

*DISCUSSIONS AND DICOURSES*  
*ДИСКУССИИ И ДИСКУРСЫ*

## A Human Through the Prism of Jointness. The Possibility of a General Psychology

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The paper raises the question of the possibility of creating a general psychological field of research. The condition for the beginning of such research is a sufficiently complete general model of psychological phenomena. The assumption is made that the work of identifying suitable psychological universals has already been done as a part of cultural-historical psychology. We summarised the investigations, starting with L.S. Vygotsky's idea of a psychological "unit". With the help of some modern theories, the assumption is substantiated that meaning is a feeling of jointness, the essence of the human in man. As an example we took the "integral unit of the human life world" construction in the F.E. Vasilyuk's school and its transformation into a scheme of jointness. By analysing F.E. Vasilyuk's notion of "experience", the activity-dialogical model of jointness is extrapolated and filled with "meaning". This model is proposed as a suitable tool for generalising psychological knowledge. An assumption is made about resonance as a fundamental mechanism of jointness formation. In this paper we describe the properties of the prism of jointness and question its sufficiency for the beginning of general psychological research.

**Keywords:** jointness, meaning, resonance, functional domain, general psychology, cultural-historical psychology, lifeworld, experience, activity, relations, mindset, shared intentionality.

**Acknowledgements.** The work was carried out with the sensitive accompaniment of Maria Vasilchuk as a part of her PhD coaching practice ([mariya.vasilchuk@gmail.com](mailto:mariya.vasilchuk@gmail.com), [t.me/MVasilchuk](https://t.me/MVasilchuk)). I express her my deep gratitude for her support, lessons, and her feedback on my work.

**For citation:** Novichkova A.V. A Human Through the Prism of Jointness. The Possibility of a General Psychology. *Kul'turno-istoricheskaya psikhologiya = Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 2024. Vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 108–118. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2024200114>

## Человек сквозь призму совместности, или О возможности общей психологии

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В работе поднимается вопрос о возможности создания общепсихологической области исследований. Условие для начала таких исследований — достаточно полная общая модель психологических явлений. Делается предположение, что работа по выделению подходящих психологических универсалий уже проведена в русле культурно-исторической психологии. Кратко обозначается пройденный путь, начиная с идеи Л.С. Выготского о психологической «единице». С помощью некоторых современных теорий обосновывается предположение о том, что смысл — это чувство совместности, суть человеческого в человеке. Приводится история построения «интегральной единицы жизненного мира человека» в школе Ф.Е. Василюка, превращения ее в схему совместности. При помощи

анализа понятия «переживание» Ф.Е. Василюка экстраполируется и наполняется «смыслом» деятельностно-диалогическая модель совместности. Эта модель предлагается в качестве подходящего инструмента обобщения психологического знания. Делается предположение о резонансе как об основополагающем механизме формирования совместности. Описываются свойства призмы совместности. Аргументируется ее достаточность для начала общепсихологических исследований.

**Ключевые слова:** совместность, смысл, резонанс, функциональный домен, общая психология, культурно-историческая психология, жизненный мир, переживание, деятельность, отношения, установка, совместная интенциональность.

**Благодарности.** Работа выполнена при чутком сопровождении Марии Васильчук в рамках ее авторской практики PhD Coaching (mariya.vasilchuk@gmail.com, t.me/MVasilchuk). Выражаю моему другу глубокую признательность за поддержку, обучение и обратную связь.

**Для цитаты:** Новичкова А.В. Человек сквозь призму совместности, или О возможности общей психологии // Культурно-историческая психология. 2024. Том 20. № 1. С. 108–118. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2024200114>

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## Introduction

“There is a time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones together” – said Solomon [2, p. 829]. Even L.S. Vygotsky searched for a psychological “unit” around which a general psychological field of research should emerge [9, p. 172]. However, for almost a hundred years psychology has been scattering stones in different directions, and, often, quite similar stones. For example, the concepts of “archetype”, “introject”, “role”, “subpersonality” have different theoretical origins and are used in different contexts. At the same time, we are talking about some phenomenological characters that typically manifest themselves periodically in human behaviour and consciousness. They can coincide with the “Self” or be opposed to it, but they are always in a relationship with the “Self”, and can also be projected onto a real Other [1]. If these concepts are so close, what is the common psychological phenomenon underlying them? What systemic value does it have for psychology? How can we transform eclectic psychological knowledge into a relatively coherent system to get closer to an answer? We have become accustomed to accepting such questions as almost rhetorical. Perhaps it is time to ask them again in earnest. Discussing a general model of psychological phenomena can be a starting point for finding meaningful answers.

