

To Create Psychology's Own Capital

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“... in the course of historical development, and precisely through the fact that within the division of labor social relations inevitably take on an independent existence, there appears a cleavage in the life of each individual . . .” (Marx & Engels, 1845–46, p. 87).

“We do not want to deny our past. We do not suffer from megalomania by thinking that history begins with us. We do not want a brand-new and trivial name from history. We want a name covered by the dust of centuries. We regard this as our historical right, as an indication of our historical role, our claim to realize psychology as a science. We must view ourselves in connection with and in relation to the past . . . That is why we accept the name of our science with all its age-old delusions as a vivid reminder of our victory over these errors, as the fighting scars of wounds, as a vivid testimony of the truth which develops in the incredibly complicated struggle with falsehood”. (Vygotsky, 1997/1927, Vol. 3, p. 336–337)

INTRODUCTION

The key to understanding the current crisis and fragmentation of psychology is familiarity with scientific psychology as described by L.S. Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky, the Marxist concept the *social relations of production*¹ is the appropriate unit of analysis of human mental phenomena. In spite of his chronic tuberculosis and death in 1934, at the early age of 37, Vygotsky succeeded in laying the foundations of his cultural-historical theory in a short period of time. In the following passage, Vygotsky explained what he meant by his famous phrase: *to create one's own Capital*:

I want to find out how science has to be built, to approach the study of the mind having learned the whole of Marx's method. . . . In order to create such an enabling theory-method in the generally accepted scientific manner, it is necessary to discover the essence of the given area of phenomena, the laws according to which they change, their qualitative and quantitative

characteristics, their causes. It is necessary to formulate the categories and concepts that are specifically relevant to them—in other words; to create one's own Capital. The whole of Capital is written according to the following method: Marx analyzes a single living "cell" of capitalist society—for example, the nature of value. Within this cell he discovers the structure of the entire system and all of its economic institutions. He says that to a layman this analysis may seem a murky tangle of tiny details. Indeed, there may be tiny details, but they are exactly those, which are essential to "microanatomy." Anyone who could discover what a "psychological" cell is—the mechanism producing even a single response—would thereby find the key to psychology as a whole. (1978, p. 8)

Many current discussions of Vygotsky's work proceed no further than to explore how development is the conversion of social relations into mental functions focusing on how individuals achieve that through mediation. Specifically, these discussions are concerned with the ways in which mediation occurs, examining the various linking tools or signs that are our means of psychological production. Because of this emphasis, Vygotsky's theory is being understood as a way to analyze an activity system by viewing how tools and signs mediate it. But it is essential, while considering questions of mediation to not leave behind the question of the psychological cell of Vygotsky's theory: the social relations of production. That is, the concept of the social relations of production must be theoretically integrated into our understanding of Vygotsky.

Vygotsky's use of the concept of the "social relations of production" reflects his grounding in Marxist theory.² He lived during the Russian Revolution, a time of extreme tension between private and collective, individual and social. It was this cultural environment of change and upheaval that provided him with the context for his scientific investigations. His life was devoted to solving the urgent and practical problems of education (Vygotsky, 1921–1923; Krupskaya, 1990 [Vygotsky was an active member in Krupskaya's circle of education]) to ensure the success of the new socialist experiment. Vygotsky, built upon the conceptualization of mental phenomena, outlined by the leading French Marxist psychologists, Henri Wallon (1879–1962), and Georges Politzer (1903–1942). His contribution to the psychological and educational (see Krupskaya, 1990) debates of the 1920s, along with the contributions of his colleagues Luria and Leontiev, played a major role in shaping the direction of Marxist scientific psychology.

But psychologists and educators working within Vygotsky's framework often do not use Marxist philosophy and the dialectical method in their analysis (Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1991; Valsiner & Van der Veer, 1991, among others), or minimally fail to appreciate its importance (Joravsky, 1989; Kozulin, 1990 & 1996; Moscovici, 1996 & 1998, among others). Some have even stated that Vygotsky was not a Marxist psychologist and that he never engaged in building a Marxist psychology. For example, Alex Kozulin (1996) wrote, "Vygotsky was never engaged in building a Marxist psychology" (p. 328), and added:

