; Muniz 2015a, b). This line of research began with González Rey's study (1995) on how learning to read for some children became a moment of their

subjective development through the stimulation of their imagination, fantasy, socialisation and creativity in the reading process that transcends the cognitive-instrumental nature of reading. The research headed by Mitjans Martínez on the development of subjectivity was oriented in three directions:

- The study of the changes in the subjective configurations of teachers who worked with students with disabilities in their classrooms for the first time.
- How children's creative learning and writing become subjective configurations that changed other spheres of their life.
- Changes in the subjective configurations of children with learning difficulties that helped them to overcome their difficulties.

The main purpose of this chapter is to develop a better understanding of the development of subjectivity, as a specific type of development that cannot be reduced to psychological development. Subjective configurations and subjective senses have a cultural, historical and social genesis. However, subjective senses and configurations are not a reflection, not an assimilation of the conditions within which these subjective processes emerge; they represent a new qualitative level in relation to the processes involved in their genesis.

This difference between psyche and processes of a different quality that are specific to human individuals has been mentioned recently by Russian psychologist Slobodshikova, who stated:

Psyche is an instrument, mechanism, that firstly, reflects a reality that is external to the individual and independent of him/her, and secondly, it is a mechanism of adaptation of the individual to the objective world...all the other characteristics of the individual psyche, (spirituals, moral and other related to personality), do not result from the reflective and adaptive function of the psyche; these characteristics are beyond the natural character of psyche. (Taken from Kolnakova 2012, p. 112)

Our theoretical proposal enables us to overcome the prior enumerated limitations of cultural-historical psychology as follows:

- Our definition of human subjectivity comprises the interwoven movement between social and individual subjectivities of the paths taken by individuals and the social instances in their interrelated trajectories. In this movement, subjective configurations emerge capable of integrating within their functioning as a subjective unit, subjective senses related to, for example, morals, lived familiar experiences, prior frustration in love, professional interests and many other areas of the individual life into one, unique subjective experience, that is feeling and expressed as one unity.
- This understanding of subjective configurations as a generator of different subjective senses of different experiences represents one step forward in relation to the idea of motivation understood as a pluralistic integration of motives (Kaplan and Tivnan 2014; Kim and Sankey 2009; Waardekker et al. 2012). Instead of being a unity of different motives, subjective configuration represents a dynamic and recursive system within which the diversity of subjective senses emerge as one qualitative unit in which the flow of subjective senses appears as

flashes that in their constant movement represents the way in which personal trajectories together with the present context are being subjectivized in one performance. This versatility and dynamic character of subjective configurations goes beyond the idea of multiple motives, each of which presupposes different psychological contents.

- Subjective configurations integrate a partial multiplicity of symbolical social productions that emerge through the multiple subjective senses in each concrete performance. Moral values, understood as subjective senses, are expressed differently by the same person during different human actions and performances. For instance, the moral sense of one action can appear in such a way that an external observer can interpret it as an action devoid of moral value. The congruence of the moral sense of different actions can only be defined by the theoretical constructions of the researcher. This is one of the attributes of the concept of subjective senses that in my opinion represents an advance in relation to those concepts defined as bearers of universal psychological nature.
- Subjective configurations in their complexity and dynamic character are the motive of the action, a motive that is complex, variable, open to the context, involved in the action and self-generative of multiple subjective senses on which the different individual's expressions and behaviours are based. There are also more simple motives for the immediate emotional involvement in one action. However, the motivations that involve identity and other spheres of personality are always represented by subjective configurations.
- The concept of subjective configuration represents an alternative for the concepts that emphasise human phenomena as having a social dialogical nature but which omitted the subjective character of those phenomena. For example, Bauman's definition of "liquid identity" in fact weakens identity as such in the process of the current experience. We agree with authors like Bauman and Stuart Hall in their definition of identity as not being a combination of fixed and universal contents. However, there are multiple subjective configurations that within particular contexts are bearers of a sense of identity, while in other contexts they are not. For example, national identity is relative to the contexts in which the individual and social groups are located. National identity is the way by which belonging to one nation becomes source of subjective senses. This is always a nonstandardised process; the subjective senses related to the national identity emerge when the belonging to a nation is important to feel, to recognise me, and to steady myself in a context to which I do not belong originally. It is impressive how Cuban American citizens born in the United States associate the "Cuban language" as a significant element of identity, something that for Cubans who live in Cuba is completely irrelevant since the "Cuban language" does not have a sense of identity in their daily life because it is completely naturalised in a context in which everyone speaks this language.
- The concept of subjective configuration is an attempt to define a unit of subjective functioning that allows us to overcome the dispersive taxonomy of concepts that has characterised the history of psychology, which also has been the basis on which developmental psychology developed. We would like to

emphasise that the development of subjectivity should not be equated with psychological development. There are specific behaviours and operations in intellectual development, sensorial development, perceptual development, motor development and other types of specific developments that are not covered by the development of subjectivity. The development of subjectivity involves studying the integration of subjective units of a diversity of culturally engendered symbolic productions that are responsible for the motivational value of different functions and concepts, which up until today have been treated as isolated entities. These complex subjective processes have never been studied by the “Cultural historical activity approach” of psychological development.

To conclude, it is not possible to advance a cultural-historical definition of development which is centred on one concept or on static entities defined by their behavioural expression, and which does not see the complex network of cultural and social facts that appear through subjective processes as being subjective production upon the lived experiences and not as reflections of them. Every individual’s subjective development is unique and results from different subjective configurations interwoven within different social networks from which actions emerge.

Finally, it is important to answer the following question: When and how one subjective configuration can be considered a generator of subjective development?

One subjective configuration is a driving force of subjective development when it includes the development of new subjective resources that allows the individual to make relevant changes in the course of a performance,² relations or other significant lived experiences within which the configuration emerges leading to changes that define new subjective resources. The subjective configurations on which the development of subjectivity takes place includes changes in individual behaviours and positions that also lead to changes in other spheres of life.

The process described above is frequently associated with the emergence of the individual as a subject of the performances in that area of life in which a developmental process is occurring. The development of subjectivity never involves a progressive continuity, on the contrary, it takes place abruptly in different moments of life and frequently, in different types of experiences that are impossible to be standardised. These processes occur throughout one’s entire life, living the more diverse experiences as demonstrated in the study of teachers who had to experience great challenges in their professional performance.

In one recent study in our line of research (Martins 2015) of an interesting case of a middle class student (MG, 21 years old), who experienced an unexpected pregnancy as a single woman and assumed a different attitude towards her pregnancy than that of her very traditional and conservative family. As a result of the conflicts she had to face, she experienced deep changes also in different areas of her life; she began to differ from her family’s thinking and moral and religious values

²We consider any performance as a moment of human experience that always includes a network of social relationships within which the performance takes place.

and was able to live according to her own values and principles, turning her into a subject who made her own decisions.

In this case, the emergence of a new configuration of her family includes a wide spectrum of changes in practically every sphere of her life. MG stopped going to Church and started to develop relationships with many different people, including young people of different sexual preferences, different races and different social positions, something that she had never done before because of her family's prejudices. Moreover, she refused to study Law that was the family's plan for her and began studying psychology instead. Her changes and their consistency, together with her ability to follow and decide on the different plans for her life, are significant evidence that she has become a subject of her own life, a process grounded on new subjective configurations related to different spheres of her social life, friendships, professions, moral positions, and so on. This process is another example of the different ways through which the development of subjectivity takes place.

Other research done in our line of work, which has advanced this theoretical approach to the study of subjective development in other spheres of life was the work of Rossato (2009) on children with learning disorders within a school setting, and the research of Goulart (2013) on people with severe mental disorders within a mental care institutional setting. In both research studies, it is evident how the studied cases progressed in relation to their different disorders due to the processes of subjective development. Next, we will illustrate how this process of development takes place in two of the cases studied by these research studies.

