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**Lev Semenovich Vygotsky**

G.L. Vygotskaia  
and  
T.M. Lifanova



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## Foreword

### About This Book

I read this book by G.L. Vygotskaia and T.M. Lifanova about L.S. Vygotsky, in virtually one sitting, with tremendous interest and attention; and although V.V. Davydov and I have had occasion to write about Vygotsky's scientific legacy numerous times, this book impelled me to certain reflections that I should like to share before presenting the authors of this book and my impressions of it to the readers.

We are lagging behind as usual. In many countries, books and articles have been published about Vygotsky; international and national conferences on his theory and in his memory are held; he has been called the Mozart of psychology, a genius; and we are still dragging our heels or stepping on each other's feet. But Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of consciousness is as necessary to us as air. Let me just mention the key concepts in Vygotsky's theory: "culture," "history," and "consciousness." If we had not been so barbaric in our handling of the realities these terms cover, we should not have the problems that confront us so bewilderingly today. This, of course, does not mean that these problems would have disappeared entirely, but rather that we should be confronting them rather than have them confronting us.

After the catastrophe that took place in Russian culture in 1917, the development of Vygotsky's theory against the background of the events in our country in the 1920s and 1930s was a miracle, as was the development of Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic nature of consciousness and of Bernshtein's theory of the structure of movements. Undoubtedly the creation of the cultural-historical theory of consciousness came about thanks

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The long life of Vygotsky's theory and works is due, to a considerable extent, to his undoubted literary talent, to his free and unshackled language. His youth, in which he concentrated on literary criticism, "freed his spirit from the gloomy funeral garb cocoon of psychology." These words, by Osip Mandelshtam, refer not only to the epoch of which Vygotsky was a contemporary: The imprint of a coerced and forced quoting of the classics of Marxism and Leninism, the "works" of Lysenko, the truly great Pavlov's theory of higher nervous activity and conditioned reflexes, is borne by the psychological works created after Vygotsky's death. This theory had a very little directly to do with psychology. Even petty Party officials would quote it. The publications of Vygotsky's two volumes (1956 and 1960) marked the beginning of psychology's unchaining and emancipation. We have seen how the Master wrote.

It is not my intention in this brief introductory note to analyze Vygotsky's theory, nor, especially, the quite turbulent, though brief, evolution of his views, which could be embraced in a few scholarly biographies. Of course, not everything in Vygotsky's legacy is to everyone's liking. Not everything has preserved its former relevance, which is natural. I shall leave this to the judgment of historians of psychology. But I should like to say one thing nonetheless.

Vygotsky began to develop his historical-cultural theory of the development of mind and consciousness at a time when a great culture had broken down. What was this? Naïveté? A sincere belief? Blindness? A secret design?

Or perhaps something more simple? Perhaps it was an enthusiasm for science, so normal for a great scholar, a sense of his impending end, and the feverish (in both senses of this word, as Toulmin has noted) work to achieve as much as possible. One can only guess. But one should also not forget that he was a wise and keen-sighted person. I often heard Zaporozhets and A.N. Leont'ev tell about his capacity to evaluate a situation: "What distinguishes a bad situation from a good one is not that there is no way out of it, but that there is no good way out of it." Is that not the situation in which we have found ourselves up to now?

He understood his life situation. Quoting lines from N. Gumilev and O. Mandelshtam at the end of his book [*Thought and language*], he did not mention the authors, presuming the low level of literacy of the censor. In fact, in the last edition of that book, Mandelshtam is distorted beyond recognition: "But a thought that is not embodied in the word

remains a Stygian shadow" (the poet's word was *tenderness*, "a cloud, a bell, and radiance" (the poet's words were "a gaping hole")) . . . The last mistake was an editorial one (see L.S. Vygotsky (1982) [*Collected works*] [in 6 vols.]. Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers. Vol. 2, p. 360).

Whatever the case, the theory came into being and became a fact in science. It is appropriate to note here that in any science, either a cultural or a civilization component dominates in the different periods of its development. Not to stretch my examples too far, let me say that the cultural component dominated in Vygotsky's theory, and the civilization component, in Piaget's theory. This by no means implies that one of them is worse than the other. They both manage to "keep up with the times in education." It seems to me that both will even pass into the twenty-first century.

Piaget and his disciples achieved a high level of operationalization in a number of stages of development of their theory. I think it useful to call attention to this since Vygotsky's theory of development has also been subjected to various kinds of operationalization—true, not all of them could be classed as totally civilized. There is a difference between the total formation of mental actions with freely assigned properties and the development of theoretical generalization and, ultimately, of theoretical thinking. Moreover, both types of operationalization go back to the same conceptual root. Of course, Vygotsky is not responsible for how his scientific legacy is used. I shall not multiply the examples, but merely present one fundamental view concerning the cultural-historical theory of the development of the mind and of consciousness.

Earlier I stated that it was difficult to overestimate the importance of this theory. Nevertheless, it is time, yet again, to return to the place and the role of culture in man's development. For Vygotsky, culture, the environment, and external circumstances are the principal, dominant, historical source of development. One's own internal sources, one's own human uniqueness, which makes for self-development, self-creation, self-movement, self-definition, and self-sufficiency, remained in the shadows. We now understand how ruinous a development from top down, e.g., from the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Education, can be. Culture becomes aggressive. It either is imprinted in people's heads or is rejected by the individual as an effect—in fact, of the latter's uniqueness.

However, in creating his cultural-historical theory of development, Vygotsky had in mind another culture and history. But even during his lifetime, not only "was the hand of the giver depleted" but culture be-

came something else. These comments are not meant as a reproach to Vygotsky, or even a reproach to those who equated the structure of internal and external activities, although the structure of both was very vague. Nor is this an invitation to combine "movement from below," i.e., maturation, with "movement from above," i.e., training. The essence of a human being, the uniqueness of all that is human, is not at the bottom, just as not all culture or all education is at the top. We must still understand the development of man as a synchronous act in which rules are standardized, and a reverse perspective is established. It is another matter that a shift of accents (or epochs of development) is possible in human life as in a drama or a tragedy, and each of them lasts for several years. For example, Vygotsky distinguished a period when "a new personage enters the drama of development, a new qualitatively unique factor: the personality of the adolescent himself" (see L.S. Vygotsky [1983] [*Collected works*] [in 6 vols.]. Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers. Vol. 4, p. 238).

These notes are an invitation to reflection on the nature of man's generative, creative and creating, resurrecting forces and capacities. What is important is that in these reflections, we do not confine ourselves to some scientific school, even the school that has nurtured us. We need life forces as never before, and must not be afraid to draw them even from notions of vitalism and entelechy. Vygotsky himself appealed to the "passions of the soul," to man's emotional-affective sphere, and indeed began his scientific activity with a study of this sphere (see [*The psychology of art*]): He wrote that behind every thought was an affective and volitional force, and that it alone could provide an answer to the ultimate "why" when thought was analyzed. It is striking that A.V. Zaporozhets, a scholar and follower of Vygotsky, wrote that the core of the personality is the emotions (and, if I may be so bold, not just social relations).