However, before attempting to construct such a generalised system of psychological ideas, it is necessary to determine what criteria it should meet in order to bring us closer to overcoming the historical crisis described by L.S. Vygotsky [9, p. 291] and the methodological split in psychology analysed by F.E. Vasilyuk [3, p. 89].

Firstly, such a model should sufficiently generalise psychological knowledge and remove contradictions between the main psychological oppositions, such as affect and intellect, consciousness and unconsciousness, apex and deep mechanisms. That is, the ontology of the generalised model should reconcile phenomenological,

behavioural, social, cultural, biological and other views on the nature of the mental. It should create such a common field on which the proximity and complementarity of existing psychological views are highlighted.

Also, the general psychological model should remove the contradictions between theory and practice, should be psychotechnical, be, in the words of F.E. Vasilyuk, “the philosophy of practice” [9, p. 291; 26; 3, p. 79]. The psychotechnical model should be born out of psychological practice – formed by research participants in the process of joint understanding of the object. In this process the central method of cognition should be matched with such a subject, for which this very method is the optimal method of research [3, p. 89]. In this case natural-scientific methodology does not lose its positions, but becomes part of the process of research into “the culture of consciousness”, and psychology itself becomes “understanding-active-humanitarian” [3, p. 101].

It is important that the language used to describe a model of psychological phenomena be so general and, at the same time, filled with concrete sensory background that its application would be natural to a wide variety of areas of knowledge about a human and would not cause inconvenience in practice.

To make an attempt to build such a model, let us turn to the background of cultural-historical psychology. It seems that the work on identifying suitable psychological universals has already been conducted in the direction outlined by L.S. Vygotsky.

### The joint “meaning field” as the basis of the human in a human

In order to describe the core idea of this work on the nature of the meaning field, let us turn to the central point of L.S. Vygotsky’s theory. The law of development formulated by him states: “Any function in the child’s cultural development appears on the stage

twice, in two plans, first social, then psychological, first between people, as an intersychic category, then within the child, as an intrapsychic category” [10, p. 145]. The usual understanding of this law can be formulated in the following way: a child becoming a human is a result of interaction with other people, by transferring accumulated knowledge to him or her, by mastering cultural means of handling his or her natural mental functions, their internalisation. However, this understanding overlooks one essential question — what happens to the very experience of interaction with another person, *does joint activity become the same psychological function as the knowledge and the skills that are transferred in this process?*<sup>1</sup> Let us attempt to answer this question from within the approach.

L.S. Vygotsky postulates: “Consciousness as a whole has a meaning structure” [9, p. 165, 15]. L.S. Vygotsky’s meaning or meaning field has many definitions, including: “system of meanings”, “semantic field”, arising “internal independent field” [8, p. 463]. According to E.Yu. Zavershneva, “meaning field” in L.S. Vygotsky’s theory embodies the principle of unity of affect and intellect, expresses “the plan of generalisation, which mediates a human attitude to the world” [12, p. 125]. In these definitions, meaning is given the role of a fabric that forms consciousness, but there is no indication of its communicative nature. Nevertheless, A.R. Luria notes: “socio-communicative significance”, or ‘meaning’, is the main unit of communication (based on the perception of what exactly the speaker wants to say and what motives stimulate him to speak)” [20, c. 44]. Later, as a result of extensive theoretical research, D.A. Leontiev singled out two fundamental properties of meaning [19]. One is intentionality, that is, goal-orientation; the other is contextuality, that is, the dependence on circumstances, on context, which is “not reducible to the context of individual consciousness” [19, p. 376]. “A personality meaning, unlike a biological meaning, cannot be considered as a purely individual formation, because the activity that generates it is not purely individual” [19, p. 377]. From this description we can assume the presence of a communicative component of the content, the dialogical correlation, in the meaning field. Generalizing, we can say that meaning is generated in activity, structures the consciousness, has a dynamic orientation on the goal and contextual, dialogical, correlation. In some modern theories based on the cultural-historical approach, there is even more obvious dialogical turn in understanding the nature of meaning.

M. Tomasello, in his concept of “shared intentionality” [27] highlights the key differences between human behaviour and other primates. He believes that the basic

human trait is the ability for cooperative communication. The development of cooperative activity in phylo- and ontogenesis begins with recursive interaction between individuals, in which they establish mutual eye contact and use pointing gestures to focus joint attention on the goal of interaction. Such universal actions acquire their concrete meaning only in the context of the participants’ interaction history. And in the process of developing cooperative communication, due to people’s active use of means of synchronisation, cyclic “recursive mind reading” of intentions and thoughts [27, c. 96], a “*common conceptual ground*” [27] is created and a special activity — speech — is developed. “The ability to create a common semantic context (shared attention, shared background, shared cultural perceptions) represents an absolutely integral dimension of human communication, including language communication” [27, c. 29]. Thus, at the behavioural level, interaction with the Other acts as a condition and a means of developing the essentially human in a person, the ability to share intentions *through the formation of a common meaning context*.