11.2.1 The Case of João

João is 12 years old and he studies in elementary school. He began school when he was 7 years old and repeated the first and second years. At the end of the fourth school year, he was referred to a multidisciplinary team responsible for carrying out diagnostic tests for learning difficulties. Unexpectedly, his academic skills were diagnosed as being high for his age group. João lives with his mother and stepfather. He does not personally know his biological father and his half brothers who live in another city. Occasionally he talks to them but only by telephone.

In the researcher's first contacts with João the tension experienced by him with his family was observed immediately. His stepfather and mother reject his biological father and this made João reject them and become aggressive at home. At school, João was seen as a child with serious difficulties. He had trouble concentrating in class and paying attention to the teacher. He just wanted to draw, as the teacher reported at that time. So at home he was seen as a rebellious child, and at school as a restless student that "romps around and wastes time" (oral report of the teacher).

João was active in various areas of his life and he was also creative when questions were addressed to him by the teacher; he did not give the correct answer

but he invented an answer. João's active position in his daily life was also expressed in the way he reacted to his family about his biological father. He was characterised by maintaining his own paths in the different social spaces in which he acted. Almost always, as a result of defending his own positions, he was rejected by the school and by his family.

João's mother did not appear spontaneously in the conversations the researcher had with João at the beginning of the research, which could have been an indicator of his bad relationship with his mother at that time. He only referred to his mother in a descriptive way, when talking about certain events of his life, such as when they moved to the city or in situations that involved his biological father. In the conversation the researcher had with his mother, she said that João was not sensitive to the affection she gives him and that he had refused to accept her authority. The subjective configuration that characterised João's life in his family expresses in his rebellious, emotional, confrontational and aggressive style. These elements also characterised João's behaviour at school. His fantasies about his father were an expression of the affective emptiness that he felt at home.

It is impossible to separate the subjective configurations of students in other areas of life from the way in which the activities at school are subjectively configured. At school, João was seen as a child with learning and behavioural problems. He was stigmatised as a "problematic child", although the school never approached him to know about his personal life. The school has a very intellectual-instrumental representation of learning, which accounts for the lack of interest in the child's subjective conditions. This view of learning is only centred on the child's academic school performance. This representation separates the child's intellectual resources from his/her subjective resources. Such a separation supposes a dichotomy between emotions and intellectual operations. Based on this dichotomy, learning disabilities are attributed to intellectual and personal disorders and labelled as "abnormal behaviours" leading to the pathologizing of the learning disabilities.

Due to João's challenging attitude towards colleagues and teachers, the teachers did not believe in the developmental abilities of João, a position that appeared in the next subjective expressions of João:

In the instrument of sentence completions João wrote:

Sentence 11: It is easier to learn: when I pay attention to the teacher.

Sentence 16: It's hard to learn: when something around distracts me.

During one of the conversations with him, he stated: "I think that my learning difficulties result from my difficulties to stay quiet in the classroom"... "My life would be good, if I pay attention to the teacher, but I cannot control myself".

The attention to children with learning disabilities requires a focus on their social life as well as on the way in which social, symbolical attributes, such as gender, race, physical appearance, and so on, are subjectively configured, and are part of their subjective productions in every sphere of life. The quality of learning is an integral process that is not only defined by academic operations but by the subjective configurations that emerges during the learning activity. It is this condition

of the learning processes that inspired the definition of the “subject of learning” (González Rey 2009, 2010). The “subject of learning” is defined by the capacity of individuals to actively participate in the learning on the basis of their singular subjective resources.

A recent research, Muniz (2015a, b), demonstrated the condition of subject in children in their learning of Mathematics. He presented some case studies of children who did well in Mathematic, who expressed different subjective configurations of the learning process and who demonstrated a variety of attributes, such as self-confidence, low or high levels of mathematical interests, different fantasies related to the future, the ability to face challenges, and so on, which are inseparable from their performance in Mathematic. In the research of Rossato (2009), from which the case of João was taken, the difficulties of learning are also related to the closely linked subjective configurations present in his family life and at school, from which subjective senses closely associated to his behaviours and subjective position in the family and at school emerge. His resistance to follow the established norm, his rebellious attitude, his position of actively facing challenges and following his own interests, subjectively characterise his positions in both social spaces of the family and the school.

The dominant social subjectivity of the school is configured as an important element of the teachers’ subjectivities, in the social climate of classrooms and of the school, dictating the social representations about what a good student and good learning is. João does not respond to any of those representations. João drawing ability and his capacity to use his own personal experience to face the demands of his daily life at school are completely ignored by most of his teachers. The passive conception of discipline that rules the classroom is completely incompatible with the active positions assumed by João in his different activities at school. The teachers do not pay attention to the singularity of the students and as result, they do not stimulate singularity and creativity in the learning of students.

11.2.1.1 Advancing on João’s Learning Difficulties

After repeating his second level at school, João was integrated into a new classroom with a new teacher. This teacher perceived João’s interest in and skills for drawing, and based on this, the teacher asked for João to be tested. As result of the evaluation, João was defined as a child with high academic abilities. This process occurred in the middle of the fourth school year—João started to attend weekly classes in a special programme to improve his knowledge and to learn some techniques to improve his current situation at school. As a result of this process, João was moved to a group of higher achieving students, in which he began to receive high evaluations for his academic performance. Since the beginning of João’s relationship with his teacher, who believed in his best qualities, devoted time and attention to him, important changes have occurred in João as a student and as a person.

The teacher was very reflective and communicative, and she started working on João’s strongpoints, encouraging his drawing skills. The acceptance expressed by

the teacher to João and her positive evaluation of his skills at drawing opened a new social space for João in the classroom, who felt highly valued by the teacher. Such a process radically changed the social acceptance of João by his peers, which at the same time included important changes in the subjective configuration of the João's experiences at school. João began to pay attention to the class, to be friendlier to his colleagues and to feel confident about getting good grades at school.

The teacher was guided by the researcher to talk to João's mother and step father, who reacted positively to the teacher's suggestions. At the same time, the subjective changes experienced by João at school were also expressed in his behaviours at home. As a result of the simultaneous changes from João's parents to João and from João to his parents, a new affective climate emerged in the family. One new subjective configuration, integrated by new subjective senses that are simultaneously interwoven in the family and in the generation of new subjective senses, expressed as self-confidence, led to the emergence of a new identity that made João develop a new perception of himself.

According to the information provided by João's mother, on the suggestions made by the pedagogical team of the school, she stopped confronting João about his desire to get to know his biological father, and she also accepted and valued the time João devoted to drawing. His mother's position decisively contributed to the reciprocal affective relationship between João and his mother. It is important to stress here the heuristic value of the concept of subjective configuration and the opportunity it offers to understand how the complex dynamics from different areas of life assemble as one qualitative unit that simultaneously deals with a wide spectrum of an individual's life.

In one of the conversations with his mother after the changes experienced by the family dynamic, she stated:

Now I understand better João's need to feel my affection and attention. At the moment, I talk with him a lot, taking care of his needs [...] He expresses himself through drawings and I am paying attention to his drawings, which are at times a good starting point for our conversations.

From his mother's comment, it is possible to conclude the important changes she made towards João and the important role played by the teacher in this change. The teacher not only worked with João, she extended her work to his family, which was the most important source of conflict for João at that time. The changes experienced by João appear in all the instruments of the research, as well as in his daily life behaviour at school and at home. In the completion of sentences João's following statements are interesting:

Sentence 8: I know: that I can improve more than I have already improved.

Sentence 9: I think: I deserve to be congratulated for my behaviour in class yesterday, because I was able to pay attention the whole class.