Vygotsky, of course, was not able to avoid the problem of spontaneity of development, of the nature of man's free actions, his vital forces and energy. Following Sherrington, he ascribed the significance of a command cue to a strong movement. It is difficult to refrain from quoting a small extract from his [*Theory of emotions*]: "in a period of strong excitation, tremendous power is often felt. This feeling appears suddenly and arouses the individual to a higher level of activity. In strong emotions, excitement and a feeling of strength merge, thereby releasing hitherto unknown stores of energy and bringing to consciousness an

unforgettable sensation of possible victory" (see L.S. Vygotsky [1984] [*Collected works*] [in 6 vols.]. Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers. Vol. 6, p. 101). Let me recall that Vygotsky shared the view of Spinoza, who understood by the term *affect* not only a state of the body but also the idea of that state. This is the second aspect of emotional life that has remained a riddle for psychology. Vygotsky himself, in speaking of the effective basis of an idea in affect and will, drew on literary reminiscences and metaphors: "Whereas above we compared an idea to a suspended cloud pouring out a torrent of words, to pursue this figurative comparison we would have to liken motivation to the wind setting this cloud in motion" (see L.S. Vygotsky [1982] [*Collected works*] [in 6 vols.]. Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers. Vol. 2, p. 357).

Is not this similar to the metaphorical, and at the same time conceptual, apparatus (it seems to me this is not only possible but, at a certain stage in the development of science, even necessary) used by Osip Mandelshtam to describe the field of action of poetic material? We constantly encounter in Vygotsky such living metaphors qua concepts, such as "a relentless form-creating attraction," "transcendental drive," "extraspatial field of action," "the prime mover transforming a force into a quality," "the charge of being," "vitalist current," "vitalist impulse," etc. In my opinion, the heuristic role of such "artificial concepts" (the term is Vygotsky's) in human knowledge is no less important than the role of irrational terms in the exact sciences.

In describing the development of the field of action of psychological reality, Vygotsky noted that what makes child development, in contrast to other types of development, so highly unique is that, at the moment when a primary form is evolving, a higher, ideal form that will put in its appearance at the end of development has already taken place. It interacts directly with the first steps a child takes along the path of development of that initial or primary form. The idea that there exists an ideal form at the beginning of development is noteworthy in itself. How it is concretized is another matter. And although Vygotsky denied an embryonal development in this uniqueness, similar ideas with regard to the development of form in any living organism were articulated even during his lifetime.

An analog of such an ideal form complementing and accompanying the information residing in genes is the special reality Gurevich called the morphogenetic (biological) field, which is also responsible for the assembling of cells to form an integral organism. This field has also

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→  
"Kendall  
of (1981)

been called an information field, a psychological field, and even a telepathic field. The semantic field, or even "semantic universe," postulated by V.V. Nalimov & Zh.V. Drogalina fulfills the same functions with regard to human development. According to these notions, the individual mind of every human being is immersed naturally and organically in a more general and integral "collective mind"—"continual flows of consciousness" (for more details see V.V. Klimov & A. Liubishchev [1991] [Problems of organic forms]. *Chelovek*, No. 2, pp. 22–35).

In no matter which area the idea of the role of an ideal form in human development is materialized, it remains just as clear. It may be that of intellectuality, of consciousness, of culture, of the "semantic universe," etc.: what is important is that Vygotsky not only was in step with world science but even, in many respects, was ahead of it. This applies above all to his ideas of the semantic and systemic structure of consciousness. When we read Vygotsky or even other champions of the Spirit in those difficult times, they give us the vital energy we so need today. We need them not only to assimilate ready-made culture (as if there were something to assimilate) but above all for "a fertile existence." That is what Pasternak meant by culture. We must recall that culture invites but, in Pasternak's words, does not succumb to the embrace of the first one desiring it—after all, it can also repulse what is unworthy. Mirab Mamardashvili once noted that culture is man's effort to be. A cultural theory of consciousness and a civilized theory of activity are equally necessary for us today.

This book about Vygotsky, which I introduce with this preface, is an excellent addition to his scientific writings, not all of which have yet been published. This means that new discoveries await us.

To conclude, let me say a few things about the authors of this book and about their efforts to create an image of Vygotsky, an image of a man, a father, and a scholar. The authors are professional psychologists: G.L. Vygodskaja, Vygotsky's daughter, who has preserved a living, albeit a child's, image of her father—his colleagues and pupils who have written about him surely do not see him in this way (e.g., A.V. Zaporozhets, A.R. Luria, and others). T.M. Lifanova is not only a psychologist but an experienced historian of science, a connoisseur of Vygotsky's works and works about him. In addition to his works, she also knows the mockeries written of him in the difficult thirties. Fortunately, the majority of them were written after his death, and he never read them.

This creative collaboration of two authors also made for the dual but nonetheless integral genre of the book. The book is not a scientific treatise about Vygotsky, but rather a description of his life and a characterization of his creative career and the principal stages in his scientific creativity. It describes the atmosphere of this creativity, Vygotsky's circle, and the innumerable places of his scientific and pedagogical activity where his creative and organizational efforts found application.

The role of "cognitive relations" and "personal knowledge" that is part of scientific production has become a commonplace of the methodology of science today. Without information about the personality of a scientist, especially a psychologist, there is much in science that is difficult to understand. The living social context of the creation of the cultural-historical theory of the mind and consciousness is splendidly reproduced in this book.

G.L. Vygodskaja's childhood reminiscences are striking. These are not "sketches for a portrait," as they are modestly referred to, but a rounded, unforgettable, and in many respects touching, picture of a scientist and his relations with the members of his family, his home, and with his children, and his attitude toward his children. Lev Semenovich appears to the reader not only as a highly gifted scientist, selflessly devoted to his work but also an outstanding person.

Gita L'ovna Vygodskaja's contribution to this book is not limited to her childhood recollections. She has collected new, previously unknown material about Vygotsky practically throughout her conscious life, at first together with her mother, Rosa Noevna Vygodskaja, Vygotsky's wife, and after the latter's death, by herself. Just one example of her tremendous efforts, described in detail in the book, is the discovery of Vygotsky's correspondence with V.A. Vagner. This correspondence reveals to us one more dramatic page in the history of psychology. V.A. Vagner was an outstanding Russian psychologist, evolutionist, and animal psychologist. In 1914 he wrote a penetrating book about the necessity of closer relations between biology and psychology, and that a premature turn to physiology could do harm to both psychology and physiology. Unfortunately, we did not heed his advice. I have often had occasion to write about Vygotsky; in particular, I wrote about him in [*The red book of culture*], published in 1989 by "Iskusstvo" publishers. Nevertheless, upon reading this work about his life and activity, I not only learned more about him but even came to understand him better. It made me want to go back to his works anew and see them with new eyes.

I am confident that this book will be of interest to its readers. It is needed by our young scientists. I think it will be well received in the West, and not just by the many followers Vygotsky has there.

—V.P. Zinchenko  
Product and disciple of  
Vygotsky's school,  
Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences,  
Honorary member of the American Academy of Arts  
and Sciences

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## Preface

I feel I am sifting the words. . . .  
—Boris Pasternak

Lev Semenovich Vygotsky . . . It is perhaps now difficult to imagine that among those whose interests lie in the area of the human sciences there is someone who has not heard this name. It is encountered not only in the pages of scientific works bearing on the various sciences—psychology, pedagogy, abnormal development, psychiatry, linguistics, and literary criticism—but also in the pages of journals and newspapers in connection with problems of reorganization of the system of education, in connection with theater reviews,<sup>1</sup> and literary criticism, and even in fine literature.<sup>2</sup>

As V.P. Zinchenko has written: “There are scholars whose fate is inseparable from the history of evolution of science and of their own country.”<sup>3</sup> Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, “a scientist with the traits of genius who left behind him an indelible trace in the overall complex of social and biological sciences about man, including those that did not yet exist during his lifetime (psycholinguistics, semiotics, cybernetics),”<sup>4</sup> is one of those scientists.