Taking into account an overall social orientation of Marxism one might assume that it was Marxist theory that provided an intellectual guideline for Vygotsky. This assumption holds no water, however; as Vygotsky showed in his crisis, Marxist theory in the 1920s failed to develop any concepts required for a psychological study of human behavior and cognition. (Kozulin, 1990, p. 122)

Serge Moscovici, one of the leading social psychologists in Western Europe, wrote that:

Vygotsky devoted himself to a thorough criticism of Marxism and moved away from it. Evidently, Marxist psychology seemed to him either premature or impossible. We do not know, because he never expressed a clear opinion on the subject. (1996, p. 71)

James Zebroski (1994) wrote: "Vygotsky was neither a Marxist ideologue nor a bourgeois humanist, neither pure scientist nor pure artist" (p. 277).

The problem is, of course, more complex than debating whether Vygotsky was or was not a Marxist. His theory is dense, incomplete, full of insights and psychosocial observations, highly theoretical and philosophical but difficult to read for those unfamiliar with Marxist and Hegelian concepts. However, an adequate appreciation of Vygotskian psychology is not possible without a consideration of its relationship to Marx and Marxist philosophy (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999; Hyden, 1988; Sève, 1978 & 1999; Shames, 1984; Ratner, 1997a; Tobach, 1999). In other words, Marxism is "the humus of every particular thought and the horizon of all culture" (Sartre, 1960, p. 17). We will approach this relationship through the psychological cell, the concept of the social relations of production.

THE GENESIS OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALIST PSYCHOLOGY

Vygotsky had no model that he applied to psychology. Vygotsky's genius was that he understood how to make psychology itself, based on the principles of dialectical and historical materialism, speak in conceptual terms. Vygotsky's theory of higher mental phenomena had its roots in dialectical materialism, the theory that historical changes in society and material life produce changes in the human mind. According to McLeish, by the late 1920s, a truly Marxist psychology had yet to be established but Soviet psychology had arrived at four principles. These were:

- Adherence*, which means the rejection of all non-materialist and non-Marxist theories;
- Materialism*, which means that, human mental life and rule-governed behavior are derived, formed, and shaped by the material conditions of social reality;
- Dialectics*, which means that everything, is in flux; nothing is unchangeable or constant;
- Activity*, which means that a human individual acts to change concrete reality and in so doing changes him or herself. (McLeish, 1975, pp. 247–248)

Once these foundation stones were laid, the next task should be the creation of a theory of psychological materialism (Vygotsky 1927/1997a, p. 332). In the most vibrant and convincing section of chapter 13 (pp. 310–332) of the *Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology*, we can see Vygotsky taking up this challenge. The ambition of Vygotsky, as these pages show, was to produce a new type of psychology in full bloom in the context of the post-revolutionary Soviet society. Fundamental to this project was the concept of dialectics. Vygotsky (1927/1997a) made dialectics the basis of any science: “Dialectics covers nature, thinking, history—it is the most general, maximally universal science. The theory of the psychological materialism or dialectics of psychology is what I called general psychology” (p. 330).

Vygotsky’s theory was an explicit attempt to develop a Marxist psychology, i.e., turning to the structure and practices of socially organized labor to provide the context as to how the human individual perceives, thinks, and acts. This would mean that individual development could not be understood without reference to the context within which it is embedded. Development does not proceed outward toward socialization; development is the conversion of social relations into mental functions and thought processes. This distinction is important. Vygotsky (1997b) argues:

From the standpoint of historical materialism, the fundamental causes of all social changes and all political upheavals must be sought not in peoples’ minds . . . and not in their views of eternal truths and justice, but in changes in the means of production and distribution. They must be sought not in philosophy, but in the economics of each epoch. Thus, in mankind the production process assumes the broadest possible social character, which at the present time encompasses the entire world. Accordingly, there arise the most complex forms of organization of human behavior with which the child encounters before he directly confronts nature. (p. 211)

Dialectics is not just the interaction of an individual and society: Society itself should be seen as engaged in a dialectical flux. According to Vygotsky, society is not a community of individuals or a community of social groups as described in the works of Rogoff, Wertsch, Valsiner, Van der Veer among others, but is the *totality of their interrelationships* as construed in the Marxist approach (Ratner, Sève, Tobach). In other words, “Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand (Marx, 1857–58, p. 265). Society is the sum of the relations in which human individuals stand to one another, and the “real intellectual wealth of the individual depends entirely on the wealth of his real connections [*relations* my emphasis]” (Marx & Engels, 1845–46, p. 59).