Sentence 10: Sometimes: it's very hard for me not to take a scolding because I always lead the bad group of the class. However, I control myself at the moment.

João's interest in changing his behaviour at school is evident and it was the result of the new social space in the classroom that the new teacher facilitated for him to feel good about himself just as he did in his new social position in his family.

The changes in the subjective configurations related to his life at school were evident in the radical changes experienced by João in his daily school life: he was accepted by the teacher, he began to receive better grades, he paid attention in class and he began to be perceived differently by his peers.

Eighteen months after the research, João continued to show an active and inventive posture but now directed to achieving better results at school. He demonstrated a radical new posture in the classroom and at school. At different moments in the classroom and during the breaks between classes, it was possible to observe João advising his classmates about their inadequate behaviour. He also began to keep his distance from certain students and situations in order to avoid getting into trouble at school.

After a year, it was possible to establish that João recognised his stepfather as a travelling companion for fishing, accepting his authority and recognising him as "father Roberto". João never mentioned the word stepfather again. He began to overcome his fantasies about his biological father, which was evidence of what he needed from his family. His mother also changed her position in relation to his biological father and began to plan a meeting of João with him, which was a strong indicator of change from the way they referred to his biological father before. The following sentences taken from the instrument of completion at the end of the research are strong evidence of the changes experienced by João in relation to his family:

Sentence 3: I'm happy: when my father Roberto and I go to Caldas Novas, there are several clubs and places there-those which are not for tourists are the best for fishing.

Sentence 19: I love my family, they are my life.

Sentence 25: My family: is special.

Sentence 29: My mom: is the best mom in the world, she does everything to help me.

It is necessary to stress how the dynamics of the subjective senses and subjective configurations are important to understand the way in which different experiences of the child appear as being one subjective unit, which is embedded in each area of the child's life and their subjective senses that embody what has happened in other areas of life. The learning failures of João resulted from a complex subjective configuration of his school positions that represent a "miniaturisation" of what was occurring in his family and of João's subjective production of that experience. Family and school appear through one and the same process, provoking behaviours and subjective states that did not allow João to concentrate at school. The teacher played a decisive role in transforming João's social climate at home and at school. Without those changes, the development of João might have been impossible. The problems in children frequently result from situational subjective configurations that can be reorganised by remodelling their system of life.

The pathologizing labels almost always hide the real subjective nature of the learning disorders, creating a new problem, for example, the labelling of the child as a “problematic child” that could become a stigma in all the systems of social relationships of the child, a stigma that with high frequency makes the process of development impossible. The new situation of subjective resources that João experienced as result of the changes in his social life represents a moment of subjective development that was decisive for the new paths taken by João in his everyday life. This moment of subjective development will make others possible in the future of João’s life. This is the nonregular, nonstandardised and dynamic way in which subjective development occurs.

11.2.2 The Case of Sebastiao

The study of Sebastiao was part of Goulart’s research project (Goulart 2013) in a community mental health centre in Brazil. His research aimed at understanding individual and social subjective productions during the user’s process of institutionalisation and to find effective ways help users emerge as subjects of their life. The emphasis of the work centred on defining the strong link between education, mental health and the development of subjectivity. The work was carried out uninterruptedly done during 36 months, which made it possible to create affective relationships with users and professionals of the community mental health centre—an important condition for creating the social space within which the research would be carried out. The emphasis on studying subjective development of people undergoing treatment for mental disorders is based on one of theoretical premises that sustain the theoretical framework of this research: the development of subjectivity as a process that may occur during the entire life of an individual.

Sebastiao was 37 years old at the time we started our contact. He is a shy man, always smiling and generally friendly with people around him. He is single, has no children and, throughout his life, he always lived with other family members. At the beginning of my work with him, he lived with an aunt, and after a few months, he moved in with a brother. In both cases, he lived in simple houses, in the Brazilian Federal District regions characterised by populations with low purchasing power. Sebastiao did not finish elementary school, and throughout his life, he has worked as a painter and as a helper on cattle ranches. He has been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia since he was 30 years old. He has gone through two psychiatric hospitalisations and he has become a regular consumer of psychotropic drugs ever since. Sebastiao was known among professionals as one of the first service users with uninterrupted treatment for 7 years. Something that characterised Sebastiao’s routine was an obvious lack of spaces and activities for socialising outside of his home and outside the mental health service. As he himself used to say, his day to day was basically “from the bedroom to the service, from the service to the bedroom.”

At the beginning of our contact with Sebastiao in one of the group sessions offered by the service, he said:

The thing that bothers me most of all is when someone who does not know me looks at me and says, 'You're fine, you don't have anything'. How can they say that? I don't have this disease because I want it ... No one knows how I am, just the psychiatrist.

In this dialogue, Sebastiao claims the recognition of his suffering. It is, however, striking how for Sebastiao, the figure of the psychiatrist is central to the knowledge about himself. In assuming this position, the "disease" seems reified as an object of the other's technical knowledge; he does not acknowledge the relevance of his own actions in the course of its development. This same position was also present in an individual conversation with Sebastiao:

Sebastiao: "Man, I think that the cure for these diseases that we have is really in the treatment. There are many institutions around here that cure us, like this mental health service where I am attending."

Researcher: "And what do you feel that your role is in the process Sebastiao? What are your responsibilities?"

S: "I don't know... I can't say. But one thing I know is that I'm doing the treatment properly. I take all the medicines and I have realized that I can't live without the medicine. I think it's for the rest of my life! What I don't like is when someone says that I'm fine when I'm not. The psychiatrist is the one who knows about that, and if the psychiatrist says it's OK, then I can be discharged."

R: "And you cannot say anything about you?"

S: "I know very little."

Sebastiao's position, taken together with his previous statement, is strong evidence of his passive attitude towards his life, his difficulties or assuming responsibilities beyond those prescribed to him in therapy. Moreover, at first, he refers to the notion of cure, attributing the resources to reach this idealised state entirely to the mental health service. However, this is contradictory with his own process, marked by intensive and prolonged institutional treatment, as well as contradictory to his own words afterwards, when he says "I think it's for the rest of my life". In this sense, his situation seems to become even more chronic, by evading his responsibility to find out what to do to improve his own life.

The identification of the service user as an object of specialists' knowledge can be seen as a remnant of the "mental hospital model", which still exists in the lives of the assisted individuals, not as cages and chains, but as the subjective experience they have during their treatment. This dynamic eliminates the legitimacy of the users' knowledge and consequently does not allow them to actively engage in their development processes. As a result, human development and treatment appear as separated from one another. Such processes seem to be related to a biomedical logic, which often justifies the omission of the user's responsibility in the treatment process. These psychiatric procedures lead to the nullification of users as active

individuals with treatment that overemphasise the instrumental procedures and omit the role of education³ as a relevant promotor of human development.

The impact of the limitations of the psychiatric attention given to Sebastiao clearly appears in Sebastiao's next statement: "I get the job, I do the job properly. But suddenly, out of nowhere, man, I get discouraged, so I just walk away and leave. I resign! But that's because of these mental disease problems that I have".

Sebastiao assumes his inability to work as being inherent to his "mental illness". In this sense, he seems to be a prisoner of a situation in which he can do very little, centring his life around the "disease" and not vice versa. However, we think that this expression indicates the existence of subjective productions that are beyond what is conscious to him, as the production of subjective senses expressed in insecurity, devaluation of himself and fear, which can, in turn, be consequences of the lack of social bonds—a process which is intensified by the reification of his mental disorder. The ignorance of the complexity of the subjective configurations of Sebastiao's mental disorder is one of the reasons that prevented the implementation of differentiated therapeutic actions addressed to his subjective development processes instead of to the elimination of symptoms.

