

## **Developing cultural-historical theory in times of crises<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Theses**

1. The dramatic social changes and crises motivate scientists across a wide range of disciplines, including psychology address crucial theoretical and practical issues and look for new ways of acting in the social world. Business, as usual, is no longer acceptable in the midst of an acute crisis.
2. The disappearance of the social and the rift between individual and social are among the most important dimensions of the crisis in psychology. Due to the dominance of individualism, mainstream North Atlantic psychology has failed to adequately address social problems and respond to the dramatic social changes.
3. Cultural-historical theory of development with its focus on crises, qualitative reorganizations, transitions, dynamic of mediating activity, etc. cannot remain static, especially when substantial social changes take place.
4. Vygotsky (1997) has employed the concept of the crisis in the context of a critique of psychology as a “problematic” discipline as well as for the articulation of the specific mechanisms related to psychological development.
5. The concept of crisis should be considered in its interrelationship with other concepts of the cultural-historical theory. The concept of the crisis is a moment of a dialectical account of human development in terms of drama (Veresov, 2010). In other words, human development

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is examined in terms of dramatic collisions, conflicts, crises that create a dynamic space of possibilities for unforeseen changes.

6. Cultural-historical understanding of the crisis differs from the positivist account of continuous, quantitative, accumulative growth and the post-modern celebration of discontinuities and differences. Cultural-historical understanding of the crisis is based on the dialectical relation between continuity and discontinuity, qualitative and quantitative transformations. This dialectic relation changes in different stages of the developmental process (Dafermos, 2018).

7. The cultural-historical theory with its focus on a dialectic of change, becoming, and proximal development is a future-oriented theory. The projection of what could or should be in the future and the implementation of future-oriented, collective actions is especially important in times of crises.

8. There is an urgent need to rethink and develop further cultural-historical theory in times of dramatic social changes and crises. Taking into account collaborative nature of Vygotsky's project, it is argued that this 'supertask' (in Stanislavski's terms) cannot be solved without the creative cooperation and collaboration amongst scholars from different generations and continents as well as across various disciplines. A critical reflection on cultural-historical theory and its further development involves active, collaborative, transformative engagement with the social world (Stetsenko, 2017).

### References

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