Summary

The Vygotsky That We (Do Not) Know: Vygotsky's Main Works and the Chronology of their Composition

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This paper summarizes a notably longer version the paper on Lev (1896-1934)written legacy that came out in the Russian-language PsyAnima, Dubna Psychological Journal (Yasnitsky, 2011b).

PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS. Given the immense popularity of Vygotsky nowadays, it is highly suprising to see the great discrepancies in bibliographies writings as manifested in different printed and archival sources (Lifanova, 1996; Luria, 1935a, 1935b; Murchison, 1932; Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991; Vygodskaya, 1996; Vygotsky, 1934, 1956, 1960, 1982-84), none of which appearing ultimately and unconditionally correct. Therefore, this study posed two interrelated research questions:

(1) What are the most important written works of Vygotsky that represent his theory in its most developed and advanced form?

(2) ion?

DATA AND ANALYSIS. This study is deliberately focused on larger works such as published books and manuscripts of monographs chapters, created during the period of 1928-1934. Thus, it leaves out earlier and relatively immature such as the 1925-1926 manuscript Psychology of Art (first work published in Russian in 1965), the book of 1926 Pedagogical Psychology, or the unifinished manuscript draft of 1926-1927 Historical meaning of crisis in psychology that, according to recent archival studies, was not apparently intended for publication by its author as a whole, but was later considerably revised and eventually published as several journal articles (Zavershneva, 2009). On the other hand, several later publications are only briefly discussed in this study, which include with the only exception of Thinking and Speech (1934) that is treated here at a considerable length posthumously published (such as Foundations of Paedology, 1934, 1935) and compilations of his papers (such as Mental development of children in the process of learning, 1935 or coedited volume Mentally retarded child, 1935, with I.I. Daniushevskii). The former group of sources is excluded from this study for

their author for publication original thought:

see (van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2011).

This study explored two major categories of data. First, the metaworks such as (a) the dates of manuscripts submission to the publisher, of their approval by the cersorship authorities, and of their final publication, (b) information about the publishing houses and the institutions that authorized these publications, (c) the contexts of publication and intended readership, etc. Second, in several most problematic instances the author analyzed the discourse of

FINDINGS.

First. Man will make it his purpose to master his own feelings, to raise his instincts to the heights of consciousness, to make them transparent, to extend the wires of his will into hidden recesses, and thereby to raise himself to a new plane, to create a higher social biologic type, or, if you please, a superman

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(emphasis added, Trotsky, 1925/2005).
                                                           visionary proclamations, as evident in
a number of quotes and programmatic statements in his writings (e.g., Vygotskii, 1926, 1926/2008),
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general sense, psychology with regard to culture and the superhuman (Vygotsky & Puzyrei, 2007,
p. 19) [in German transla
                               [es ist eine Chance,]
dem Aspect der Kultur und des
                                                                                  1. This project
ultimately materilized as two books that came out in 1930: Studies on the history of behaviour.
Ape, primitive, child (Vygotskii & Luria, 1930) and Imagination and creativity in school age
(Vygotskii, 1930b). To their apparent disappointment, as it is evident from
correspondence with his associates and collaborators, the outcome of the work did not meet
            high expectations, who self-criticized
inconsistencies, and omissions
                                                     -64; Vygotsky & Puzyrei, 2007, p. 26) that
resulted from the lack of experimental studies done by the Vygotsky-Luria Circle (Yasnitsky,
2009b, 2011d), and, on the other hand, their inability to provide sufficiently convincing and
comprehensive theoretical generalizations. Therefore, the outcome of the undertaking of
 psychology with regar
                                                          the two books for general reader that
summarized the studies of other, mostly West European scholars was clearly an overall failure of
what started as a highly ambitious and original project.
       Second. Perhaps, the most unexpected, striking, and sensational discovery made in this
study is the conclusion that such according to common opinion
as The History of Development of Higher Mental Functions and Tool and Sign in the Development
of the Child, in fact, were not considered as his seminal works by their author, who neither included
them in his bibliographies of published works and unpublished manuscripts (cf.: Murchison, 1932;
Vygodskaya, 1996) nor even intended to publish them, at least in their present form as they are
known to us in Soviet publications of 1960s-1980s and their translations into English of 1970s-
1990s. Furthermore, this study leads us to the conclusion about numerous both deliberate and
incidental falsifications that took place during preparation of the texts for publication by the editors
                                                                   -1984. Thus, The History of
of the Russian six-
Development of Higher Mental Functions appears to have been constructed from two different
                                                   -2 years and published in 1983 by the editors
of the Soviet edition of Pedagogica Press as one theoretical work under the title that actually never
                                                                      (Vygotskii, 1983). In turn,
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on the basis of testimonies of the participants of the events of that time and the comparative analysis Tool and Sign in the Development of the