Sebastiao's positioning expressed earlier is very similar to his position in a group context:

After I started having these problems I have ... schizophrenia, these things... I saw that what I needed was treatment. So, I stopped everything I was doing, to focus on treatment, to see if I could get well soon... I think that's it, right? First, one has to be well, to have good health, and only afterwards you can go out to do other things, to have fun, to work.

Sebastiao's statement reinforces the indicator of the gap between the treatment to which he is submitted in the mental health service and the lack of attention to his subjective developmental process during his treatment. This gap leads to another one; the gap between the institution and daily life, the gap between the "cure" and his preparation to face the challenges of his life in society.

Thus, treatment is first experienced as an abstract procedure to be performed, rather than a space for his development in multiple spheres of life, in which the subjective implication of the service user is essential. These initial interpretative constructions of Sebastiao's case also represent indicators of the social subjective functioning of the mental health service within which the research was done: the representation of the user as an object of technical procedures, which is expressed by not taking into account the user's responsibility for his life during medical treatment, something completely counterproductive for the development of subjectivity.

³Education is defined here as a system of actions addressed at the development of the persons and social groups. The ground on which these actions take place is the dialogical communications of the educator with the group and between the participants in the processes. Education as such is very absent in the institutions devoted to the attention of human beings, as schools, hospitals, communitarian attention, and prisons.

In order to advance this hypothesis in process on how the institutionalisation is subjectively organised in the mental health service, it would be necessary to expand on the construction of other indicators studied also from other cases. It is worth noting that the subjective impact of institutional processes is expressed differently in the individual subjective configurations of the users, however, because of the intelligible articulation of such singular processes, it becomes possible to address aspects of the social subjectivity of the institution that go beyond the individual dimension. The heuristic value of the category of subjective configuration for the study of development, in this case, lie in the possibility of developing theoretical ways to organize the singular aspects of the experience of individuals to broaden social and cultural processes where they originate. That is, in this view, the individual is not considered as an atomized and universal fragment, but a dynamic moment of social experience and as such he/she is a source of knowledge of social processes that transcend themselves.

Regarding Sebastiao, these initial interpretive constructions about his treatment led us to propose several meetings and reflection with the professional staff of the service, in order to come up with ideas on alternative strategies that could facilitate Sebastiao's development, instead of reproducing the chronicity of the situation in which he found himself. In this sense, we proposed some different activities for him. The importance of this initiative was not reduced solely to actions as such but to the communicative processes involved in the action, processes, which carried out together, are an important source of subjective development. Furthermore, this is an example of the indivisibility between research and professional intervention, because the research processes foster reflections and critiques which develop into changes in the professional practice processes. These changes and relational processes generated by the research must also become the object of the research.

As stated earlier, one of the main challenges in the case of Sebastiao was to take him out of the routine of his daily life. In an attempt to achieve this purpose, the professional staff, on the suggestion of the researcher, organised his participation in a football team. This activity was held in a nearby community sports field. The main aim of this activity was to remove the service user from the institution and to integrate him into new social spaces within which the stigma of the illness was not so marked. As this activity started to become common in his routine, physical exercise was revitalised in his life and a playful social space was created in which Sebastiao was able to develop some social bonds. After a few sessions on the football team, he said:

Football is good because nobody is better than anyone else. We go there, we run, we make some goals, we take some goals (laughs) and all of us are well. The problems seem to disappear. I really like people there.

From Sebastiao's statement, it is possible to appreciate the relevance of the insertion of the individual into new social spaces, within which he can develop relationships and actions on his own within a complete different atmosphere from the dominant one in the mental institution. This physical activity unfolded into new subjective senses related to self-worth by feeling welcomed by a group. The function

of an activity, such as the football game in mental health care seems to be related to the momentary blurring of barriers and differences among participants because it is a team sport and it leads to a collective sense of functioning that helps so much in the development of healthy relationships based on solidarity, sense of the other, informal conversations and other important values that allow the participants to feel integrated in that social instance (Goulart 2013). In the case of Sebastiao, he is a shy person, who talks very little, however, the fact of him having to share with other members of his team, has made him say things such as “problems seem to disappear” and “no one is better than anyone”. These expressions are strong evidence of his feeling in this activity, within which new subjective senses emerge and on which it is important to address the therapeutic–educational work with him to the emergence of new subjective configurations. The creation of new spaces within which the person could be integrated is an important condition for the transit from a “patient identity” to a citizen identity, which in cases like this, represents an important moment of development without which the return to a life different from one characterised by the asylum institution is quite impossible.

Since the football activity, Sebastiao spontaneously began to take sporadic walks near his home on his own initiative. He even proposed it to himself to take these walks regularly. Then, he began to gradually increase the frequency of his walks in public places in which sometime before he had felt uncomfortable. After a few weeks of this new experience, Sebastiao said:

Now I'm not walking three times a week, I'm walking every day! In fact, there are days when I walk twice: in the morning and late in the afternoon. I am walking a lot! I go out, I feel the sun, I see people on the street ... I get very excited! Today, walking is the most important thing I do for my health! Another thing that I have changed in my routine is that I am taking shower every day. Before I used to take shower every three days. Sometimes I didn't take a shower for a week... and now I take shower every day. If I walk twice a day, I take two showers (laughs)! I'm improving my way of life a lot, before I did not shave or brush my teeth! Today, I do it every day (laughs)! It was hard for me to keep up the pace, it was very difficult for me to leave my house. I preferred to stay at home inside the bedroom. But this situation was not good for me. Changing my habits was hard at the beginning but it is necessary for my health. The same happened when I stopped to smoking, at the beginning I suffered so much, but now it has been more than a year since I quit smoking.

On the basis of the above fragment taken from the conversation with Sebastiao, it is possible to create some indicators that, because of the convergence of their meaning, leads us to affirm that the additional educational actions to change his way of life by creating new spaces for his social integration were effective because of the spontaneous new behaviours that represent the first moment of a process of subjective development. One important fact to consider Sebastiao's changes as indicators of the beginning of a process of subjective development was the appearance of new paths and positions in his life that were taken on his own initiative. The network of activities within which Sebastiao was inserted was important for the emergence of new subjective resources that allowed him to overcome the fear, submission, indecision and the self-feeling of inability resulting from the subjective configuration that had developed from his institutionalized history as a “mental

patient". In his process of change, the dialogical support that Sebastiao received from the therapist and the researcher before activities was very important

In the work with Sebastiao outside of the walls of the mental institution, there were no formal roles determined by instrumental procedures. All the work that was done with Sebastiao was based on a dialogical setting making the emergence of new affections possible, without which the emergence of new subjective senses as the way to new subjective configurations is impossible.

Without a dialogical network that allows the individual to develop new social relationships and which opens a new space of social integration to him/her, there are no activities that could be considered as positive or negative for their subjective development. The objective conditions taken in isolation do not make the development of subjectivity favourable or unfavourable. There are the subjective productions that emerge from the way in which these conditions are experienced by the individuals and the social instances, which are the driving force of subjective development.

It is very interesting to note how the emergence of new subjective senses in one activity, motivate Sebastiao's decision to perform new activities, as was evident in his decision to begin taking walks after his experience in the football game. This process also led him to begin to take care of his personal experience, since during his walks he met different people and he wanted to look better for them, and all these new initiatives were always taken by him. As a result of this, his acceptance of himself increased and he overcame some of the subjective barriers that blocked any social integration before, such as his resistance to leave his house. The new subjective resources evidenced by Sebastiao were not possible without will and motivation, two interrelated process without which subjective development is impossible. The stabilisation of these two functions implies new subjective configurations emerging during the action. Both functions, will and motivation, from our point of view resulted from subjective configurations that emerged during Sebastiao activities.

