

Journal of Russian and East European Psychology, vol. 40, no. 2, May–June 2002, pp. 3–12.

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ISSN 1061–0405/2003 \$9.50 + 0.00.

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Editors' Introduction

In this and the next issues of *Russian and East European Psychology*, we continue to introduce our readers to the works of the outstanding Russian psychologist, Aleksandr Vladimirovich Zaporozhets. Although in recent years, our journal has published some of his works (see bibliography at the end of this introduction), we believe that his scholarly heritage has still not been fully presented to our Western colleagues.

In this introduction we would like to focus on some specifics of his psychological theory.

A.V. Zaporozhets entered the field of psychology as a mature person with already formed interests and his own research agenda. Prior to that, he was an actor and a student of the well-known Ukrainian director and theater reformer A. Kurbas. Furthermore, according to Zaporozhets's own words, his first teachers were V. Meyerhold and S. Eisenstein. It was no coincidence that in the mid-1920s, Zaporozhets became a student and follower of L.S. Vygotsky, rather than any other more prominent psychologist at the time. Let us recall that precisely at that time Vygotsky was working on his famous *Psychology of Art*, perhaps, a decisive fac-

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tor for Zaporozhets's choice. Whether that was so, we can only guess. We know for a fact, however, that it was Zaporozhets whom Vygotsky sent to Eisenstein's studio to plan and organize joint research projects, which, unfortunately, were not destined to be carried out.

From then on, Zaporozhets's life as a scholar was continuously linked with Vygotsky's school. The research ideas and methodological principles advanced by Vygotsky enriched his own program and became the foundation of his research.

Following Vygotsky, Zaporozhets maintained that specifically human mental qualities such as cognition, imagination, will, social and moral senses, and the like, cannot arise either from the process of biological maturation, or from the child's individual experience. They emerge from the *social experience* embodied in the products of material and spiritual culture that the child acquires throughout childhood. Zaporozhets emphasized that a social environment is not just a necessary external condition (along with air and warmth), but rather a true source of development. A social environment contains a "built-in" program for the kind of mental abilities the child is to acquire, along with specific means for "translating" these abilities from a fixed social form into an individual procedural one. In this respect, social environment is an effective carrier of the content of the human mind.

What was the content of Zaporozhets's scientific program? The core of his interests was not activity as such, but rather action: sensory, orienting, perceptual, mental, emotional, esthetic, playful action, a learning action, and, finally, action in the true sense of the word, that is, movement and voluntary action.

In his remarkable book, *The Development of Voluntary Movements* [Razvitie proizvol'nykh dvizhenii],¹ which in a sense summarizes the results of his scholarly investigation of the psychology of action, Zaporozhets spoke about the need to abandon the concept of action and movement as a mechanical locomotion in space of the body or its organs, and to start examining it as a complex

motor action that realizes a certain (and integral) attitude of a subject to the object, to reality, to another person. Equally important is his idea that the mastery of new actions (rather than the mastery of objects through actions and activities) is a true enrichment of the subject; it presents development not only of his technical operational abilities, but also of his personality and truly human existence.

We would like to highlight another idea of Zaporozhets that, in our opinion, has not been sufficiently appreciated up to now. When he investigated the nature of action, Zaporozhets came to the conclusion that “action is divided, split, cleaved into the external and internal, into the practical and the ‘theoretical.’” Thus, the thesis about the unity and fundamental commonality of the structure of external and internal activity acquires a completely different sense. Their unity consists not in interpreting internal action as internalized external action (as A.N. Leontiev would have it). The unity lies in the common origin of the internal and the external, in their common root or common source, that is, live movement in N.A. Bernshtein’s sense. This view is the beginning of a new paradigm in the analysis of the fundamental problem of psychology: the problem of correlation between the external and the internal; this is a new “turning point,” to use F. Capra’s term.

In Zaporozhets’s framework, differentiation became opposed to internalization of live motion and object-related action; mental functions do not “grow in,” but rather “grow up.” Like Vygotsky, he was concerned with the fundamental problem—freedom of will and voluntary action.

Thus, we have a strong basis for saying that Zaporozhets not only made an outstanding contribution to the development of action psychology, but that he also significantly enriched general developmental psychology.

In the last years of his life, Zaporozhets headed the Institute of Preschool Education of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. Nevertheless, he remained a scholar in all that he did. Investigating problems of perception development, Zaporozhets put forth

the concept of *sensory tokens* as cultural means for perception development in early childhood. This concept realized Vygotsky's fundamental idea about the role of signs in psychic development. Taken in this perspective, the importance of Zaporozhets's contribution to the field of cultural-historical psychology is beyond doubt.