Vygotsky's name is now widely known in the West as well. He gained “recognition as one of the great psychologists of the first half of the twentieth century.”<sup>5</sup> This is borne out by a number of statements of our own as well as of outstanding foreign scientists. The American philosopher and historian of science Professor Toulmin, of the University of Chicago, called Vygotsky “The Mozart of psychology.” In his article with that title, Toulmin writes: “One can say that the achievements of

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Soviet psychology are due mainly to its orientation toward the cultural-historical approach to psychological problems. As a result, a high level of integration among interdisciplinary sciences was achieved as they mutually enriched one another."<sup>6</sup> Thus he "explicitly acknowledges that the tremendous contribution made by Vygotsky to world psychology, which is especially perceptible in our times, is intrinsically related to the principles of his theory and his philosophical foundations. . . . It is for this reason, says Toulmin, that Vygotsky's theory was far ahead of the works of American psychologists in its theoretical developments over several decades."<sup>7</sup>

V. V. Ivanov writes that Professor Bernstein, at London University, thinks that the "continuation of the research of Vygotsky, who marked the path toward the unification of biological and social studies, could be of no less importance for our science than deciphering the genetic code."<sup>8</sup> Toulmin thinks this judgment is correct.<sup>9</sup>

In a letter to my mother, Professor Bernstein wrote:

Dear Ms. Vygodskaia!

I am delighted for this opportunity to write to you. The work of your late husband had a tremendous influence on me. Many of the ideas that I have attempted to formulate I discovered that your husband had already clarified. In reading the writings of your husband, I feel I encountered a generous, creative, and deeply sensitive person. When I discovered his work on language and thought, published in *Psikhiatriia* in 1939, I was unable to sleep for three nights. This may sound like an absurd exaggeration, but it is the truth.

As you may know, many of us working in the area of speech (from the perspective of psychology as well as from the perspective of sociology) think that we owe a debt to the Russian school, especially to works based on Vygotsky's tradition. I should say that in many respects, many of us are still trying to comprehend what he said.

I should like to express my appreciation to you for the inspiration and feelings the writings of your husband have aroused in me. I deeply hope it will be possible to translate your husband's writings into English quite soon.

With deep respect,  
Basil B. Bernstein,

Head of the Department of Sociology and Education,  
Director of the Section on Sociological Research<sup>10</sup>

In late 1988 in Moscow, I met U. Bronfenbrenner, professor at Cornell

University. When we met, he said to me: "I hope you know that your father is a God to us!"

The interest in Vygotsky and his works abroad is at present concentrated in two areas: on the one hand, in the extensive publication of his works in the majority of European countries, in the United States, and in Japan and, on the other, in the emergence of research that continues various aspects of his creative work.

The new interest in the name and the person of L.S. Vygotsky demanded a satisfactory response. But the fact was that his works had not been published in our country for twenty years; and if his name was mentioned, it was only in a critical context. His biography had never been published, and there were no memoirs about him. Yet many years had passed since his death, and an aura of mystery had grown up around his name. Even such an expression as the "Vygotsky phenomenon" had appeared. The lack of reliable information about him and his life, and the vacuum that had formed at this level, began to be filled with various concoctions and inventions sometimes approaching myth.

Indeed, what was known to the broad circle of readers about Vygotsky? The dates of his birth and death. It was known that he lived a very short life. It was known that his name had been under opprobrium for long years and his works had been banned. Finally, it was known that he had achieved incredibly much in his short life: the list of his works comprises more than two hundred titles. That seems indeed to be everything that was known. The rest was filled in, sometimes with redoubled fantasy.

Insufficient knowledge of the facts of Vygotsky's life was compensated for by inventions that at times had nothing in common with reality and truth. In a meeting I had with one student of Vygotsky's works (I won't mention his name), he asked me whether it was true that my father died from hunger after having been dismissed from his job. When I regained the gift of speech after the shock caused by this question, I asked my interlocutor where he got this information. He answered that he heard this from several persons abroad. I told him that this had nothing to do with the truth, that my father had worked to the end of his days, and that he had not worked only thirty-one days before his death, since he was bound to his bed by his grave illness. I saw that my words did not convince the other person; he doubted they were true and sincere. When, after a few days, he had a meeting with my teacher, Academician A.V. Zaporozhets, on my advice, my guest, somewhat embarrassed probably by my presence, asked him the same awkward question.



Foreign scientists have asked me about various facts about my father's life, and about him, in numerous letters to me (from Spain, Argentina, the Netherlands, England), and in personal meetings; they ask to clarify something, to recount some incident, or to tell some story again. They even ask me to present a written biography of Lev Semenovich.

The variety of inventions and concoctions about my father have gained currency not only abroad but also in our country, where he was born. They sometimes have acquired the character of rumors, even old wives' tales, so to speak. There have been cases in which their authors even referred to persons from whom they were supposed to have heard this or that. But, alas, it has either been impossible to prove the rumors, since the person to whom they referred had already passed on, or else they would tell a completely different story.<sup>11</sup>

How can one combat this?

I saw only one way out, only one possibility, namely, to publish totally reliable material in which the life and certain features of Lev Semenovich's personality would be reconstructed on the basis of documents and recollections.

And so I conceived of this book.

To write it I had to meet and talk with a number of people; I had to dig out archive materials, and look through much literature. All the facts presented in the book are based on documents stored in many state and personal archives, and on recollections of his contemporaries—his relatives, his friends, his students, his close workers—all those who knew him well for a number of years.

One might object that recollections may not always be a reliable source—after all, much in the memory grows dull, becomes blurred, and gets confused. This, of course, is true; I have encountered this myself. In the sixties I had occasion to be present at a meeting of the Academy of Pedagogical Science. Quite a number of people were present there; we had gathered in a room in the House of the Pioneers. In the pause between sessions, Professor A.M. Fonarev asked me to come to speak with him in private. We went up to an old fellow, and Fonarev said to him: "Well, Nikolai Matveevich, I promised I would introduce you to the daughter of Lev Semenovich."

I understood that before me was N.M. Shchelovanov. "Well, well," he responded in a lively way. "I remember your father well. In Leningrad in 1924, at a conference," he continued. And then, turning to Fonarev or to me, perhaps to both of us, he said:

—A person whom no one knew had come from Perm and presented a report that shook us all!

—From Gomel', I corrected him.

—From Perm, Shchelovanov insisted.

—You're wrong, Nikolai Matveevich, he came from Gomel'; he had never ever been to Perm.

"Listen," said Shchelovanov, becoming angry, "who was there, you or I?!" And then he added quite angrily: "You were not even born yet!"

What is true is true. I had not yet been born. But still Nikolai Matveevich was wrong; his memory had misled him. Lev Semenovich had not come from Perm. But is this important? This is, after all, a detail. He forgot, he had confused details; but the most important, namely, the lecture, he remembered!

Here is another incident.