Another important indicator of the process of subjective development that emerges during the alternative system of activities proposed by the researcher appears in the next statement by Sebastiao in one of the group meetings, organised as part of the plan of activities with the service users:

There's something that I would like to talk to you about. I arrived at a conclusion... that I'm feeling good, I'm improving, I'm much better than before and I think now that I can participate spontaneously without support from you in the football team. I really appreciate the time you have devoted to me during this time. You have helped me a lot! But now I think it's time for me to take charge of my own life, to leave the group and to give up my place to someone else. This represents a step forward in my life.

Sebastiao's position expressed in the prior paragraph is a strong indicator of his advance during his integration in activities supported by the researcher. He feels capable of keeping up these new personal activities on his own, independent from the support of the research project. He does not restrict the changes in his life to specific and isolated spheres, but he is advancing simultaneously in different areas

of his life, which is an indicator of the emergence of new subjective configurations involved in his active position as an individual. The concept of subjective configuration through the interwoven movements of subjective senses that characterise its functioning, made it possible to explain and follow these interrupted processes of change in Sebastiao, whose intelligibility as being part of one complex subjective configuration in process, is only possible through the constructive-interpretive researcher's construction.

Finally, it is clear that, in the case of Sebastiao, the psychiatric prescriptions within the institution did not contribute to his subjective development. Only when he was supported by educational actions that opened new social spaces to him, inside and outside of institutions, new subjective senses related to life and to himself began to appear and to be expressed in his new feelings and reflections. The subjective production within one activity led him to new activities and his participation in the activities produced significant changes in his personal care, including attention to his appearance. Sebastiao after many years in the mental institution began the process to become the subject of his life, which was not part of the institutional expectations.

The spiral of subjective transformations experienced by Sebastiao signalled a moment of subjective development in the present circumstances of his life and its unfolding might lead to new qualitative moments in this process, what it is not an automatic axiom of progress, but a living processes in which Sebastiao is at the centre. This theoretical approach to human development makes it possible to advance in the understanding of human development as a partial and active process that qualifies a new moment in the life of people aside from the conditions in which they are living. The development takes place by the emergence of subjective configurations that make deep changes possible in different areas in one moment of a person's life, changes that represent the first moment of a complex process that can lead to other changes in the future moments of life or simply do not advance in the future.

11.3 Some Final Remarks

Subjectivity is related, first and foremost, to the way in which the history and current contexts of individuals, and social instances, turn into symbolical emotional processes and formations. These processes and formations have a self-regulative and generative character. Under certain circumstances, a new psychological blend of functions and subjective configurations emerges, characterizing a new subjective repertoire. These new qualitative moments characterise individuals and social instances. Such a process represents the development of the subjectivity.

In the cultural historical tradition, Vygotsky, at the last moment of his work, clearly understood that psychological development does not result from the immediate external social influences on children. As a result of this, he developed two very important and interrelated concepts: social situation of development and

perezhivanie. These represented a first step for a completely new representation of development within a cultural- historical point of view. However, both concepts were completely overlooked for a long time by Soviet Western and Russian psychologists.

The development of the topic of subjectivity is one way to continue Vygotsky's attempt to advance on a theory of consciousness. However, the inconclusive character of his work means progress must begin from the moment his work stopped. The development of his theory was interrupted by the end of his life but the vitality of his ideas continue to have a strong presence today. The development of subjectivity offers new ways of understanding one specific qualitative level of the human cultural existence.

The basis for the development of subjectivity is communication and dialogue, as demonstrated in the empirical experiences discussed in the chapter. Without the other as an affective presence the development of subjectivity is impossible. The case studies show how contradictory and emotionally intense the processes are from which development emerges. The emergence of new social spaces of integration and communication of the individuals is a condition for the emergence of new subjective resources through which development of subjectivity takes place.

Social subjectivity represents a dynamic and general system organised by different subjective configurations of the different social instances that indirectly take part of the current dynamic of one concrete social experience. Social subjectivity is inseparable from the genesis of individual subjectivity, within which social subjectivity emerges through singular subjective senses. Thus, social subjectivity is inseparable from the complex process of the development of subjectivity.

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Part IV
New Challenges and Perspectives

Chapter 12

Continuing the Dialogue: Advancing Conceptions of Emotions, *Perezhivanie* and Subjectivity for the Study of Human Development

Marilyn Fleer, Fernando González Rey and Nikolai Veresov

Abstract This final chapter brings together the outcomes of a dynamic dialogue on the concepts of emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity. In drawing upon the content of the three sections in this book, the editors theorise the relations between the concepts introduced, building new theoretical insights, but also explicitly introducing methodological challenges yet to be faced by the cultural-historical community as they engage in research which draws upon these concepts. This chapter notes the controversies, the challenges, and the elaborations of Vygotsky's original theory by advancing his legacy through a dialogue on the concepts of emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity. This chapter does not resolve these, but rather opens up the dialogue, as has been the tradition in our cultural-historical community. In identifying emerging gaps in contemporary discussions of emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity, this chapter contributes to furthering scholarship in our understandings of these concepts for the study of human development.

12.1 Introduction

The concepts of *perezhivanie*, emotions and subjective sense and configuration were discussed in the three sections of this book. As editors we sought to examine the theory and the methodological dimensions of these concepts, not as a complete *conceptual product*, but rather as concepts still in the process of development. The concepts of *perezhivanie*, emotions and subjective sense and configuration were

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discussed in unique but related ways. In keeping with our original framing for this book, in this final chapter we enter into a dynamic dialogue about these concepts. We analyse concepts and ask questions to each other, so that together we can show the theoretical power of these concepts, and contribute in new ways to scholarship in cultural-historical theory.

In our theoretical analysis of the concepts of perezhivanie, emotions and subjective sense and configuration, we frame our dialogue in relation to the content of the three sections. However, we also move back and forth across the content of the sections, so that a more dynamic and relational understanding of the concepts of perezhivanie, emotions and subjective sense and configuration can be realised.

We begin this dialogue in relation to the first section: perezhivanie; followed by the second section on emotions; and finally we discuss subjective sense and configuration. In the final section of this chapter, we conclude the book by offering insights into the controversies, challenges and contexts which surround the recent interest in these concepts. Together, we seek to build and contribute to new theoretical understandings and through this, show the methodological power of the concepts of emotions, perezhivanie and subjectivity.

12.2 Perezhivanie in Focus: Methodological Challenges and Empirical Implications

Nikolai The first section of this book reflects the current state of the art of scholarship in the concept of perezhivanie. Perezhivanie nowadays as a concept of cultural-historical theory *is* of interest to researchers. Even simple Google search of the concept of perezhivanie indicates hundreds of sources available showing a huge variety of understandings and interpretations. The three chapters on perezhivanie presented in this book not only reflect this interest and diversity in conceptualising this concept, but respond to this current state of affairs through foregrounding the challenges and implications in unique ways. With all my respect to post-modernist conception of multiple truth, I do not think that such a variety of understandings and interpretation is something we should be celebrating, but rather it is something we should be seeking to understand. The recent special issue of *Mind, Culture an Activity* (Volume 4, 2016) on the concept of perezhivanie also shows this diversity, and seeks to try and understand the complexity of this concept. I strongly believe that theoretical concepts have definite theoretical contents, at least when we speak on the concepts of cultural-historical theory of Vygotsky. The section on perezhivanie in this book does seek (1) to clarify the content and (2) to show possible ways of how to use this concept as an analytical tool for analysis. The section gives us a theoretical lens to study the process of development of human mind in its complexity.