Another example of modern theory is taken from the field of educational psychology. A. Schwartz develops the concept of “intercorporeal dynamic functional system” [33] on the material of mathematical learning, studying the educational process in which a student-teacher pair successively passes through “micro-zones of proximal development” [33]. She substantiates theoretically and experimentally that bodily resonance and intercorporeal coordination arise in interaction between people, that there is an unconscious “intentional synthesis” at multiple levels: speech, posture, gestures, actions, up to inter-brain synchronisation. “There are no literal neuronal connections between the brains, however, environmental affordances and task constraints give rise to the coupling of brain activities” into a dynamic system [33, p. 9]. “Importantly for educational concerns, the object itself, as a sensory-motor perceptual entity, transforms during the teaching-learning process, in the sense that it is approached differently and thus acquires new meaning.” [33, c. 30]. Thus, interaction between people is not just a necessary condition for the phylogenetic and ontogenetic development of a human at the behavioural level, but *it is a situation of formation at the pre-conscious physiological level of the “intercorporeal functional system”, which comprises and transmits the content of cultural background*.

Let us consider another theory of ontogenetic human development. O.S. Nikolskaya [24, p. 173] in her concept of four levels of affective organisation of consciousness and behaviour proceeds from the postulate that the de-

<sup>1</sup> For example, A.N. Leontiev’s experiment in order to study mediated memory is not a study of memory as an independent natural function, but rather “a joint activity of two people – the experimenter and the subject, rolled into the ability of one of them (the subject) to reproduce a series of words in a given special situation” [6, c. 55].

velopment of the affective sphere is a link between human mental life and its biological basis. Vital “adaptive meanings” are seen both as a natural biological need and as a phenomenon encapsulating the properties of human consciousness. Their transformation into cultural forms of affective experience is possible only in interaction with an adult. At each of the four levels of affective organisation, the child develops in close connection with the adult’s established system of adaptive meanings. And the first form of the infant’s affective experience becomes “pra-we” [11, p. 305]. This is a state of passive perception of the Other in which the adult acts as an “impersonal form for adaptation” that provides safety. “Pra-we” is experienced by the infant as a physical extension of its own body that can directly affect the object it desires. Thus, at the affective level, *the first, properly human, form of consciousness and behaviour is precisely the experience of confluence with the Other. And so on, the child’s relationship with the world continues to be built solely through the experience of interaction with Others.*

In turn, F.E. Vasilyuk [5], identifying the general invariants of psychotherapeutic practice, came to the model of psychotherapy chronotope. In this model, the basic necessary elements of experiencing a critical situation, *overcoming the meaninglessness*, are the client (I), the psychotherapist (You), the problem (the matter of interaction) and the mutually expected result (the goal of interaction). And even when the psychotherapist is physically absent, psychotherapy is possible, because “an internal character is actualised, which takes on the performance of this function” [5, p. 30]. In this process, the client overcomes “the situation of impossibility” and acquires new meanings. Thus, the general phenomenology of psychological changes in the process of psychotherapy, the acquisition of meaningfulness, also points to the special value for direct participation of the Other, either a real person or their psychological function, in this process.

Based on the theories presented, we can conclude that perception of the world through the prism of the affective sphere of the “significant other” [14], preconscious physiological synchronisation and coordination in the learning process, creation of a common context in the process of joint activity [17] and acquisition of individual meanings in interaction — all these processes describe the formation of a meaning field. The acquisition of meaning enables an individual to master natural functions through cultural background, to act in a socially contextualised way and to find solutions in complex life situations. That is, *interaction with the Other is not only necessary for the transmission of cultural background, but the common meaning field formed in this interaction plays a crucial role in the development of the human psyche proper.*

And, if, at the modern turn of development of the cultural-historical approach, we supplement the scheme of “integral psychological unit of the life world”, which was built by F.E. Vasilyuk [3, p. 64], with this

representation, we can find a generalised systemic value of many psychological phenomena, starting with the concepts of “meaning”, “experience” and “joint activity”.

### Activity-dialogical model of jointness

In his time, L.S. Vygotsky set the task of searching for a unit of the mental, which would include all the properties of the whole and become the central category of a unified system of concepts around which general psychology could be built [6, p. 112]. As such a central category, he considered the concept of meaning [9] or meaning field [8].