In 1976 a meeting of the Moscow Society of Psychologists was held in Moscow. It was dedicated to the eightieth anniversary of Lev Semenovich. My mother and I were sitting together in the hall. Among the speakers was D.B. El'konin, who was sharing his recollections of Lev Semenovich. He remembered in particular detail and very emotionally the time when Lev Semenovich came from Leningrad to give lectures. Daniil Borisovich said that in the evening after a terribly busy day, he and Lev Semenovich would take a stroll to some small café on the Nevskii and there would carry on endless conversations over a cup of coffee, until late into the night, about psychology, about concrete investigations—in a word, about everything that was their principal interest. Mother, who was sitting alongside me, said quietly: "He is wrong—Father never took so much as a drop of coffee in his mouth!"

Several years later, in 1981, in that same auditorium, the All-Union Scientific Conference on Lev Semenovich took place. By that time mother had died, and my father's sister, Mariia Semenovna, was sitting with me. D.B. El'konin spoke at the plenary session. His talk was interwoven with recollections of Lev Semenovich and, once again, as five years previously, he told how they would discuss all kinds of questions of psychology that for them were urgent over a cup of coffee. My aunt turned to me and said: "Your father couldn't take coffee; he never drank it!"

Once again an error? Probably. But once again it is a detail, not the most important aspect, that was confused. It was of no importance if the conversations took place over a cup of coffee or a glass of tea. What was

important was the conversations! And those Daniil Borisovich remembered to the end of his days!

But I am very much concerned to be accurate in presenting not only the facts but also the details in this book. It seemed to me that this could be achieved if I drew on the memories of more than one person and selected only what several people remembered, what was present in the recollections of at least two persons. And that is the way I proceeded.

I checked the accuracy of my personal recollections down to the last word as well.

I should like to present the truth about my father. This is the only objective I pose myself: the book should contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This principle guided me in my selection of the material and as I was writing the book. Only this and nothing more.

I want to tell about my father sincerely, with love and with pain. This is natural since he was one of the dearest and closest persons to me.

Soon after his death one of his closest students, A.N. Leont'ev, wrote:

Soviet psychology lost in him not only an outstanding researcher and brilliant educator, not only a person of remarkable personal qualities, but in his person we lost one of those people whose appearance in our science was of decisive significance for its development, one of those people whose life and death are as inseparable from the history of psychology as from their personal biography. And if this system of scientific ideas about psychology Vygotsky created also requires an understanding of the biography of its creator to be complete, the opposite is also true: only an analysis of this system itself will provide the real key to the discovery of the personality of the deceased.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, an understanding of the biography of the scientist is a premise and a necessary condition for understanding the system of ideas he created.

It was Lev Semenovich's lot to have a short life, but he lives on in his works.

As an illustration I should like to add one more thing to what I have already said. Let me recount two minor incidents.

The first: In autumn 1985, comrades at the Psychological Faculty of Moscow State University begged me very urgently to receive a Spanish professor, Luis Garcia Vega, who was in Moscow for the first time and, as they told me, was begging insistently to be taken to Lev Semenovich's family and to his grave. At the time I had not yet recovered from the

death of my sister: I couldn't pull myself together; and this request seemed to me to be impossible to meet. But my colleagues insisted, and of course I gave in. I arranged to meet at the gates to the cemetery. A very nice woman accompanied the professor; she was a translator and helped us considerably during the meeting. To my question of what I should call her, she replied, "Martha." We stood at my father's grave in silence, laid some flowers, and then, after strolling about a bit through the cemetery, we went to my house. Once we had warmed up after having tea, we chatted, and I answered the guest's questions about my father. I showed him some photographs and some of my father's documents. Martha translated splendidly and helped our communication considerably. Suddenly she said: "You know, your father played a notable role in my fate as well." I was surprised; I looked at her attentively; there was something I didn't understand. She could not have known my father since she was too young for that. I decided that she had not expressed herself clearly or that I had not heard something and so had not understood her. Seeing my surprise she said: "I am from Argentina. Your father's book [*Thought and language*] was published in Argentina. When I read it, I understood that that was what I wanted to do, that it was this to which I wanted to devote my life. I came to the Soviet Union and became a pupil of A.R. Luria. That's how your father influenced my fate." Now I know Martha Soare better. She has successfully defended her dissertation written under the guidance of Luria and stayed on to live in our country. Recently she finished her book [*Soviet psychology—As I see it*]. There is a chapter on Lev Semenovich in that book, as she told me recently.

Second incident. In spring 1986, I was a guest in Alma Ata. An acquaintance of mine whom I knew from Moscow (where she was studying) in the Department of Abnormal Development asked me very urgently to speak to the graduates of the Faculty of Abnormal Development at the Abai State Pedagogical Institute of Kazakhstan. I arrived. There were many people gathered for my talk. There were students not only from the graduate course but also workers from the Departments of Abnormal Development and Psychology. I told about my father's life and work, and dwelled on a few incidents in his life. They were very good listeners. After answering the questions of the listeners, I assumed that the meeting was over. But then, unexpectedly to all, Viteli Konstantinovich Shabel'nikov, the Deputy Head of the Department of Psychology, asked for the floor. After thanking me on behalf of the listeners for the meeting and the talk, he suddenly said: "I should like to tell you in particular that

your father was a decisive factor in my becoming a psychologist." Clearly what he said surprised not only me: the whole audience became quiet. Shabel'nikov went on to say that he had always dreamed about the theater. He was lucky and became a student in the Directors' Faculty of the Shchukin School of Theater. His wife had studied at the State Institute for Theatrical Arts, and they dreamed about the time when they could work together in the theater: he would direct a play, and his wife would act in it. But, as it happened, he got hold of the book [*The psychology of art*]. That book, in his words, turned his life upside down. He threw over everything and got admitted to the Psychology Faculty of Moscow State University, where he became a pupil of P.Ia. Gal'perin. Here is what he himself has written about this:

My choice and my entry into the Faculty of Psychology were wholly determined by reading [*The psychology of art*]. It is sad that in those years when I studied in the faculty, no one was dealing with this subject. I had to concentrate on something else. But my life plan still contained the intention to write a book on a director's analysis of a play, which I always take with me in all practical work with Dina,<sup>13</sup> based on the principles of that book of Vygotsky's. This gives something unbelievably strong, useful, and beautiful to an actor's work.<sup>14</sup>

V.K. Shabel'nikov is an author of three big books; he prepared and defended a very interesting doctoral dissertation on psychology.

These students of Lev Semenovich's students are plentiful among the ranks of psychologists.

Decades after Lev Semenovich's death, his works and his ideas continue not only to stir people's minds but at times even to influence their destiny.