From my point of view, two methodological distinctions are important and which have also been discussed in Veresov and Fleer (2016). The first is a distinction between *perezhivanie* as a psychological phenomenon (P1) and *perezhivanie* as a theoretical concept (P2). This is not a distinction of two meanings only, this is a distinction of two levels of analysis—phenomenological and theoretical. When we study the content of children’s *perezhivanie* as a phenomenon (for example, presented in children’s drawings or imaginary play) it might bring a lot of data of how concrete social environments influence a child’s mind, and how a particular child interprets and relates to certain situation. *Perezhivanie* as a concept has no phenomenological content, it is a part of the theory and its content is therefore completely theoretical. Using this concept as an analytic tool, a researcher might discover how social environments influence the whole course of child development; but what are the developmental outcomes of these social influences and how are they refracted through child’s *perezhivanie*? In other words, *perezhivanie* is a concept that can be used to study the process of development as the sociocultural genesis of the human mind.

The second important distinction is in advancing the theoretical endeavour of this concept. I am sure it does not make any sense to repeat what Vygotsky said about *perezhivanie* in different periods of his work, as everyone who is interested can easily find appropriate quotations in the Collected works and the Vygotsky Reader. Chapter 2 brings together these interpretations, and Chap. 3 gives this historical reading of the development of Vygotsky’s thinking. The challenge is to find new ways of advancing the understanding of the content of this concept, yet to do this in line with Vygotsky’s thinking and theoretical framework. I introduce a concept of dramatic (critical) *perezhivanie* because of several reasons. First, dramatic *perezhivanie* is related to the contradictory nature of human development. There is no development without contradictions, and higher mental functions “can be most fully developed in the form of drama” (Vygotsky 1989, p. 59); dramas, dramatic events being refracted through dramatic *perezhivanie*, do not only affect the child, but can create turning points in a whole course of child development. The famous example by Vygotsky of three children from one family demonstrates such dramatic *perezhivanie*, where social drama in the family affected the children’s developmental trajectories in different ways. This is also touched on by Veresov and Fleer (2016) in the special issue of *Mind, Culture, and Activity* on the concept of *perezhivanie*. Second, dramatic *perezhivanie* is related to development in such a way that it is a theoretical tool for the analysis of development and qualitative reorganisation of the whole system of higher mental function. Dramatic *perezhivanie* brings changes to the whole system of the child’s mental functions. The unique architecture and hierarchy of higher mental functions of human beings is the result of the unique dramatic interpsychological collisions that have happened in their lives and of the process of that human overcoming them. There is no development without qualitative reorganisation, there is no reorganisation of the system of higher mental functions without social drama refracted through the prism of dramatic *perezhivanie*. I think this is absolutely in line with Vygotsky’s words of dynamics of personality as drama. In other words, dramatic *perezhivanie*

is a theoretical tool for analysis of complex process of sociocultural genesis of human mind in two key dialectical aspects (1) contradictions and (2) qualitative reorganisation. This is a contribution to advancing the concept of *perezhivanie*. But there are some contradictions in Vygotsky's writing over time, as I have alluded to already.

Would you agree that concepts developed in the last period of his life follow from the key principles of the cultural-historical theory developed in late 20s and beginning of 1930s, the period some researchers identify as an "instrumental" period?

Fernando No, I disagree with this. I considered that his works during that period were not only instrumental, but also had a strong behavioural orientation. As I have defended elsewhere (González Rey 2011, 2014, 2016), in the last period of his work, Vygotsky followed some of his foundational ideas from "The psychology of Art" and from some of his first works on defectology, which permitted him to overcome the idea of social determinism of the psyche as a process from the outside to the inside, and to emphasise the emotions, the imagination and the creative character of the individual.

*Is it possible to consider *perezhivanie* as a concept in transition in Vygotsky's thought? What are the consequences for the study of this concept?*

Nikolai Yes, but what does it mean "the concept in transition"? For some people it might be understood as "concept in development", but not every transition is a developmental transition. For others this might mean simply an "undeveloped concept" which means that the concept was introduced by Vygotsky in a general way but remains undeveloped in terms of its theoretical content and relationships with other concepts and principles of the cultural-historical theory.

Fernando Can we consider that Vygotsky introduced the definition of *perezhivanie* in the Psychology of Art, and do we see a more advanced definition of the concept in "The crisis at age seven"?

What are the implication of the concept in those moments when the concept was introduced for advancing a new approach about emotions and motivation?

Nikolai I do not think so. These two works of Vygotsky belong to different stages of his scientific biography and reflect different theoretical positions. Psychology of Art (written before 1925) reflects the theoretical position of Vygotsky's early period, that was far from the cultural-historical theory which appeared in 1928–1932. "The crisis of age seven" is based on one of Vygotsky's last lecture of 1933/34. In that text Vygotsky speaks on *perezhivanie* as a concept which allows for the study of the role of the social environment on the child's development. In short, there are two meanings of the word *perezhivanie* in Vygotsky's texts—*perezhivanie* as a psychological phenomenon (P1) and as a concept

(P2) (see Chap. 3). In Crisis of age seven Vygotsky uses P1 and P2 and this creates difficulties in understanding, but in the Psychology of Art, Vygotsky uses perezhivanie only as P1. In 1925 Vygotsky did not have a concept of perezhivanie, in 1934 he had this concept. I see this as a process of conceptualisation of perezhivanie.

Marilyn Consequently, we can see that there is disagreement between whether or not Vygotsky originally conceptualised perezhivanie as a concept or as a phenomenon in his earliest work—The psychology of Art. But this is only an issue of disagreement if you separate out perezhivanie into a concept and into a phenomenon. A holistic conception would suggest that they must always be considered together to have theoretical power. One of the important theoretical points that emerge throughout this book, is how a holistic conception of perezhivanie has methodologically supported the empirical chapters to foreground development through their case studies. Indeed, this holistic conception, that is characteristic of cultural-historical theory generally, is strongly featured in Sect. 12.2, where emotions and imagination are dialectically theorised and empirically discussed.

We now turn to a discussion of emotions and imagination.

12.3 Emotions and Imagination

Fernando What is the relevance of Vygotsky's turning point in relation to the definition of emotions between 1932 and 1934 for advancing his legacy of the study of psychological functions?

Marilyn In the second section of the book, it is possible to see how contemporary researchers have drawn upon both the early foundational theorisation of emotions by Vygotsky in the Psychology of Art (Vygotsky 1971) and from the Teaching about Emotions (Vygotsky 1999), where new directions for the study of emotions moved from a reductionist research methodology and methods to realising emotional imagination. One of the key points that Vygotsky made in relation to the genesis, function and structure of emotions was that emotions could not be simply reduced to physiological responses and behaviours, such as “bodily changes” as we might see on a child's face—a smiling action when happy or a flight response when frightened. But rather, it became increasingly important for Vygotsky to study emotions as part of a child's activity, and not as a series of descriptions of behaviours exhibited by a child as a result of some experimental condition.

In the Psychology of Art, Vygotsky draws attention to the emotional nature of responding to a piece of visual art, or the collective response that is felt in theatre between the audience and the actors. This early work laid an important foundation

for later scholars by moving attention from the physiological response to the cultural construction and societal power of emotions in shaping and being shaped by social activity. The concept of an emotional attitude emerged to explain how children responded to a particular task, discipline area, or even to others, such as their teacher.