Other obvious candidates for the central category in the Soviet period of cultural-historical psychology were D.N. Uznadze’s concepts of “mindset” [28], V.N. Myasishchev’s “relations” [23], and A.N. Leontiev’s “activity” [18]. Later, F.E. Vasilyuk, on the basis of the synthesis of these three “central categories” described the general scheme of the “integral unit of the life world” [3, p. 64]. In the works of F.E. Vasilyuk’s disciple, E.V. Mishina, the “unit” was described as a phenomenon of interpersonal interaction completeness and received its name — “jointness” [22]. This phenomenon is experienced as “a state of unity, mutual understanding, solidarity, emotional resonance and single-mindedness” [22, p. 47]. In his turn, F.E. Vasilyuk developed another version of the central category of psychology — the concept of “experience” [7]. Let us look at F.E. Vasilyuk’s scheme of “unit” taking into account the categories of “experience” and “jointness”.

In the scheme of the “integral unit” of 1986, the categories “mindset”, “relations” and “activity” form a contour connecting three basic elements — the Individual, the Other and the Thing (Fig. 1) [3, p. 64]. As a result of methodological analysis, F.E. Vasilyuk came to the necessity to add a fourth category — “communication” — to the three categories (Table). The result was an holistic system of “integral unit”. It was considered by F.E. Vasilyuk in the “ontology of the life world” developed by S.L. Rubinstein. From this point of view, psyche is a fusion of the subjective world and objective human life, an integral “unity of state and circumstances” in any life situation [3, p. 71]. The scheme summarises many concepts similar to M. Tomasello’s concept of “shared intentionality” which were developed in the cultural-historical direction, such as A.V. Petrovsky’s “jointly distributed matter activity” [25; 17] and V.P. Zinchenko’s “cumulative action” [6, p. 71; 13].

“In the scheme, one of the vertices of the triangle symbolises an individual (И), the second — a thing (В), the third — another individual (Др). Each individual and thing are connected by an activity (Д), within which the individual acts as a subject (С) and the thing — as a matter (И) or object (О). The vector within the body of activ-

ity directed from the subject to the object symbolises the mindset (*У*). Two individuals are bound together by communication (*Об*), within which they appear to each other as You (*Ты*) and I (*Я*). The vector within communication directed from I to You means relations (*От*)." [3, с. 76] Later, applying the "integral unit" to the field of psychological help, F.E. Vasilyuk discovered the practical necessity to consider it as an event phenomenon having its unique configuration at each moment of time. For this purpose, a temporal dimension appeared in the structure of the therapeutic situation in the form of a vector directed towards the goal of interaction [5]. However, this scheme has not been developed in detail. In E.V. Mishina's thesis, the phenomenology of "jointness" is thought within the framework of activity-dialogical ontology, which was formed in Soviet psychology as a result of the discussion about the status of the concept of "communication" in A.N. Leontiev's theory of activity [21, p. 111]. Here the structural scheme also potentially has dynamics in time, but the subject of research is still the state of maximum development of the phenomenon of interpersonal communication, the state of "jointness".

Let us reflect the appearance of the time dimension in the modified scheme of "unit" (Fig. 2). In the new model, from a phenomenological point of view, the subjects of the dialogue – I and You – enter into interaction. The object of their joint activity is the "Matter". Jointness is a phenomenon "which is formed not in one point, but in the whole field of interpersonal interaction, and is affecting all its elements and connections" [22, p. 47]. This

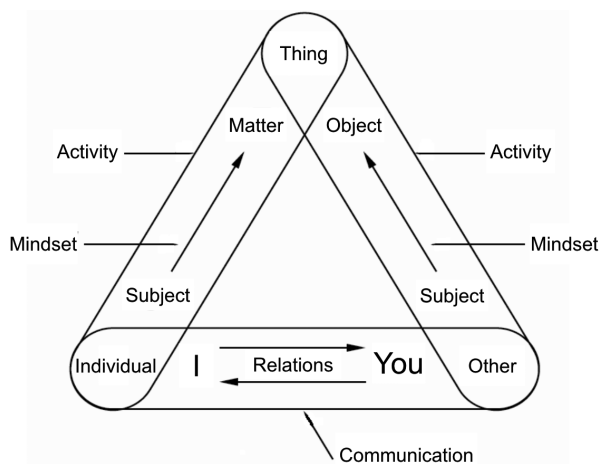


Fig. 1. F.E. Vasilyuk's scheme of the "integral unit"

phenomenon arises in the process of joint activity oriented to the common goal of interaction.