Aleksei Nikolaevich Leont'ev called Vygotsky one of the last encyclopedists in the science of psychology. He wrote:

Fifty years separate us from Vygotsky's ideas. But the key problems to which Lev Semenovich devoted his life remain central to modern psychology as well, which is based on the theoretical and methodological principles he developed. Therein lie the main achievement and the best evaluation of the creative works of the greatest psychologist of the 20th century, Lev Semenovich Vygotsky.<sup>15</sup>

The recently published [*Red book of culture*]<sup>16</sup> contains an article, by the well-known psychologist V.P. Zinchenko, entitled ["Culture and technology"]. The author of the article writes:

What might one recommend be included in [*The red book of culture*], bearing in mind that such an act should be not simply a respectful tribute to the past but a means of improving the culture of the present and the future? As a professional psychologist, it seems to me that Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of the origin and development of higher mental functions in consciousness bears a direct relation to the genesis and development of the world of social engineering. This theory is one of the most interesting intellectual achievements not only in psychology but in the culture of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

The name of Vygotsky, the "creator and the head (which I might say in passing he never himself felt he was) of the leading scientific school in Soviet psychology," in Zinchenko's opinion, deserves our deep respect since "he made a tremendous contribution to the study of the most complex phenomenon of nature and history—man's conscious activity."<sup>18</sup>

The present book consists of three relatively independent parts. The first follows the life career of the scientist; the second consists of recollections about him from his friends, colleagues, and pupils; and the third are my own recollections. In writing this book I used material stored both in the holdings of the state archives (TsGA SSSR),<sup>19</sup> the TsGA of the RSFSR, the scientific archives of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR, and the archives of the Scientific Research Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology and of the Scientific Research Institute of Abnormal Development, the state archives of the Moscow oblast, the Moscow state archives, the state archives of the Gomel' oblast, the archives of the Gomel' district museum, and a number of personal archives.

I also present material gathered during the course of conversations with people who knew Vygotsky well for many years and some of his letters or excerpts from them. I should like to think that all these objective findings will help the reader create a true image of the scholar whose life is almost sixty years removed from us.

I wrote Part I together with T.M. Lifanova, who has scrupulously gathered material about Vygotsky for many long years from the various archives throughout the country. One result of her searches is a historical-archival study of the scientist's life and works. She compiled the first full scientific bibliography of his works, which includes some previously unknown writings. This bibliography is used not only in our country: it has been published in a number of foreign editions of Vygotsky's works as well. Vygotsky's scientific bibliography and the

bibliography of his works are a component part of Lifanova's dissertation, which she defended in 1986. We also used some materials from her dissertation in writing the first part of the book.

Since Lifanova's bibliography of Vygotsky's works was published in the sixth volume of his [*Collected works*], published in a very limited run, and since this volume went out of print in 1984, it seemed to us expedient to publish the bibliography in an appendix to the present book as well. The bibliographic list includes works that have gone out of print since publication of the sixth volume of the [*Collected works*]. In addition, we recently found a large number of Vygotsky's early works, which we have added to the bibliographic list published in this book. The bibliography of Russian and foreign publications was compiled by Lifanova. The other parts of the book, the Foreword and the Afterword, I have written myself.

It was not our purpose to analyze Vygotsky's works or to present our own assessments of various aspects of them. Many pages of journals, collections of essays, and books have been devoted to this. Our task was to write accurately about his life, about the conditions under which he lived and worked, and to give at least some insight into his personality.

If we have succeeded in doing this, we shall feel we have achieved our goal.

It's hard to strike the first note,  
But there, you look: and it's off and running,  
Line after line . . .<sup>20</sup>

Andrei Vozhnesenskii has the following lines:

Urns are placed in niches,  
Books are placed in souls.

We can only hope that this book has found its way into someone's soul . . .  
That is what I should like to hope . . .

G.L. Vygotskaia

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## PART I

### Life and Works

The days are numbered, don't count the losses,  
a life lived is long behind us.

—F. Tiutchev

In the very center of Gomel', at the intersection between Sovetskaia Street and Zharkovskaia Street, stands a small, two-storey house.<sup>1</sup> They say it was built during the time of Rumiantsev;<sup>2</sup> but it was so solidly built that it has survived to our day, even surviving the troubled times of war.

Many years ago when these streets were called Romanevskiaia and Arktechnaia Streets, the owner of this house rented apartments. In 1897, a family newly arrived from Orsha rented one of these (on the second floor). The family was a small one—parents and two children: a two-year-old girl and a boy who was about one year old. When this boy grew up, he would be called Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. His life was a short one, but he was destined to accomplish so much that even after he had been dead for more than a half-century, his life and activities would interest and stir people not only in his homeland but throughout the world. He was destined to become a major scientist, one of the creators of our psychology and science of abnormal development, and to bring fame and glory to our science.

Lev Semenovich passed his childhood and school years in this house. He left this house to go to study in Moscow, and he would return here on holidays during his student years. He also returned here when he fin-

Translation © 1999 M.E. Sharpe, Inc., from the Russian text © 1996 by G.L. Vygotskaia and T.M. Lifanova. "Zhiznenni i tvorcheskii put'." In *Lev Semenovich Vygotskii: Zhizn'. Deiatel'nost'. Shtrikhi k portretu* (Moscow: Smysl, 1996), pp. 25–109.

ished his university studies. He lived in this house until 1924 (his family, until 1925). It was to this house that he brought his wife in spring 1925, and here, too, in this house their first child was born.

Although Lev Semenovich was not born in Gomel', he always considered it his home. He lived most of his short life in this city. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky was born in Orsha, in the Vitebsk oblast (the former Mogilev gubernia) in 1896, on 5 November (old calendar).

His father, Semen L'vovich Vygotskii (1869–1931), was an educated man; he read much and knew several foreign languages. He graduated from the Commercial Institute in Kharkov and was a bank clerk all his life.<sup>3</sup> In the recollections of natives of Gomel', he was one of the most respected people in the city. He was very polite and intelligent and not only did his job with merit but also had a very active influence on the life of Gomel'. When a self-defense organization was formed in 1903 in Gomel', the "Society for Defending the Security of the City's Population," Semen L'vovich was an active participant.<sup>4</sup>

For example, it is known that he was one of the organizers of a cultural society that built a splendid public library. His son also used this library during his high-school years.

As they say, Semen L'vovich was a difficult person; he had a solid and firm character. However, this did not prevent him from being a great family man and a loving father. Despite the fact that he kept his children at a certain distance, Semen L'vovich had a splendid knowledge of the distinctive characteristics and interests of each of them. Thus, noting the early passion of his elder son for philosophy, he brought Spinoza's *Ethics* home to his son from one of his business trips. This became one of Lev Semenovich's most cherished books.

The father cared not just for his own family; he assumed total responsibility for the family of his deceased brother and effectively supported his three nephews and their mother.

The true soul of the family was the mother, Cecilia Moiseevna (1874–1935). She was a teacher by education, and was fluent in German and French. In the judgment of her youngest daughter, "She was a person of great intellect and extraordinary kindness." A gentle person to a fault, she would smooth out all the roughness that her husband's difficult personality might cause. An atmosphere of love and attention for each and concern of the older for the younger dominated in the family because of her. It was mainly the mother who created this atmosphere of goodness and love. She was the person closest to her children and enjoyed their

devoted love, respect, and boundless gratitude throughout her life.

Cecilia Moiseevna did not work in her area of specialization since she was busy with the home, the family, and rearing the children. The Vygotskii family was large: eight children (three sons and five daughters, with one and a half to two years separating each of them).

The family played a huge role in the children's lives. It was there that they acquired their primary habits of concern and attention for people and each other, and for doing household work together. The older children helped the mother in the household chores and took care of the young ones. Of course, Lev Semenovich also took part in the household work. He tried to do everything he could—to help straighten up the house, to shop, and to take care of the young ones. All these children had extraordinarily affable relations with one another and never fought. Throughout their lives they preserved their attachment to one another and a desire and willingness to help anyone who needed it and to take care of one another.