It is through such a creative and concrete application of dialectical materialism that psychology can escape the grip of ossification and orthodoxy. In fact, the dominant version of Vygotsky’s theory in North American and West European psychology, with few exceptions (Chaiklin, Clot, Collins, Elhammoumi,

Engeström, Feigenbaum, González-Rey, Jones, Ratner, Rowlands, Sève, Stetsenko & Arievitch, Tobach, Vergnaud, Zazzo among others), is a psychology in crisis because it is drained of its dialectics and consciousness is ignored.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND HUMAN ACTION

How then did Vygotsky, as a dialectical materialist, approach the interrelation of consciousness and human action? Vygotsky viewed consciousness as a social-historical-cultural process dialectically shaped by social relations. This too is an essentially Marxist idea. According to a dialectical view, human higher mental phenomena should be investigated not as particular functions in isolation, but as functions relating to each other. Consciousness is shaped by the processes of mediation of material production, cultural development, and social relations of production. As Leontiev and Luria (1968) put it, "Man's consciousness is formed not by material production but by the personal relationships and by the products of cultural development of society which arise out of this development" (p. 341).

Consciousness is produced dialectically through social relations, and what was needed was a genuine method of analysis, which avoided a fragmentation of the subject studied. This methodology was termed *analysis into units*. Vygotsky (1934/1987) explained, "A unit designates a product of analysis that possesses all the basic characteristics of the whole. The unit is a vital and irreducible part of the whole" (p. 46). According to Vygotsky's theory, this irreducible unit is the *social relations of production*. The social relations of production are not simply more variables; rather, they represent the appropriate unit of analysis of human mental phenomena. From this point of view, the entire psychological makeup to which Vygotsky devoted the last ten years of his life was nothing more than the application of dialectical materialism to psychology. He revealed that the entire psychological makeup is an integral part of historical, cultural, and social life.

The entire psychological makeup of individuals can be seen to depend directly on the development of technology, the degree of development of the production forces and on the structure of that social group to which the individual belongs. (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 176)

In addition, it seems evident that the concept of alienation is fundamentally important for understanding human consciousness in any given society (Lukács, 1923 & 1925). The importance of the concept of alienation is that, as Marx (1975) put it:

Labor is external to the worker . . . the worker feels himself at home only during his leisure time, where as at work he feels homeless. . . . This is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation, the *personal* physical and mental energy of the worker, his personal life, as an activity which is directed against himself. (Marx, 1963, p. 124–26)

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

Vygotsky's work was never narrowly focused on higher mental issues. He always located mental phenomena within their wider social and historical context. This brings us to the materialist theory of history (Vygotsky, 1927/1997a, pp. 310–332), summarized by Marx as follows:

In the social production of their means of existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations which are independent of their will, productive relationships which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The aggregate [totality] of these productive relationships constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis [foundation] on which a juridical and political superstructure arises . . . The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. (Marx, 1961, p. 217)

The development of the forces of production bring human individuals into conflict with the relations of production, and these conflicts are reflected in their thought processes, consciousness, and activity. These conflicts are the principle motive of history and the locomotive of historical change.

Social class, according to Vygotsky, is a social relationship. For him the individual's social class depends on his relationship to the means of production. Vygotsky (1997b) described it this way:

Since we know that each person's individual experience is conditioned by the role he plays in his environment, and that it is the class membership which also defines this role, it is clear that class membership defines man's psychology and man's behavior . . . Man's social behavior is determined by the behavior of class, and each person is inevitably a person from a particular class. In this regard, we must be profoundly historical and must always present man's behavior in relation to the class situation at the given moment; this must be the fundamental psychological technique for every social psychologist. Recall that the class structure of society defines the standpoint which man occupies in organized social behavior. Consequently, class membership defines at one fell swoop both the cultural and the natural orientation of personality in the environment. (p. 212)

Vygotsky drew on Marx's notion of ascent from the abstract to the concrete in his cultural-historical theory. Marx thought that we ought to dispense completely with the theoretical concept of human nature and the theoretical concepts of the nature of human mental phenomena that seemed to him useless from a scientific point of view. As an alternative, Vygotsky introduced new concepts: the concepts of psychological means of production, psychological forces of production, social relations of production, power, ideology, labor, consciousness, activity, subjectivity, and so forth. Vygotsky's effort was to extend and develop a unified theory of the science of the social relations of production while at the same time elaborating a materialist dialectical methodology absorbing the advances in the existing bourgeois social sciences and rejecting their explanatory systems. Of these new concepts, understanding subjectivity becomes central for comprehending Vygotsky's psychology.