At this point it is necessary to deviate from the initial scheme of "jointness" and to specify the following. No matter how complete mutual understanding and emotional resonance are in interaction with the Other, in this process there is always room for differences in the mindsets of the participants, in their perceptions of the relations, in their understanding of the matter, goal and process of joint activity. Let us leave room for this mismatch in the scheme in order to reflect phenomenological processes more precisely.

The concepts of "relations" and "mindset" also require a special discussion.

Relations, as defined by V.N. Myasishchev, are any relations with the surrounding world, subject-object relations with both objects and people, which are formed exclusively in relationships between people [23, p. 13]. Relationships are a "holistic system of connections", "conscious, selective, experience-based psychological connection" [23, p. 21] (Fig. 3). Thus, relations are an individual system of perception of the world, a concept close to the modern notion of cognitive structures [31].

Mindset, according to D.N. Uznadze's definition, is a "holistic state of the subject", a state of "dynamic certainty", the subject's "orientation" towards a certain activity [28, p. 11]. Thus, the mindset describes the vector of processes of an integral subject, its purpose, intention, readiness to act. In this sense, each of the subjects of jointness has its own mindset, and the synchronisation of these mindsets in the course of joint activity gives rise to "shared intentionality" [27] (Fig. 4).

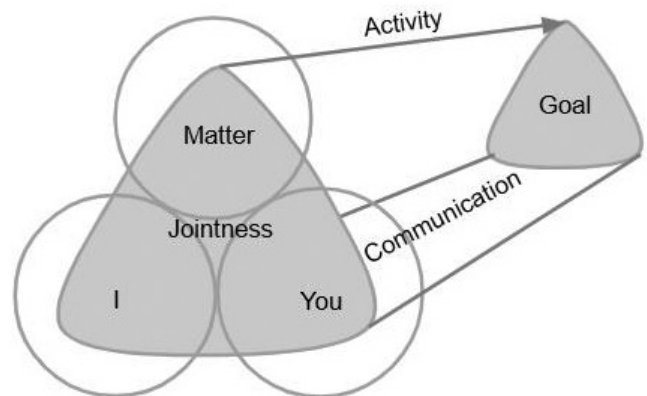


Fig. 2. The basis of the activity-dialogical model of jointness

Table

Typology of psychological "units" of the life world

HUMAN LIFE IN THE WORLD		HUMAN LIFE	
		Human being (as a dynamic structure)	Life (as an actual process)
WORLD	Object World	1. MINDSET	2. ACTIVITY
	People's world	3. RELATIONS	4. COMMUNICATION

In his scheme of “unit” F.E. Vasilyuk classified mindset and relations as structural-dynamic characteristics. Now we can make a clarification and consider relations as current structural connections between all elements of a situation, and mindsets as vectors of dynamic orientation of participants arising in this situation.

In this way, the activity-dialogical model of the “unit of the life world” begins to manifest itself. From the behavioural point of view, this model describes joint activity; from the phenomenological point of view – the experience of jointness; from the historical point of view – the formation and transmission of cultural experience; from the physiological point of view – an intercorporeal dynamic functional system.

The elements of jointness, I, You, Matter, Goal, appear here as names of whole functional domains of psychological phenomena, each of which necessarily has its representation at every moment of time in any human activity, as well as the relations connecting them, directing mindsets, communication and activity. The general field of jointness means synchronisation and coordination of participants, describes the ongoing process in which cyclic physiological synchronisation, empathy, mutual understanding, and cooperation take place.

Thanks to such synchronization, the participants’ individual processes are mutually reinforced according to the principle of resonance, “dialogical resonance” [29, p. 92]. Just as a swing increases its oscillatory motion as a result of someone’s pushing in the direction of its movement, or sound waves, partially coinciding in their oscillatory frequencies, mutually increase their amplitude. In a broad sense, resonance is “the phenomenon of a sharp increase in a dynamic system’s response to an external influence” [30]. Thus, *resonance is a key catalyst of the joint process of people, which allows us to assimilate the experience of jointness, to coordinate joint activity, feeling its meaning, and, as a result, to maintain our individual activity for a long time.*