Child we come to the conclusion that this work that we known very well by its Russian (Vygotskii, 1984) and English (Vygotsky, 1994) publications is a fake, or, in the words of Elkonon Goldberg, a , or, even more precisely, back-translation from an English translation of an earlier Russian text that had not preserved by the time of the preparation of Soviet six-volume publication (i.e. by the end of 1960s) (Goldberg, 2005, p. 99). The main evidence in support of this finding is the fact of numerous repetitions of considerable segments of Russian text, virtually identical in their content, but most frequently varying in their verbal expressions (see Kellogg & Yasnitsky, 2011; aslo footnote 20 in Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994, p. 171). Such variations must have resulted from the poorly coordinated work of two (or even more) translators who made redundant translations of the text and, then, from the mistakes of integration of these segments into coherent whole that were presumably made by a highly unprofessional and careless editor of the volume. Finally, it is notable that the English text that served as the original for this back-translation has

ology), which suggests that first translation of the original Russian text was made in the interwar period, quite likely around 1930. On the other hand, this English text also reveals -1932, which might be explained by later certain

interventions and revisions that took place after 1930 when the original text was expanded and augmented with several newer paragraphs here and there, but not fully reconsidered, revised and rewritten as a whole. As a result, what is available to us now is a highly eclectic text that reflects

Therefore, in sum, we are safe to claim that

such findings do not allow us to treat these two texts The History of Development of Higher Mental Functions and Tool and Sign in the Development of the Child

works the way they were published in the six-volume collection by Pedagogika Press in 1980s. The same obviously applies to all subsequent translations of these two texts that were made from this Soviet edition, for instance the English publication of Tool and sign of 1999 (Vygotsky, 1984/1999).

Third.

and contributed to a better understanding of the place these works occupy within the corpus of As a result, this study suggests that we need to question and reconsider the set of his published books and book manuscripts that are traditionally considered as seminal and foundational. Also, the chronology of composition was somewhat revised and in several instances corrected (see Table 1).

most significant

those texts that are traditionally presented as the most important and foundational in (for most recent critique of some of these

see Miller, 2011) were in fact written before 1931 (the two exceptions are several chapters of Thinking and speech, 1934 and several fragments of Tool and sign, 1930-1932). Therefore, we realize that these texts do not quite represent the last and the most important and productive period -1934. On the other hand, we also realize that the

most popular texts of Vygotsky that were in fact written in 1932-1934 give only a fragmentary and far from complete overview of his integral psychoneurological theory of bio-social and culturalhistorical development that was emerging over the last period of his life.

an see that the paedological cycle of his works such as Paedology of school age (Vygotskii, 1928) and Paedology of the adolescent (Vygotskii, 1929, 1930a, 1931) were quite undeservedly downplayed and largely forgotten in the numerous contemporary scholarly works of post-Vygotskian scholars. Quite in contrast to the contemporary virtual oblivion of , the author of these works and his closest associates considered them as important, often referred to these books, and included these publications in the bibliographies of his works. Also, one should keep it in mind that, cumulatively, the paedological books of Vygotsky constitute his largest text more than 700 pages that was authorized for publication by its author and was ultimately (cf. Table). Analysis of these works will help us better

understand the growth of the theory of bio-social development that Vygotsky announced in his earlier programmatic works of mid-1920s. Given that his latest and, thus, the most mature text of this cycle was written not later than the end of 19

main paedological works it is important to include also his more advanced works on paedology: the

for the courses that he typically taught at the Herzen Leningrad Pedagogical Institute in 1930s. Some of these stenograms and course notes were later published posthumously, most likely not proofread by the author, without his consent, and quite probably with editorial changes (Vygotskii, 1933-34/1984, 1934b, 1935a, 1935b, 1996, 2001; Vygotskii & Danyushevskii, 1935). For typical examples of editorial interventions and, for that matter, distortions of the meaning of the text in (Kellogg & Yasnitsky, 2011;

Mecacci & Yasnitsky, 2011; van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2011; Zavershneva & Osipov, 2010). Despite not ungrounded doubts in the authenticity and reliability of these posthumous publications,

they are the best what we currently have of the paedological legacy of the later integrative psychoneurological developmental theory of Vygotsky and, therefore, these sources should be most seriously taken into consideration.