VYGOTSKY'S CONCEPT OF SUBJECTIVITY

The Vygotskian concept of subjectivity has never been popular within the dominant trends of Marxist psychology. Recently, however, it has begun to make appearances in mainstream cultural-historical research programs. In this section, I argue that this concept has been misappropriated by those who constructed it simply as a psychological cognitive phenomenon located in individuals' heads, rather than as a socially emerged product of the totality of social relations and socially organized practical activities. Cultural-historical psychologists have paid more attention to technological forces of production (signs and tools) than to the social relations of production in the study of human mental phenomena.

Subjectivity and objectivity should be conceived dialectically. The subjective constructions that the individual constructs to perceive and interpret the objective world are grounded in the totality of social relations. Also we must distinguish between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Subjectivity is the ability to show by coordinated acts that purposes are being consciously regulated; and intersubjectivity is the ability to adapt one's practical activities to the subjectivity of others.

Cultural-historical psychologists who say that they do not use mainstream psychology and its mode of psychological thought in the analysis of human mental phenomena are imprecise; they do and they have walled themselves off from Vygotsky's famous statement: to create one's own capital. They use methodological individualism focusing on the priority of the individual subjectivity construed in the old Cartesian way, rather than carrying out concrete analyses of human higher mental functions dealing with the complexity of social relations. Far from analyzing how human higher mental functions, personality, and consciousness are produced and reproduced, cultural-historical psychologists have attempted to recast Vygotsky into a form compatible with present day mainstream psychology. The empiricist philosophy and Cartesian dualism dominate the investigations of the human mind in Western psychology. According to the empiricist philosophy, to know is to abstract from the real object its essence. However paradoxical this may seem, the dominant versions of Vygotsky's psychology in North America are grounded in the British empiricist philosophy and French Cartesian dualism.

In *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels (1845–45) offered an extensive analysis of the nature and boundaries of human individuality. They argue that “the difference between the individual as a person and whatever is extraneous to him is not a conceptual difference but a historical fact” (1845–46, p. 90). That is, the property relations of each social formation produce the nature of individuality itself, its structures, its boundary and its form.

Vygotsky started from the conviction that human individuals should cease to be mere objects and start to live as subjects. In other words, they would cease to be prisoners of their social relations and begin to develop their underdeveloped potential. He argues:

A change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself must inevitably take place. This alteration has three basic roots. The first of these consists of the very fact of the destruction of the capitalist forms of organization and production. Along with the withering away of the capitalist order, all the forces which oppress man and which cause him to become enslaved by machines and which interfere with his free development will also fall away, disappear and be destroyed. Along with the liberation of the many millions of human beings from suppression, will come the liberation of the human personality from its fetters, which curb its development. This is the true source—the liberation of man. The second source . . . at the same time as old fetters disappear, an enormous positive potential present in large-scale industry, the ever-growing power of humans over nature, will be liberated and become operative. Finally, the third source . . . is change in the very social relationships between persons . . . the human personality is formed basically under the influence of social relations. (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 181)

Vygotsky's major quest was always for a way to define the role of human agency or, in other words, to develop a theory of "subjectivity" or "practice" that moves between two poles. On the one hand, an individual is different from an animal because of his capacity to mold his own environment in a goal-directed way by means of tools and signs. This means that subjectivity is real if a human individual can indeed control his/her own real social life. On the other hand, human control over nature is subject to limitations that are largely determined by the level of technological forces (tools and signs) and social organization (the nature of social relations of production) in any given society at any stage of historical development.