Their constant communication with their parents gave much to the children. The parents supported and developed the children's interests. An interest in languages, history, the theater, and painting and literature was common to all the family. Literature merits special comment. A cult of the book literally reigned in the house. Regardless of how modestly the family lived, they nevertheless bought books. Works of the Russian classics and foreign literature were in the house. Books were loved and valued above all else in the family. A book was considered the best and most precious of gifts. Books were given to the children on their birthdays and on holidays. An interest in literature predominated perhaps above all else in the family, and a love of literature united them. Joint readings aloud of the classics and of new literature were a family practice. After new works were read, or after a visit to the theater, the family discussed together what they had read or seen, and each could state his own opinion and impressions about the book or the play.

The family also had this custom: in the evening, when all chores were done, and the father was resting after his work and the mother from her housework, everyone gathered together at the table. By this time the children had finished doing their lessons, and general chats followed their tea. Anyone could tell about any news, about what interested him or her, what bothered him or her, discuss what they had read or some theatrical novelty, or ask advice. The situation was so sincere and well-wishing that no one was afraid to share what he had or ask for help. Each

of the children believed that he would be understood and that he would get calm and good advice and, if necessary, even help. Both the children and the parents valued these hours of intimacy very highly.

The Vygodskii family lived very modestly, materially speaking. The girls had only one cotton dress in addition to their school uniform. When the youngest of the daughters, Masha, asked why other children dressed better, the mother calmly explained to her: "Don't you understand that we must help Dasha?<sup>5</sup>—Her children are growing up without a father."

All the children in the Vygodskii family were competent: they learned well, and they displayed special talents for literature and languages.

Elizaveta Onufrievna Vasilenko (a high-school friend of the Vygodskii's older daughter, Anna), who knew the family well, wrote in her letters to one of the authors of this book that she "often visited the home, knew and deeply respected the entire family, and was confident that each of them would have an extraordinary future." She noted that Anna "loved Russian and foreign literature very much. She would always supply me with new things. She was the best writer in the class." Usually the literature teacher would read her compositions aloud to the entire class. "Everyone in the class understood her superior talents in Russian language and literature and thought that she would become a writer."<sup>6</sup>

The family kept the books Zinaida was awarded in high school for her achievements. The other children also did well in school.

Lev Semenovich grew up as a lively, communicative, active, happy, and mischievous child, with a liking for pranks and tricks; he was by no means a quiet child. He was a boy full of the joy of life, with a rich fantasy life, a bright and lively imagination, and great curiosity. He was interested in what all boys his age were interested in; but even in childhood, he displayed kindness and was outgoing toward people, took responsibility for his own actions, and was able to keep his word.

He was very attached to his parents; and if he did something to anger them, this was for him the greatest punishment of all. Someone mentioned in recollections that Lev Semenovich was a passionate "horseman." Once he hijacked someone else's horse and went galloping off into the distance with it. Nothing was known of the boy for several hours, and everyone in the house was very worried. When he finally returned, he was not punished. The father only looked at him intensely and reproachfully and withdrew to his study, and the mother breathed a sigh of

relief. The father's displeasure and the mother's silent distress were the greatest punishment of all for the boy.

For a very short time when the children were quite young, the family had a governess living with them who loved Lev most of all. Knowing his passion, she once bought a foal for him for a ruble and gave it to him. The boy was happy; he spent the entire warm season with it and was inseparable from it (none of the relatives remembers what ultimately happened to the foal).

His actions were guided from his very first years by his fear and aversion to causing his parents distress. The family kept a photograph of Lev Semenovich at the age of six in which he is standing and wearing a broad straw hat. His sisters told the story of this photograph. Some relatives had once suggested to the mother that she send the boy to them for the summer in the countryside. Before his departure, the mother bought him a straw hat and asked him to wear it on hot days. The boy disliked the hat intensely but, sighing, promised his mother to do what she asked. Some time later the parents received this photograph in a letter. When the boy returned to the city, the mother asked her son why he had been photographed in the hat since, after all, he didn't like it. The boy answered that he did this so that his mother would see that he was keeping his word and that she had no cause for worry.

Lev Semenovich always had many friends. He spent all of his free time in the summer at the River Sozh, where he would swim and go boating. Sometimes the boys liked to do some quite risky things: they would row their boat up near a passing steamship and bounce on the waves. Once this ended tragically for one of Lev Semenovich's close friends.

In the evening the young people would gather in the broad wing of the Vygodskii house, where they read poetry, dreamed about the future, devised plans, shared their secrets, and simply chatted.

Lev Semenovich got his primary education at home, independently passing a course that included the first grades of secondary school. He passed an external examination for five grades and entered the sixth grade of Dr. Ratner's private high school for boys in Gomel'. We know from the stories of his fellow students that the level of his classmates was quite high. But Lev Semenovich immediately began to stand out among them. The depth of his interest, his skill in dealing with complex questions—in other words, his ability to think—is what attracted his fellow students and teachers to him.

Professor Ia.S. Temkin, who studied in the same high school in those years, remembered this. He said that Lev Semenovich was head and shoulders above his peers and possessed outstanding abilities, yet he never boasted about this. Because of his communicativeness and affable nature, he was loved and respected by his classmates.

Lev Semenovich's interests were very diverse even in his high-school years; he showed an interest in all subjects and displayed so much talent that each of his teachers thought that the youth should choose his particular area of specialization: the mathematics teacher forecast a future as a mathematician for him, and the Latin teacher, a future as a classicist.

In high school Lev Semenovich studied German, French, and Latin. At home he studied Greek, ancient Hebrew, and English. But the subjects he liked best were literature and philosophy.

Recalling the breadth of the interests of the fifteen-year-old Lev Semenovich, Semen Filopovich Dobkin, who was a close friend of his in those years, said that their sisters studied in the same grade and were very friendly with one another. In the fourth and fifth grades, they decided to organize a study circle in history and chose Lev Semenovich as its leader. The topics discussed in the readings of this circle were very varied: "What is history?" "Is it a science or an art?" "If history is a science, then how does it differ from other human sciences?" "Does history have a purpose?" "What is the role of the individual in history?" etc.

The lessons in the study circle were historical and philosophical. Despite the young age of the participants and their leader, they dealt with questions seriously and thoroughly. "Lev Semenovich was at that time very interested in Hegel's conception of history. Hegel's schema of thesis-antithesis-synthesis occupied his thoughts at that time, and he used it to analyze historical events."<sup>7</sup>

In a talk to the students at the Faculty of Psychology of Moscow State University on 27 November 1984, S.F. Dobkin recalled how Lev Semenovich conducted the lessons in this circle.

The lessons were of a seminar type. First, Lev Semenovich gave a talk on each topic. . . . Then all the topics were distributed among the participants. Before each talk, Lev Semenovich would work through the topic with the person who would be giving the report; he would present an introduction, and then have a final word after the report was completed. I know from my own experience how he would conduct the conversation with the reporter. . . . His confidential chats were remarkable, and inter-

esting, and gave me a lot. When several years later I entered Moscow University and studied with outstanding thinkers and educators such as Gustav Gustavovich Shpet, Frank, Il'in, Fokht, and others, in the Philosophical Department of the Faculty of History and Philology, I noted the same atmosphere, and the same method of conducting lessons, as Lev Semenovich used. . . . That was how he achieved so much on his own.