We see across a variety of Vygotsky's texts that he worried about intellectualism (e.g. Bozhovich 1977; Vygotsky 1966), and saw an important place for the study of emotions in the ontogenesis of human psyche (Vygotsky 1998). Vygotsky recognised that changes in the emotional–motivational dimensions of a child's personality were key indicators of a child's development (Vygotsky 1998). Some of these ideas can be seen in text on the Emotions in Teaching (Vygotsky 1999), where he considered the pedagogical relations between exhibiting raw emotions and the child's realisation of these emotions as particular feeling states. In those that followed (e.g. Bozhovich 2004; Zaporozhets 2002), Vygotsky's original conception of emotions was further theorised to show how emotions were experienced socially and culturally at an interpsychological level through stories and fairytales (e.g. El'Koninova 2002; Flear, this volume; March and Flear, this volume). Over time, children emotionally empathised with the hero and lived through the emotions of the characters in the storyline, where they could anticipate, and experience the emotions at the intrapsychological level. That is, children experienced the ideal form of emotions in stories and role play through a form of *emotional imagination*. A form of emotional self-regulation became evident through emotional imagination (Flear, this volume; March, this volume). Zaporozhets (2002) captures this idea well:

There are grounds to believe that in forming mental activity, which is necessary for the emergence of an ability to anticipate the results of other people's actions as well as to emotionally anticipate one's own actions, a fundamental role is played by a figurative, image-bearing means of dramatised verbal description and a graphic depict of forthcoming events, a kind of stimulation of their meaning and significance for the child himself (sic) or the people whose fate touches him. These expressive means, this *language of feelings* has a social origin. Its most perfected forms are represented in art which is, in the apt worlds of Vygotsky (1968), an "instrument of society," by means of which society draws the most intimate and personal aspect of our being into the circle of social life (p. 58).

Fernando Is emotional imagination signaling a new comprehension of intellectual functions?

Marilyn Yes, *emotional imagination* signals a new comprehension of intellectual functions. The writings of Vygotsky addressed the Cinderella phenomenon first noted by N.N. Lange back in 1914 (cited in Zaporozhets 2002), who found that emotions as an area of cultural-historical study had received less attention when compared with her older sisters, thinking and will. The focus on intellectual functions dominated research, and in many Western contexts, continues to be researched without reference to emotions. This was also acknowledged by Bozhovich (1977) when she said,

Vygotsky himself was apparently not satisfied with the intellectualism implicit in the theory of consciousness and personality that capped the second stage of his investigations and was troubled by the fact that the postulates at which he arrived from his study of cognitive mental processes were not a sufficient basis for an analysis of the higher systemic structures that determine human personality. Hence, he devoted the entire last period of his life to a theoretical development of the problem of affect, its relationship to intellectual processes and to the problem of the transition from elementary emotions to the higher feeling characteristic of man (sic) (p. 15).

It is possible to see how emotions shape and are shaped by intellectual functions; and intellectual functions shape and are shaped by emotions. What is interesting to note is how in recent studies emotions have become central for understanding executive functions, where emotion regulation and the study of imagination are becoming increasingly important (Bodrova et al. 2011).

Nikolai What do you think about perezhivanie as an emotional experience as some researchers define it? Would you agree that reducing perezhivanie to emotional aspect is an example of simplifying the cultural-historical theory? What might be arguments to “protect” the concept and the phenomenon of perezhivanie from such a simplification?

Marilyn There is an abundance of research which assumes and even defines perezhivanie as an emotional experience. This point is also picked up in the special issue of *Mind, Culture, and Activity* on the concept of perezhivanie. This work is important for capturing and theorising emotions in research. It has a place in the literature, because it makes an important contribution to understanding one dimension of perezhivanie that has been traditionally lacking in studies in many Western countries where scholars have focused primarily on cognition. But as is shown in the first section of the book, and discussed above, perezhivanie is both a concept and a phenomenon. Perezhivanie as an emotional experience is part of this narrative. In using this definition, it could be argued that it lacks the explanatory power needed to deeply inform understandings. However, it must also be considered that (1) Understanding difficult concepts, such as perezhivanie, is a developmental process in its own right for those using the concept in their research; (2) Concepts that were not fully developed by Vygotsky, provide opportunities for contemporary scholars to theorise and sharpen these complex concepts in relation to contemporary problems; and as argued by Chaiklin (2011), (3) concepts come from practice, and therefore it is through research that practice informs theory, and this gives the possibility for greater insights into the concept of perezhivanie.

Marilyn In your view, how do we as a scholarly community develop Vygotsky’s original concepts? Is this best done by research or through theoretical analysis? Should we stay with the original readings of concepts or should concepts, like the definition of individual words, change in relation to the contexts or practices which are being informed by or are informing these concepts?

Nikolai Your question requires extended answer, but as I do not have enough space for detailed discussion, I would suggest to leave this to another book. However, I can present some brief considerations that highlight some aspects to show its complexity.

The problem with cultural-historical theory is that by now there is no one single book or a paper presenting the whole theory in a form of a system of interrelated concepts, laws and principles clarifying their theoretical contents related to most important dialectical aspects of the process of sociocultural genesis of human mind. On the other hand, in the literature I see the tendency of “advancing” or “developing” separate concepts without paying attention to their place within the whole theory and their theoretical relations with other concepts. Taken from the theory, separated from the theory, the concept becomes theoretically empty and therefore useless as a theoretical analytical tool. So, my position is—theoretical concepts are not “toys” to play with by changing their contents whatever you like, they are not words with different meanings, they are deep and powerful tools with definite and strong theoretical content (as shown in Sect. 12.1).

Another side of the problem is that concepts of cultural-historical theory as theoretical tools of analysis of the process of development of higher mental functions reflect dialectical nature and the character of the process of development; they are focused on the discovery of the dialectics of developmental process including quantitative changes, qualitative reorganisations and contradictions. To put this in a simple way, they reflect the complexity of dialectics of development. Fundamental dialectical categories and principles stand behind concepts of cultural-historical theory.

Marilyn I would also argue that through these original writings of Vygotsky, through their use in empirical studies, and through extended theorisation, we can find gaps, as well as the need for new concepts. Consequently, in the third section of the book there are chapters which explicitly draw upon and use new cultural-historical concepts. Specifically, the concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration were introduced to support the methodological advancement of studying human relations in the course of a child’s or person’s development.

We now turn to a dialogue surrounding these unique concepts introduced and developed by Fernando Gozalez Rey.

12.4 Subjective Sense and Subjective Configuration

Marilyn Fernando why did you introduce the relational concept of subjective sense and subjective configuration into the literature? How do they relate to Vygotsky’s concepts in the Collected Works?

Fernando I think that the concepts of subjective sense and subjective configuration have more to do with the definitions of sense and perezhivanie

which are related to the last period of his work, between 1932 and 1934. Before I became theoretically conscious of the relevance of sense and *perezhivanie*, I introduced the concept of psychological configuration of personality as an alternative to define the psychological unit of personality within the cultural-historical legacy, following Bozhovich's tradition in her research on personality (González Rey 1995). I attempted to advance a new avenue for the study of personality, overcoming the constraints I perceived in regards to the concept of psychological formation of personality as it was defined by Bozhovich and her collaborators. I remembered that during my doctoral study, two psychological formations were studied in depth in Bozhovich's laboratory, moral ideals (Chudnovsky 1966; Dukat 1965 and self-evaluation (Slavina 1966; Neimark 1966). These concepts were very interesting because they permitted a new comprehension of motive as a formation of personality. Moral ideals were studied by their content, and also by their structure, which was defined by the way in which the argumentation on moral ideals was conducted, overcoming the methodological focus on the stimuli and answers, and on the observation of behaviour. The structure of ideals was a first step in considering the quality of their expression as an element of the effectiveness of moral regulation. However, the consideration of only moral content in the study of ideals continued to be the core of moral ideals. The definition of psychological formation had to do with Bozhovich's understanding of the "orientations of personality" that she splits into three types, collective, individual and praxeological. These orientations represented the hierarchy of motives of personality, and only three kinds of motives were emphasised over others, since the ideological values at that time exerted a great influence on what were viewed as the more important motives of personality. I became familiar with Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* and the "social situation of development" in my time as a doctoral student in the laboratory headed by Bozhovich, the only Soviet psychologist that continued with this part of Vygotsky's legacy. I used both concepts to advance the topic of the development of personality (Gonzalez Rey 1995).