The updated chronology of Vygotsky's books composition and publication (italics indicate the works that were not published during Vygotsky's lifetime; corrections in the chronology of Vygotsky's works that were introduced in this study are emphasized, in bold characters)

Title Date of publication/writing Comments Length **(pp.)** traditional corrected Total text length of the Russian Istoriia razvitia 210 or Not later **1930** vysshikh psikhicheskikh publication of 1983 323 pp. 158^{2} 1930-1931 or (chapters 1-5)¹ funktsii 1931-1932 [The history of Not later **1929** development of higher 165 $(chapters 6-15)^3$ mental functions] Not later 1930 (ch. 2-Chapter 5: an excerpt from *Pedologiia* podrostka [Paedology of the [Thinking and speech] 1934 spring 1933- spring 320 adolescent] (1931) 1934 (Introduction. chap. 1, 6 7) According to Thinking and speech (Vygotskii, 1934a, p. 323), there was [Tool and sign also such English copy of the work: (manuscript)] Not earlier 1931, 1930 L.S. Vygotsky and A. R. Luria, Tool probably 1932 and Symbol in the development of the child (sent to Total text length of all three volumes Pedologiia podrostka 1929 (vol. 1, chapters 68 [Paedology of the of the book 504 pp. 1-4)adolescent] 1929 and The last, third volume completed not 1930 (vol. 2, chapters 1931 later than the fall of 1930 104 5-8) or **1931** (vol. 3, chapters 332 9-16) Pedologiia vozrasta 1928 1928 218 [Paedology of the school age] Etiudy po istorii The book most likely completed not later than the fall of 1929 primitiv, rebenok 1930 1930 230 [Studies on the history of behaviour. Ape, primitive, child]

Fifth, and the last. **Thinking and speech** is typically presented as the last and most mature of his works, as some kind of summary of all his theoretical work and a scientific

[The history of cultural development of normal and abnormal child].

Issledovanie vysshikh

psikhologicheskikh funktsii [Investigation of higher psychological functions].

² In Soviet editions of 1960 and 1983 respectively

⁻¹⁹²⁹ originally titled by its author Is

testament to his students, followers and future generations of psychologists. Our study demonstrates that roughly half of the text of this book was written not later than 1930, and the whole book was presumably ready for submission to the publishing house by 1932. The second half of the book includes the texts that although, indeed, actually written in 1932-1934 do not reflect the last esearch program of the psychology of human

consciousness, sense-making, and freedom that Vygotsky announced at the end of 1932, highly psychology with regar , was carried out by

the members of Vygotsky Circle in three different yet interrelated directions of empirical studies and theoretical generalizations. These are:

(1) intensive clinical and defectological studies in Kharkov and Moscow that resulted in considerable convergence of psychological theory of Vygotsky-Luria with psychiatry, physiology,

(Toomela, in press; Yasnitsky, 2009a, 2009b, 2011d; Yasnitsky & Ferrari, 2008);

- (2) *philological* (i.e. linguistic and literary) studies of language, thinking, and culture that, according to the contemporary nomenclature of scientific disciplines, are chiefly associated with semiotics, anthropology, and psycholinguistics (see, e.g., Bertau, 2008, 2011a, 2011b; Friedrich, 2005);
- (3) convergence of the intellectualism of the earlier Vygotsky of his instrumental period of 1920s with the research on affect, will and action in human "lifespace" that was conducted by the members of the Berlin group of Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1935, 1936) and were replicated and continued in the Soviet Union in 1930s by the scholars of the Vygotsky-Luria Circle (Yasnitsky, 2011a, 2012a, 2012b).

theory in its most mature form. It is already apparent that no single text of Vygotsky presents these three lines in

theory at a glance. Instead, what we have is a collection of brief notes, fragments, draft papers and unfinished works (Yasnitsky, 2010; Zavershneva, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), partially published during the brief period of the Gold Age of Vygotskian psychology after his death in 1934-1936 (Vygotskii, 1933-34/1984, 1934b, 1935a, 1935b, 1936; Vygotskii & Danyushevskii, 1935) (on the "Gold Age" of the period of 1934-1936 see Yasnitsky, 2011c). In this situation there are two different yet interrelated options. First, we need meticulous historical work aimed at restoring and reconstructing

(pp. 5-28).

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