The sessions of the study circle went on for roughly two years, after which Lev Semenovich went away to study. The sessions came to an end, and the study circle disbanded. But it had given its participants quite a lot in those two years, and I believe it gave quite a bit to Lev Semenovich as well. Despite the fact that he was a very mature and educated youth, he had to clarify many of questions for himself; and it was the sessions of the study circle that helped him do so.<sup>8</sup>

In the summer of 1913, Lev Semenovich finished high school. Its graduates had to take deputy examinations, a name they were given because a representative of the education district had to be present to evaluate what the students knew. It was usually teachers from the public high school who performed this function, and they were somewhat biased with regard to what the pupils of the private school knew, finding fault with the least imprecision in how they expressed themselves. Nevertheless, Lev Semenovich passed all the final examinations brilliantly.

According to the certificate for Lev Vygodskii, graduate of the eighth grade, "he had excellent marks in all subjects in the final examination taken in 1913 under the supervision of the deputies from the Vilensk education district."<sup>9</sup>

The youth succumbed to the persuasions of his parents with regard to choice of area of specialization: it was their view that an education in medicine would provide their son with interesting work in his future livelihood.

It must be mentioned that because of the conditions existing in those years, entering the Faculty of History and Philology was a choice with no future, since the education obtained would provide Lev Semenovich with no work. Graduates of this faculty taught in high schools, i.e., they were civil servants; and Jews were not accepted into the civil service and could live only in the pale of settlement.

After giving up his dream of philosophy and literature, Lev Semenovich finished the gymnasium with a gold medal and then went off to Moscow, where he entered the Medical Faculty of Moscow Imperial University.

Lev Semenovich was not enthusiastic about his courses in the Medical Faculty: they were far removed from his true interests. After a very brief interval—about one month—Lev Semenovich switched to the Legal Faculty. Why did he choose just this faculty? Because completion of the Faculty of Law offered him the possibility of entering the legal profession rather than going into state service. This would allow him to live outside the pale.

However, his interest in philosophy and literature was so great that, at the same time (1914), Lev Semenovich enrolled in the Academic Section of the Faculty of History of Philosophy at Shaniavskii People's University.

What kind of a university was this? This was the Moscow Municipal College opened on the initiative and with funds from General A.L. Shaniavskii (1837–1905), a liberal proponent of popular education. This university accepted persons of both genders regardless of their ethnic background or political and religious views. The university had two departments: scientific and popular, which provided a general secondary education, and an academic section, which offered higher education in science and history, on the one hand, and the social sciences and philosophy on the other.

The Shaniavskii University was popular, in the best sense of that term; but at the same time, it was a very real university, of the highest quality in every respect. This was not just because it was run by remarkable people but for one other reason as well. In 1911, student agitation had begun at the Moscow Imperial University. At the insistence of the Minister of Public Education, the police were sent to the university, which violated university autonomy. The students struck in protest against this. By order of the Ministry, several hundred students were expelled. Then the best professors and lecturers at the university, more than a hundred people, were retired; and this retirement was accepted, although people thought it would be impossible. Moscow University lost all its best teachers in one fell swoop. Among those who left the University in 1911 were such outstanding scholars as Vernadskii, Chaplygin, Kol'tsov, Sakulin, and Chebyshev.<sup>10</sup>

In a word, this was the flower of Moscow science. Many of these scholars found refuge in Shaniavskii's public university. The Shaniavskii University was a real university, the best of its time.<sup>11</sup>

In his story "Zubry," Daniil Granin describes in detail the activities of seminars and special courses that were held by N.K. Kol'tsov, the founder of molecular biology, at Shaniavskii University.

P.P. Blonskii taught psychology and education at that university. "The atmosphere of Shaniavskii University and communication with its students and teachers meant much more to Lev Semenovich than his lessons in the Legal Faculty."<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, he also studied quite effectively in the Legal Faculty. His examination book from the Imperial Moscow University, which has been preserved,<sup>13</sup> clearly indicates that Vygotsky was always very responsible in his studies: throughout his student years, this earned him the highest marks ("very satisfactory").

Study at the university had an enormous influence on the shaping of the world view and the scientific cast of thought of the future scholar.

Lev Semenovich was happy to live in Moscow in the presence of outstanding educators and great scientists. Thus, according to the recollections of his sister Zinaida Semenovna (with whom he studied in Moscow at the same time, and with whom he lived in Prechistenka), within a few years they were both actively involved in the seminar given by Gustav Gustavovich Shpet—"the outstanding lecturer, erudite and merciless debater and polemicist."<sup>14</sup>

G.G. Shpet (1879–1940) is an "outstanding figure in the history of Russian science and philosophy. In the first three decades of our century, he was one of the least noticeable activists of Russia's cultural life."<sup>15</sup> According to the recollections of N.P. Timofeev-Resovskii, an interesting philosophical circle was functioning at Moscow University in those years: "The so-called Logical and Philosophical Circle was led by Gustav Gustavovich Shpet, who disturbed minds with his unheard-of paradoxes and shook the very foundations of an already shaky world, and Nikolai Nikolaevich Luzin, who, as an outstanding mathematician, was able to find philosophical thought in mathematics."<sup>16</sup>

Vygotsky's sister recalled that neither of them stuck to what was prescribed by the curriculum of their selected area of specialization, but attended lectures by brilliant teachers in other faculties as well.

Vygotsky's study of literature and history and immersion in our philosophical legacy aroused an interest in psychology. His enthusiasm for this science, which began back in his student years, left its mark on the entire subsequent fate of the scientist. Vygotsky himself wrote as follows on this point: "I immersed myself in a special study of psychology at the university and continued it through all of those years."<sup>17</sup> Later he said: "My scientific studies in psychology began while I was still in the university, and since then I have never interrupted my work in this area."<sup>18</sup>



Lev Semenovich combined his university studies with work as a scientific secretary on the journal *Novyi put'*.<sup>19</sup>

We have been able to find a number of articles Vygotsky wrote when he was nineteen or twenty. Vygotsky sometimes signed these articles and comments, published in the journals *Letopis'*, *Novyi put'*, and *Novaia zhizn'* in 1916–1922 with L.S. or L.V. Of all the writings of those years signed with those initials, only those whose authorship has been established either by comparison with subsequent printed works by Vygotsky or by mentions of these articles and comments found in Vygotsky's own personal archives have been included in the complete bibliographic works of L.S. Vygotsky.

Vygotsky's first student writings were devoted to literary criticism. His articles on literary criticism are interesting in their own right: they included an article about Andrei Belyi's novel [*Peterburg*], Viacheslav Ivanov's book *Borozdy i mezhi*, an article about Merezhkovskii's play *Budet radost'*, and an article about Turgenev's poem "Pon."<sup>20</sup>

It may be assumed that the progressive journal of literature and political science *Letopis'*, founded by A.M. Gorkii, played a positive role in the formation of Vygotsky's literary tastes. The works of E. Briusov, M. Gorky, V. Mayakovsky, H. Wells, A. France, V. Shishkov, and others appeared on the pages of that journal. Vygotsky, as a student at Moscow University, tested his literary talents in the bibliographic section of the journal *Letopis'*.