Unlike Bozhovich and her team, with the concept of psychological configuration of personality I attempted to advance a concept capable of integrating different psychological elements from different spheres of life into one concept, aiming to capture the real cultural and social diversity of one historical individual existence. However, configured within this unity, I still defined different psychological elements as they were traditionally defined by psychology. These included interests, needs, conflict and goals that exist in different spheres of life and I integrated them as relevant contents of psychological configurations no matter in what field they appear. When I perceived theoretically how promissory the concept of sense could be in overcoming the traditional taxonomy of concepts that characterise

psychology, I understood that senses could be used to embody diverse symbolical social productions as they are felt and lived by individuals, which could open a radical new way of understanding individuals and social psychological productions.

As was advanced in third section of this book, in Soviet psychology the concept of the word “sense”, as it was defined by Vygotsky, was completely overlooked, and the concepts of sense and of *perezhivanie* were only discussed by Vygotsky at the very end of his work, without having time to advance the psychological systems toward which he seemed to be moving in that last period.

The basic differences between subjective sense and subjective configurations, on one hand, and the Vygotsky’s concepts of sense and *perezhivanie*, on the other hand, are as follows:

- Unlike sense and *perezhivanie*, as defined by Vygotsky, subjective senses and subjective configurations represent symbolic-emotional units, in which emotions acquire a symbolic character and symbolic processes are also emotional ones. These units I defined as subjective, due to their generative character that is beyond the external objective conditions and that also characterises human experiences. Subjectivity is a new quality of human phenomena, whether social or individual, representing a production within the social and cultural networks, historically located, that characterize human life.
- Subjectivity is not only an individual phenomena; social life is also subjectively configured. Each social institution or scenario is configured by subjective senses that embody other social productions. For example, the discourse of gender as symbolic social production is singularly configured in different ways into the subjective configurations of families that share the same social context. The concepts of sense and *perezhivanie*, as defined by Vygotsky, also referred to individuals.
- The interweaving of subjective senses and subjective configurations expresses the dialectic of self-regulatory and generative movements given by the subjective configurations, which is a source of subjective senses relatively independent of the external objective course of one experience, but at the same time, during this lived experience, new subjective senses emerge through which the subjective configuration can be modified themselves.
- Subjective senses and subjective configurations result from lived experiences, but as new symbolical-emotional productions based on these lived experiences, representing new imagined moments regarding them, that represent new human creations.

Nevertheless, the ensemble of concepts in our proposal on subjectivity in the third section of this book follows the Vygotsky legacy, embodying in the comprehension of the different psychological functions and processes the “full vitality of life” that, according to Vygotsky, remained separated from thinking in the traditional approaches to the study of thinking. This “full vitality of life” could only be integrated within the psychological function through the symbolical-emotional character of the ongoing movement of an embodied subject.

- Marilyn* The concept of sense is said to be controversial. Do you agree?
- Fernando* Yes, in my opinion it was controversial because Vygotsky advanced the concept in a different way to how it was treated by linguistics, and because, at the same time, Leontiev introduced his concept of personal sense after Vygotsky, completely omitting Vygotsky's definition, which created confusion in relation to its definition. Taken together, all these facts, along with the lack of development of the concept in Vygotsky's work, make it possible to state the controversial character of the concept of sense.
- Marilyn* What did Vygotsky not have time to write that speaks to the focus of this book? What might be missing or only partially developed?
- Fernando* In my opinion the advances in this book on the concepts of perezhivanie, emotions and subjectivity, represent one step forward in the ensemble of these concepts within one psychological system oriented toward an integrative representation of human psychological functioning. Not only did Vygotsky not have time to develop this representation, but in my opinion Vygotsky did not yet have the theoretical devices to advance on this system. However, this book shows different advances on the legacy of Vygotsky, each of which represents a way to keep that legacy alive. I think that every intellectual development may imply "undeveloped concepts", which represent a new level of thinking, but which are in process throughout the time before achieving their complete maturity. That is, in my opinion, what occurs with Vygotsky's definitions of sense and perezhivanie. The great merit of these concepts was not their preciseness as concepts, but their opening of new avenues for the development of the cultural-historical approach.
- Nikolai* This question that is in need of clarification is: what do we mean by "sense as a concept"? Concepts of sense in Vygotsky are different from the concept of "personal sense" in Leontiev. In my understanding there is a point of methodological difference of Vygotsky and Leontiev here. Leontiev did not accept Vygotsky's idea of perezhivanie as a unit of personality and environment saying that not perezhivanie, but an activity is the unity (Leontiev 2005). From this Leontiev developed the principle of the unity of consciousness and activity and perezhivanie was excluded from Leontiev's system of concepts. In last stages of his work, he introduced personal sense as a concept, but still within the principle of the unity of consciousness and activity. The point of methodological difference here is that Vygotsky tried to apply a logic of units (edinitisa) in analysis of complex unities (edinstvo). As I see this it is a dialectical approach to study complex living wholes by appropriate units. Leontiev's methodological approach was different—this was the logic of unities where the structure of consciousness coincides with the structure of external object-oriented activity (Tatigkeit) of an individual

due to the principle of the unity of consciousness and activity. So, *perezhivanie* in Vygotsky and the personal sense in Leontiev belong to two different methodological approaches. Both are part of the ongoing narrative that opens up when scholars come into dialogue.

12.5 Conclusion—The Relations Between Concepts

This chapter has specifically sought to generate a narrative surrounding existing concepts that are currently in debate (i.e. special issue on *perezhivanie* in *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 4, 2016), concepts which Western science has generally ignored (Sect. 12.2), and new concepts needed for the study of human development (Sect. 12.3).

Concepts in cultural-historical theory are interrelated and connected to each other. They are analytical tools for the study of the sociocultural genesis of mind. The dialectics and complexity of these concepts afford further discussion, theorisation and use in practice. Concepts are “heavy” tools that enrich research and support researchers with building understandings, which in turn allow for new insights. Concepts are never complete. Societal conditions, the corresponding new needs and changing motives, are always in a state of change. Historical periods show how concepts require reinterpretation, redevelopment, and retheorisation for supporting the new societal conditions, motives and needs. This book has touched on each of these dimensions. In bringing together the concepts of *perzhivanie*, emotions and subjectivity, we found that:

- each concept gives meaning to the other;
- these concepts are dialectical in their form and relations;
- concepts should always be conceptualised as part of a system of concepts which are drawn upon for specific research purposes; and
- societal needs and motives change over time, and these new conditions demand new interpretations, development and theorisation of concepts.

Consequently it is not surprising that controversies in the use of Vygotskian concepts have emerged in relation to:

- the translation of terms;
- when concepts were conceived; and
- the need for growing the concepts to support contemporary questions, needs and contexts.

This book shows this diversity. Further, new concepts, such as subjective sense and subjective configuration, were introduced and used by researchers in the context of Vygotsky’s cultural-historical theory, in order to enrich research, and through this to grow cultural-historical theory. Having a section in the book that grows theory through the introduction of new cultural-historical concepts, signals

the dynamic nature of this theory, and highlights the relevance of the historical and cultural dimensions of Vygotsky's original theory.

Solving problems and theorising findings in ways that are in keeping with the principles of Vygotsky's methodology, were central to the how authors used and discussed concepts in the various chapters of the book. In this chapter we entered into a dialogue within and across concepts in ways that gave context to the concepts. Emotions, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity were brought together in this book to advance Vygotsky's legacy and to give more clarity and context to those concepts that have in recent times generated a great deal of interest.

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