Vygotsky attributed a major role to collective activity (as he had shown in the *zone of proximal development* as a theoretical instrument for learning and teaching, see Tudge). He believed in the transformative power of the human will, accompanied by an educational system oriented toward collective social goals. Vygotsky's theory of human activity recovered the Marxist concept of reflexive subjectivity from the complete oblivion into which it had fallen in the positivized version of Marxism. Thus, activity is simultaneously subjective and objective, combining will and intellect, creativity and imagination. Through his activity, the individual overcomes the split between inner life and social life, the subjective and objective world, freedom of thought and freedom of action, morality and practical justice; he/she transforms his/her surrounding environment, including nature, into an appropriate medium for his/her self-development.

THE RETURN OF LEV VYGOTSKY

Cultural-historical psychology has probably been the fastest-growing subfield of Marxist psychology or scientific psychology. Yet, it is still not widely accepted by mainstream psychology. Researchers working within the cultural-historical framework tend to split the individual and society into two independent, ontologically separate units. Theoretical models in psychology do not appear out of nothing;

they are always underlined by some ontologically, epistemologically, methodologically, philosophically, ideologically and culturally grounded presuppositions. Thus, Vygotsky's theory in the West (with few exceptions) has been subjected to different ontological and epistemological interpretations. In my view, there is no unified ontology and epistemology underlying the different versions of Vygotsky. The return to Marx's writings is the possible remedy to these different versions.

Marx argued that what makes us human is not what is given to us by nature in each isolated individual, but is a product of human activity: forces of production, social relations of all kinds (culture, history, science, social organizations, and so forth). Following Marx's analysis, Vygotsky (1989) asserted that:

The individual and personal are not in opposition, but a higher form of sociality. To paraphrase Marx: the psychological nature of man is the totality of social relations shifted to the inner sphere and having become functions of the personality and forms of its structures. (p. 59)

The 6th thesis on Feuerbach is that human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations. It became the cornerstone on which Vygotsky laid his theoretical ideas. He argued, "I am a social relation of me to myself" (1989, p. 67).

Two decades ago, Vygotsky's ideas were barely mentioned in most mainstream psychology textbooks. The last few years have marked a shift in emphasis towards the central concerns of a Marxist or scientific psychology, founded by Vygotsky, Wallon, Politzer, and developed by A.N. Leontiev, Luria, and Sève, among others. The issues that they faced are still with us. Psychologists are continuing to confront them, sometimes without realizing that they are walking in Vygotsky's footsteps.

Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory addresses this shift back to a Marxist psychology as shown in his *Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology* (1927/1997a). He shows that there are deep-seated forces driving psychology towards crises, the most important of which being the tendency of the study of an abstract-isolated individual as a unit of analysis.

The current explosion of publications and reappraisal of Vygotsky's writings does not embrace crucial elements of his theory, such as social relations of production, labor or activity, social class, consciousness, subjectivity, dialectical and historical materialism, materialist conception of history, alienation, and so on. It is nonetheless time to move from books about Vygotsky to the reading of his translated collected works and other monographs (Vygotsky, 1987, 1993, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1998b, 1999). It is time to move beyond the now-familiar books *Mind in Society* and *Thought and Language* (1962, 1986).

The revivals of Vygotsky's ideas contain a number of crucial weaknesses which must be overcome. Firstly, the return to Vygotsky is partial and selective. It focuses on Vygotsky's conceptualization of tools, signs, language, semiotic, speech,

and zone of proximal development while his theory of social relations of production is denigrated in nearly every field of psychological studies. Second, any genuine return to Vygotsky is, of course, a return to Marx, that is, to the Marxist tradition of *The German Ideology*, *Die Grundrisse*, and *Das Kapital*. While suppression of Marxist sources in Vygotsky's writings will always help sell books in America, as with the sanitized 1962 version of Vygotsky's *Language and Thought*, and the 1978 version of *Mind in Society*, such repression also makes one wonder about the seriousness of such works. Third, the distortion of Vygotsky's theory of social relations is part of a larger misinterpretation of his thought. The stipulation of the social relations of production as the unit of analysis of human mental phenomena is essential to making sense of his thought. Too often he is depicted as a semiotician or sociocultural anthropologist (which are the dominant versions of Vygotsky in North America), who believed that higher mental change is the inevitable outcome of the development of signs and tools. On the contrary, Vygotsky argues that human higher mental phenomena are indeed constrained by their material circumstances, but that these constraints do not deprive them of self-involvement in the process of change and development.