Applying his ideas to the practice of preschool training, Zaporozhets put forth the notion of *amplification*, that is, enrichment, nourishment for mind and personality development through a specially organized system of instruction and training. Such "nourishment" must be provided while taking into account the child's potential for mastering different kinds of knowledge and skills and under condition of organizing these processes on the basis of psychological patterns in the structure of his activity and social communication.

These ideas and a number of others became the basis of the "Program for Instruction and Training in Kindergarten," created under Zaporozhets's guidance; it was not by chance that the program received immediate and wide international recognition.

Finally, in order to appreciate the true dimension of Zaporozhets's contribution to cultural-historical psychology, we have to consider the following facts. Since Vygotsky's time, cultural-historical psychology (sometimes referred to as "nonclassical psychology") has worked out as its basis some *fundamental* ideas about development, which, in fact, distinguish it from other psychological concepts and schools, and make it original. These basic ideas present an integral approach to development, characteristic *specifically* of cultural-historical psychology, both theoretical and experimental.

Let us recall these basic, definitive ideas. Cultural-historical psychology views the growth and maturation of an organism as development conditions. The source of development is the social environment, that is, ideal forms set by and existing in the culture (i.e., what development is to arrive at in the end). The form of development is learning, while its motivating force is a contradiction be-

tween mastering instrumental and social aspects of activity.² Looking at Zaporozhets's framework from this point of view clearly reveals that *all these ideas* were brilliantly realized in his psychological theory of action.

When selecting his articles for this issue, we proceeded from the following criteria. First, we selected some articles that previously have not been published in English. Second, we wished to present all the stages of Zaporozhets's scholarly work. Third, we tried to show the main directions of his scholarly interests.

The article "On the Active Nature of the Visual Perception of an Object" presents experimental data, convincingly substantiating his idea about the active character of visual perception and about the nature of *perceptual action*, the theory of which was created by Zaporozhets.

"The Development of Sensations and Perceptions in Early and Preschool Childhood" introduces the concept of a sensory token, a kind of socially fixed generalized sensory quality of perceived objects. In the process of mastering sensory tokens, the child's perception acquires cultural character both through its structure and its content. Perception becomes mediated and in this respect the concept of *sensory token* coincides with Vygotsky's idea about signs and their role in the development of the highest psychic functions.

"The Development of Perception and Activity" gives special attention to the genesis, structure and functions of perceptual processes. Of special importance is his new idea that perceptual actions not only reflect the actual situation, but they also anticipate its potential transformations. Such a sensory anticipation transforms perceptual action into a functional organ of the individual, regulating his behavior in accordance with conditions of the task at hand.

"Toward the Question of the Genesis, Function, and Structure of Emotional Processes in the Child" presents the idea that emotions have not only a reflective but also a regulative function. The external unfolded activity presupposing co-participation in

the perceived and experienced events serves as a basis for formation of co-experience, which acquires an internal form and is realized at the ideal level of emotional imagination, emotional imagery. Unfortunately, Zaporozhets had no time to complete his program on the study of emotions. Nevertheless, the article outlines clearly the basic idea of this program: to investigate the emergence of emotions in their relation to the child's practical social interaction with his environment.

The article "On the Origin of Voluntary Movements" is the second chapter of the book *The Development of Voluntary Movements*. It describes Maia Lisina's experimental study during which she was able to form in her subjects the ability to control vasomotor reactions. It is important to keep in mind that for the first time this study was based on Zaporozhets's research plan outlined in 1952–55 and that it used psychological feedback as a method of formation. A decade later, similar methods became known as "biological feedback."

The article "The Role of L.S. Vygotsky in the Development of Problems of Perception" [Rol' Vygotskogo v razrabotke problem vospriiatii] was published in the journal *Voprosy psikhologii* (1966, no. 6). It is interesting in that it is the development of several of Vygotsky's ideas, and, at the same time, a polemic with them. From Vygotsky's point of view, perception is a natural (elemental) function, which develops and changes under the influence of higher (mediated, cultural) mental functions. However, Zaporozhets, citing the studies conducted following Vygotsky's death, argues that human perception carries a mediated character, and, consequently, has properties of higher mental functions, as Vygotsky understood them. Perception is formed through a mastery of socially developed sensory standards, which can be called perceptive social unities of perception. This idea became a significant contribution of Zaporozhets in working out the cultural-historical theory of development.