### Two “experiences” in F.E. Vasilyuk’s theory and the generation of meaning

Let’s see how the central concept of F.E. Vasilyuk’s works fits into this model. Experiencing is the activity of overcoming a critical situation [7]. It is “internally dialogical” [6, p. 143]. “...The turbulent inner element<sup>2</sup> of experience, so to speak, is not quite an element, it became what it is, and as it is, in a given person, not by itself – *he himself and significant others* took an active part in its formation” (emphasis ours) [6, p. 117]. “Experience” has two embodiments – active and felt ones, “experience-work” and “experience-feeling”. Activity experience is genetically primary in relation to felt experience. The latter develops as a result of mastering the cultural means of consolation, that is, as a result of doing the experience-work of overcoming meaninglessness. After the work is done, meaningful activity arises and experience-feeling “pacifies, comforts, restrains all tense life relations, while one of them is realised in activity” [6, p. 117]. How can this be understood? When an infant cries for the first time after birth, it does so instinctively. But by getting its needs met with the help of an adult, by calming down, it gains its first experience of cultural coping with a discomforting state. The infant makes an activity, an active experience that leads to safety. In this way, the infant has the cultural experience of transforming the felt experience, which helps him to cope with similar states in the future.

The organisation of the experience becomes more complex with age. When a person finds themselves in a critical situation, they are overwhelmed by strong feelings and experience a state of impossibility. They may switch to other jointnesses, work, other activities in order to dull the acuteness of the experience. But when the pain subsides a little, a person needs the Other, who will

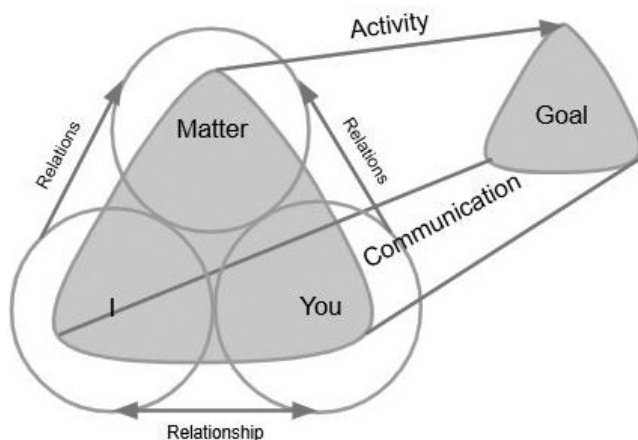


Fig. 3. Relations and relationships in the jointness model

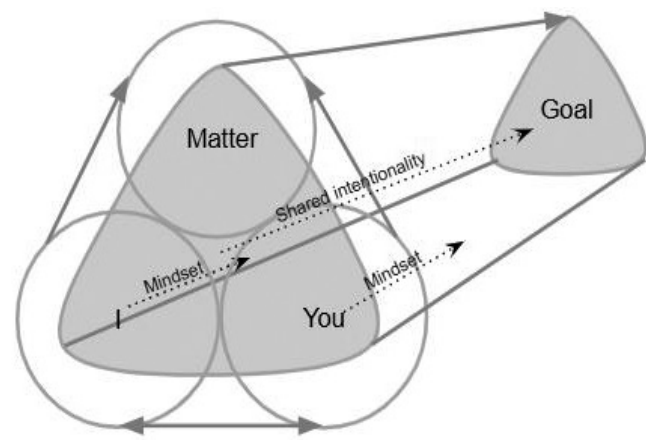


Fig. 4. Mindset and shared intentionality in the jointness model

<sup>2</sup> Element as environment, weather or substance.

help to look at the critical situation from the outside, to experience it, to weave a new “meaning fabric” [19, p. 441]. In this communication with the Other, everything personally significant, everything painful, everything unresolved which a person has access to is raised, and the search for meanings is conducted in the farthest corners of their life world. This process requires a high degree of inclusion of participants in the here-and-now (Fig. 5). When, as a result of working together, the “meaning fabric” is woven and the skill of transforming an acute felt experience into a more bearable state is formed, this skill recedes to the periphery of consciousness and the meaningful activity formed becomes the central process (Fig. 6).

Let us summarise what has been said above. Experiencing is a cultured process of coping with meaninglessness. It is carried out at any moment of time, either voluntarily or involuntarily. The meaning generated in the experience-work structures human activity. We can say that the meaning fabric connects the mindsets of the participants, the characteristics of the object and the means of influence on it, necessary to achieve a common goal, into a common meaning field. The formed meaningful activity contains in itself, in a generalised form, the jointnesses that gave rise to it and expresses the essence of individual cultural experience applicable to the current situation.

The participation of the Other in the generation of meaning is not a mere formality, but a probable cause of people’s ability to perform prolonged and complex directed behaviour, to carry out activity. This becomes possible through resonance and coordination with the Other, real or assumed. Therefore, *meaning can be seen as the name of a human feeling – the feeling of jointness*<sup>3</sup>. Thus, from a theoretical point of view, the meaning fabric forms a dynamic model of the “integral unit

of the life world”, while in practice it links individual phenomena of the life world into a holistic directed process of activity.