In addition, the hostility of mainstream psychology toward Marxism has contributed to the widespread ignorance of the contributions of Marx's writings to the development of the human mind. The contributions of a very important number of psychologists working alone or in dyads within a Marxist psychology have been very impressive. These psychologists continue in the footsteps of Vygotsky's scientific psychological project. In France, the contribution of Lucien Sève turns Vygotsky on his head (see his latest book, *Commencer par les fins: La nouvelle question communiste*. Paris: La Dispute, 1999, in which he applied Vygotsky's theory of the crisis of psychology to a new area, such as political realities of the crisis of communism after the fall of Berlin Wall). The contributions of South and North American psychologists (Duarte, González-Rey; Mario Golder, Schaarschmidt & Baca-Cabrejos, Ratner, Stetsenko, among others), as well as Scandinavian psychologists (Engeström, Eskola, Hyden, among others) to the development of a Marxist psychology are very impressive. But their contributions, for the most part, have not become integrated into the dominant portrayal of Vygotsky's project. As Sigmund Koch (1992) put it in his assessment of North American psychology, if North America is still the Rome of international psychology in respect to the size of its work force, it is certainly not Athens in respect to its leadership in ideas.

Finally, the renewed interest in Vygotsky is still largely a phenomenon restricted to a small number of intellectuals; often those first radicalized by cognitivism and its aftermath. Although there are some signs of a younger generation keen to rediscover the Marxist tradition in Vygotsky's psychological thought, they have yet to make their mark and often remain mired in the obscure modes of expression typical of an academic terrain much more restrained by ideological interest and funding priorities.

CONCLUSION

Vygotsky never found the time to present his theory in an extended or systematic fashion, as did Piaget who lived to be 84. His writings on the topics of psychology, education, defectology, literature, and literary criticism, though confined to the brief years of his professional life, were prolific. These works remain a testimony to his scholarly achievements. In a series of papers and monographs, Vygotsky began the process of making explicit Marx's method to later be called dialectical materialist psychology. He laid the foundation for developing a Marxist psychology into a comprehensive world-view.

Marx and Engels outlined the sociological factors that could bring about a change in consciousness among human individuals. But they provided no real clues as to the material nature of the transformation that can take place within individual mental functions. It would have been difficult for them to do so. Although Marx and Engels shared a great interest in human development, psychology as a scientific discipline came into existence only towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate that the beginning of a scientific psychology or Marxist psychology is one of the legacies of the period of intense intellectual creativity which took place after the Russian Revolution. Marxism provided the key to a scientific psychology because it had correctly taken a historically-socially-culturally created humanity as its starting point. Vygotsky then sought to create a psychology which would be "subject to all the premises of historical materialism . . . on this level the development of behavior will be governed essentially by the general laws of the historical development of human society" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 95). He went on to explain that the essence of Marx's method in *Das Kapital* was to define a "unit of analysis," in this case the labor theory of value, which provides a window through which the system as a whole could be understood. Ultimately, he concluded that the key to a scientific psychology is to define such a unit of analysis; in other words, to create one's own Capital. Attempting to comprehend Vygotsky's work in all its richness will result in a fatal error if we fail to incorporate the social relations of production as the cell unit of analysis of Vygotsky's psychology.

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Acknowledgements. I would like to thank Helena Worthen, Douglas Porpora, Seth Chaiklin, Dorothy Robbins, Anna Stetsenko, and Nikolai Veresov for their careful readings and helpful comments on previous versions of this paper.

NOTES

¹ The concept of social relations of production occupied a central role in Vygotsky's theory. It is through this concept that Vygotsky conceptualized his cultural historical theory. According to Vygotsky, the fundamental causes of all social, mental and behavioral changes 'must be sought not in people's mind . . . but in changes in the means of production and distribution. . . . Thus, in mankind the production process assumes the broadest possible social character, [which] . . . encompasses the entire world. Accordingly, there arise the most complex forms of organization of human behavior' (Vygotsky, 1997b, p. 211).

² Marx distinguished between three aspects of social organizations. They are: first, the "material forces of production", or the actual method by which people produce their livings; second, the "relations of production" that arise out of them and that include property relations and rights; and third, the "legal and political" superstructures and the ideas, or "forms of social consciousness", that correspond to the first two. (Marx, preface to the contribution to the critique of political economy, 1859)

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