"Thought and Activity in Children" [Myshlenie i deiatel'nost' rebenka] is the title of a report read at the Conference on Peda-

gogy and Psychology in Kiev, Ukraine in 1941. It was published for the first time in Ukrainian in the *Proceedings* of this conference [Trudy respublikanskoi konferentsii po pedagogike i psikhologii (Kiev, 1941), vol. 2]. Zaporozhets links the appearance of thought with the origin of structural changes in the objective activities of a child. In other words, thought appears when activity with an object acquires a “multi-act” or “multi-step” character. This article laid the basis for many years of research in which it was made clear that, in the course of its development, human activity splits, as it were, into two components, that is, “action is divided, split, cleaved into the external and internal, into the practical and the ‘theoretical’.”

The fate of the article, “The Development of Reasoning in Young Children,” co-authored with G.D. Lukov, is very interesting. It was published for the first time in 1941 in *Scientific Notes of the Khar’kov Pedagogical Institute* [Nauchnye zapisi Khar’kovskogo Pedagogicheskogo Instituta, no. 6, pp. 139–50] and directly connected with the previous article. However, the main task of this study was to show experimentally the peculiarities of interaction of the visual-active, visual-image, and conditional thought of preschool-age children. A rather severe (and, possibly, not always justified) criticism of the views of Jean Piaget, contained in this article, should not bother the reader. This was not only the contribution of the time and tradition existing at that time in Soviet psychology. Zaporozhets was mainly interested in the conditions and preconditions of the transition from one level of development of mental activities to another, which remained outside the field of vision of Piaget’s theoretical model. From Zaporozhets’s point of view, mental development cannot be viewed only as the process of a child’s individual adaptation to the surrounding conditions of the environment, without taking into account the assimilation of social experience in this process. In a somewhat reworked form (as part of a chapter in *The Development of Thought*, this article was included in the book *Psychology of Preschool-age Children* [Psikhologiiia detei

doshkol'nogo vozrasta], edited by A.V. Zaporozhets and D.B. El'konin (Moscow: 1964).

The article "Problems in the Psychology of Activity" was published in the collection *The Activity Approach in Psychology: Problems and Perspectives* [Deiatel'nostnyi podkhod v psikhologii: problemy i perspektivy], ed. V.V. Davydov and D.A. Leont'ev (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo APN SSSR, 1990). The thoughtful reader will turn his attention to the fact that the activity approach (or, in other terminology, the psychological theory of activity) is not a "frozen" theory devoid of internal tension. The circle of researchers (P. Gal'perin, D. El'konin, V. Davydov, and others) introduced their own ideas to the theory, at times disagreeing with each other (even on many principle positions). In a polemical form in this article, Zaporozhets insists that the unity of analysis should be action, and not activity, as Leontiev believed. Moreover, Zaporozhets, in his own highly original way, examined the problem of the correlation between instruction and development. He warned about the potential danger of the accelerated development of the child and his behavior from one stage of development to another, insisting upon the unique quality of each stage of growth in a child's development. The atmosphere of the search, joint proposals, and discussions, and even mutual criticism, not extending, naturally, beyond the boundaries of science, is an inviolable part of what is called "Vygotsky's tradition" in contemporary psychology.

The article "Perception, Movement, and Action," co-authored with V.P. Zinchenko, is a more fully elaborated statement of the basic ideas of the theory of perceptive actions—a theory by which the author, Zaporozhets, entered world psychology. It was published for the first time in the book *Cognitive Processes. Sensation. Perception* [Poznavatel'nye protsessy. Oshchushenie. Vospriiatiiia] (Moscow: 1982). The most important feature of this text is that it presents a nonclassical theory of perception, a theory of perception as action, and precisely as free action. This article is also of indisputable interest in that it devotes a great deal of attention to the connection between the theory of perceptive actions

and teachings on the formation of movements, developed in the works of N.I. Bernshtein and A.A. Ukhtomskii.

We hope that these issues of the journal will contribute, at least to some degree, to a broader understanding of A.V. Zaporozhets's personality and his psychological framework.

Notes

1. A.V. Zaporozhets, *Razvitie proizvol'nykh dvizhenii* [The Development of Voluntary Movements] (Moscow, 1960).

2. D.B. El'konin, *Psikhicheskoe razvitie v detskikh vozrastakh* [Psychological Development in the Child's Ages] (Moscow, 1995), p. 370.

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