### Properties of the jointness prism

To review in general the capabilities of the proposed jointness model, let us describe some of its properties derived from the reasoning above.

#### Ontology of inclusion

The meeting of phenomenological and behavioural, structural and processual, activity and dialogical, biological and cultural aspects of the psyche in the dynamic model of jointness invites the description of an ontology that takes all these aspects into account. Such work has yet to be done, but it is already possible to designate such a comprehensive view as an ontology of inclusion. That is, an ontology where no aspect of the human psychological life, which we can observe from different angles and understand from different perspectives, can be excluded from consideration because it plays its unique role in the psychological process.

#### Pervasive sharingness

Consideration of the prism of jointness as a functional unit of the psychic implies that all human activity contains in itself a reference to the Other. A human is always in mutual relations. In every action, in behaviour and in thinking, a human is guided, usually unconsciously, by the feeling of the Other’s sharingness and their experience of joint activity and has in mind interaction with a generalised or concrete Other. And even when they experience a critical situation, they are looking for meaning in it, which means they are looking for a new approach,

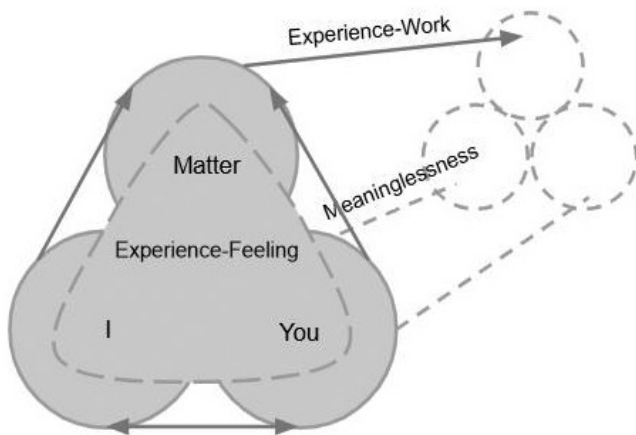


Fig. 5. Formation of sensory experience

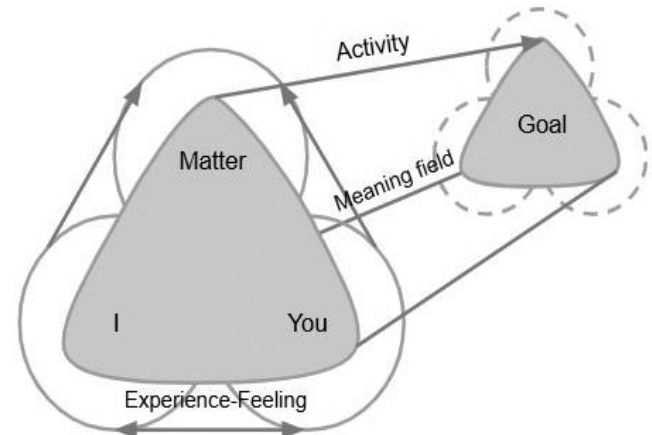


Fig. 6. Meaningful activity

<sup>2</sup> There is no certainty that meaning-making is an exclusively human ability. Perhaps dolphins and other animals can also experience resonance with each other. However, here we consider such a high degree of development of the meaning sphere, which is inherent only to humans.

perspective, context of activity, new jointness. From this point of view, loneliness is the experience of the lack of the Other's participation, the unsatisfaction of the human need for sharingness.

### Jointness as a means of generalisation

It turns out that every new jointness is formed in the process of expanding the resonance between the participants in aspects ranging from physiological processes to cultural. Similar features of their personal processes come into resonance. Similar features of their personal processes come into resonance. In this way, features of the situation that the people interacting perceive as common are manifested. These common features are reinforced in perception, become a common "figure" [32] for the participants and thus partially blur the differences, pushing them into the "ground" [32]. In fact, during the formation of jointness, each time there is a metaposition in relation to the object of interaction, detachment from it, generalisation of its properties. Thus, we can say that resonance forms a generalising semantic field. This point of view is consistent with the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky, who argued that "generalisation and communication are two sides of the same coin" [16].

### The polyphonicity of jointness

The experience of other jointnesses serves as a model for the formation of jointness. In almost every element of joint activity, we can find references to the life stories of the participants and discover their components. The new process is based on previous experiences of relationships, but their new combination gives a new quality of feeling, a new meaning. In this way, a voluminous polyphonic [1] process is formed that goes far beyond the formally labelled joint activity.

In addition, complexly organised activity and thinking require switching between different contexts, and thus between different jointnesses. The means and ways of such switches have yet to be explored. A possible way was outlined in the concept of "stratigraphy of consciousness" by F.E. Vasilyuk, in particular, in the concept of "transition operator" [4].

### Functionality of jointness domains

Each element of the jointness model is in practice a functional domain, that is, the name of the function that is realised in different situations by different psychological phenomena.

Thus, "I" is something with which the subject associates, identifies themselves in a given situation. For example, one's own body, a name or any thing ("mine"), an episode of personal history, or a social group can all fulfil an I-Function at some point.

"You" is the person with whom the subject is currently in a relationship. Whether it is a parent, a group of classmates, an archetypal image of a big dog, an eco-

nomie crisis or a subpersonality. All this can personify in some situation the interlocutor, fulfil the function of the Other, the You-Function.

"Matter" is what is currently being addressed or acted upon externally or internally. Whether it is a toy in the sandbox, an image treading on a piece of paper under a pencil, or a family relationship discussed in psychotherapy. Anything that becomes the focus of joint attention or consciousness begins to fulfil the Object-Function.

The Goal-Function of an activity can also be fulfilled by any feeling, image of what is desired, or reference point for the activity. The function of building "relations" between concepts, forming "mindsets", organising and carrying out "activities" can also be performed by any natural phenomenon or cultural tool. Each of them can fulfil both separate functions and many functions at once. And the most important of such tools is a language.

A meaning-function is any phenomenon that involves jointness, namely resonance and coordination of participants at any level of processes, physiological, speech, activity, cultural. For example, it could be: a baby rocking situation; a single word spoken in a context shared with the listener; a logical inference made in the process of reasoning alone; an intention to go to university; a family Christmas ritual; a business model; a simple meme picture — in other words, anything that can be identified as a cultural unit of activity.

## General psychological completeness of the prism of jointness

In order to assess whether the resulting activity-dialogical model is universal enough for general psychology, let us see how it meets the criteria highlighted earlier.

The functional nature of the domains of jointness allows us to describe psychological phenomena in a wide variety of situations by focusing on those aspects of the process that are important in the current research context. Such situations can be both socio-cultural and group processes, both interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomena. In addition, the concept of "meaning", according to D.A. Leontiev, removes "the oppositions of affect and intellect, inner and outer world, deep and apex mechanisms, consciousness and unconsciousness" [19, p. 441]. That is, we can say that *the prism of jointness unites functional elements into a common system in a way that describes psychological processes at the meta-level.*

The prism of jointness also claims to resolve the methodological gap in psychology, as it emerged at the intersection of cultural-historical tradition and humanistic psychotherapy, in the process of dialogue between academic psychology and psychological practice in the context of "Understanding Psychotherapy". F.E. Vasilyuk's theory of experience, as well as P.Y. Galperin's theory of formation of mental actions, forms psychological practice



proper, generates “the theory of work with the psyche”, philosophy of practice [6, p. 54]. In this, psychological practice proper, *dialogue is the very method that reveals its central subject — jointness*. It is also the most adequate general psychological method for the study of *jointness as a phenomenon of interpersonal resonance and coordination*.

I, You, Matter, Relations, Mindset (Intension), Experience, Goal, Meaning, Activity — all these categories describe psychological processes in such a general way that they are understandable both in a scientific context and at the everyday level. For translating the languages of psychological fields, this generality opens up new possibilities: by correlating concepts from different approaches with domains of jointness, it is possible to start a dialogue about their systemic interconnectedness.

### Conclusions

And so, the prism of jointness describes the formation and transmission of cultural experience in the process of joint activity. As a result of correlating the many concepts

developed in detail in cultural-historical psychology over almost a century of history, it becomes possible to construct a system that encompasses a wide range of phenomena of psychology. This system includes the phenomenological, behavioural, biological and socio-cultural sides of their manifestations. Understanding the system of jointness functional domains can help to correlate related concepts used in different psychological theories, which can, in turn, clarify the model. The study of the dynamics of the jointness development can give a qualitative increase in the understanding of mental processes.

Undoubtedly, for the sake of finding common ground, such a view reduces many essential differences between psychological approaches, but it also achieves the necessary level of generalisable abstraction which, when applied to each individual field of study, can be filled in with the necessary details. And, if we assume that psychology and psychological practice are working with a single phenomenon called “Human”, then we must finally find the level of generalisation that will allow us to gather eclectic psychological ideas into a coherent whole.

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Получена 24.09.2023

Received 24.09.2023

Принята в печать 20.03.2024

Accepted 20.03.2024