His critical articles and reviews, although still not quite mature, nonetheless give us a glimpse of the budding literary critic and psychologist. Vygotsky analyzed literary works with special attention to questions of culture, the theater, painting, and the theory of art, and sometimes presented some quite bold thoughts and trenchant characterizations; he especially stressed those aspects that, in his view, were psychologically flawed. For example, in analyzing Belyi's novel [*Peterburg*], he wrote that there was "no realistic psychological life fabric in the novel; everything is shaky, unstable, and blurred. The minds of the main characters are in a sense separated from their personalities, and the author is not concerned with the living psychology of people, but with the bare logic of their disembodied consciousness."<sup>21</sup> In another article analyzing the same novel, Vygotsky wrote: "First, no matter how you might rate the novel, there is no doubt that this is a work of art in its design, and the author's ideas are accordingly expressed as a function of the art form he himself has chosen. That is why this expression is so unique." But in the

same article Lev Semenovich noted that "all the images in the novel, even the most visual, are shaky, unstable, and blurred, they are foggy, vacillating, divided, they appear and then immediately vanish again into thin air." At the end of the article he noted: "Belyi's new novel gives artistic expression (going from Dostoevskii to Gogol') to this sensation, this sentiment: through the fragile fabric of visible reality and normal everyday consciousness, another reality is discernible in which everything is 'this, but also not this' (to use the words used in the novel)."<sup>22</sup>

After completing his studies at Shaniavskii University, Vygotsky chose one of his favorite works, *Hamlet*, as the subject of his dissertation. The study of Shakespeare's tragedy, which filled twelve notebooks, is preserved in the scholar's archives in two versions. The draft was written between 5 August and 12 September 1915, when Lev Semenovich had gone off to spend the summer holidays with his parents in Gomel'. The final version was written in Moscow and is dated 14 February–28 March 1916.

Lev Semenovich was very fond of the tragedy of *Hamlet*, and he retained this love his whole life. His library had a large number of works analyzing Shakespeare's art, and also some of Shakespeare's own writings. Lev Semenovich carefully collected the various editions of *Hamlet* and often would reread this immortal tragedy both in the original and in its various translations. He knew many pages by heart.

Lev Semenovich's favorite books met a sorry fate: Many of them were carried off and used, according to all appearances, by people from the surrounding houses for fuel in the terrible years of the war. The house in which the Vygotskii family lived was bombed and stood for some time with shattered windows and doors (the apartment was on the second floor). The numerous editions of *Hamlet* shared the fate of all the books. The career of an early but quite mature study by Lev Semenovich entitled "The tragedy of *Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark, by William Shakespeare," is an unusual one. This work first saw the light of day in its complete form 52 years after it was written. It was published as an appendix to the second edition of book [*The psychology of art*].<sup>23</sup>

In his doctoral dissertation, Lev Semenovich gave an original and unique analysis of *Hamlet*, differing from all the rest of the numerous studies devoted to an analysis of this classic tragedy. The well-known Shakespeare expert A.A. Anikst, speaking at the Central House of Artists, said: "I have been studying Shakespeare for the past sixty years of my life. When I first picked up Vygotsky's work about *Hamlet*, I under-

stood that the 20-year-old young man was a genius."<sup>24</sup> Anikst went on to say that Lev Semenovich's article stood alone among the numerous works on the theme by virtue of the fact that it did not repeat or clarify them, but was totally original and fresh in its judgments and its completely independent approach to an examination and analysis of Shakespeare's tragedy.

The early study by Lev Semenovich was given high marks not only in our country but also abroad. It was published in many countries as an appendix to [*The psychology of art*] (see the bibliography of Vygotsky's works published abroad). In some countries, for example in Japan (1970) and Italy (1973), this monograph was published as an independent book.

Lev Semenovich's doctoral dissertation "The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, by William Shakespeare" has retained its interest for readers even today. For example, in a book by A.A. Leont'ev, Doctor of Psychology and Philology, we read these words: "I have reread Vygotsky's book about *Hamlet*, and I again have the same impression. What language! What depth of artistic analysis! What penetration into the mechanisms of literary creativity!"<sup>25</sup>

Is it not a rare occasion for a doctoral dissertation by a student to receive such enraptured acclaim from specialists in linguistics and literary criticism more than seventy years after it was written?

In his student years, Lev Semenovich often would go to plays in Moscow theaters with his sister Zinaida Semenovna. Let me say something especially about his love of the theater.

Lev Semenovich developed an interest in the theater early, back in his high-school years; he would try never to miss a play by a local group or a visiting theater group. In Moscow the student art group became his favorite theater, and he would visit it often with pleasure. In fact, such plays as *Malen'kie tragedii*, *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, *Nikolai Stavrogin* were events in Moscow's theater life. *Hamlet* was staged by Gordon Craig, the English director, in this theater in 1916, when Lev Semenovich was still a university student. The staging was original: there was no set: the play was performed on a bare stage. This made it possible to concentrate the spectators' attention on the actors and their performance. The role of Hamlet was played by V.I. Kachelov. This play was, of course, especially interesting to Lev Semenovich.

In 1914 the Chamber Theater, under the direction of A.Ia. Tairov, opened in Moscow. The performances at this theater were built on another foundation, since Tairov's ideas were different from Stanislavskii's

system. Alis Georgievna Koonin, who had an extraordinarily broad actor's range, performed brilliantly there. She could perform a whole range of roles from the tragic to the operatic. Lev Semenovich fell in love with the theater in his student years and remained faithful to that love throughout the whole of his life.

Lev Semenovich and his sister tried not to miss any interesting play. They were satisfied with the cheapest tickets, and watched what was going on on the stage from the stairs or standing somewhere in the balcony throughout the entire performance.

Lev Semenovich would have probably been very surprised if someone at that time had predicted that some time in the far-off future he would have occasion to become head of the Theater Department in his native city of Gomel'.

Vygotsky passed his student years in Moscow quietly, the time being filled with lectures, seminars, stressful work in libraries, in-depth study of his favorite subjects, talking with splendid teachers and outstanding scientists, working on literary journals, writing the first of his articles on literary criticism, and visiting the theaters of the capital city.

After completing his studies at both universities successfully, Lev Semenovich returned to his family in Gomel' in December 1917.<sup>26</sup>

On 12 November 1917, Soviet power was proclaimed in Gomel'. But because it was situated at the intersection of many roads, Gomel' soon found itself the center of military actions. It was occupied by German troops and annexed to that part of the Ukraine in which a puppet state was set up, headed by Hetman Skoropadskii. The city was, in fact, under a dual yoke: on the one hand were the German occupiers, and on the other, Skoropadskii's troops. The city's inhabitants recall this time as a very difficult one: hunger and disorder reigned in the city, and occupants of different stripes plundered Gomel' one after the other.

Lev Semenovich, who had returned after completing his education in Moscow, was unable to find a job under these circumstances. So as not to be a burden to his family, he earned money by giving private lessons.<sup>27</sup> The family situation was complicated by the fact that at this time (1918), Lev Semenovich assumed the added burden of looking after two sick people: his mother, who had only just gotten out of bed after a serious bout with tuberculosis, and his youngest brother, who was just thirteen years old. Doctors considered the boy's condition threatening; but they still nourished the hope that sending the boy, who also had tuberculosis, to Crimea might save his life. Obviously, the family seized upon

the doctor's suggestion and was ready to do anything to save the boy.

The road to Crimea went through Kiev. Lev Semenovich embarked with his brother and his mother. But when, after much difficulty, they finally arrived in Kiev (one must not forget that a civil war was going on), the child's condition deteriorated abruptly, and there was no use even dreaming about continuing the journey to the Crimea. They had to put the patient in a hospital, and Lev Semenovich and his mother took a room beside his so they could be with the boy throughout the day.

The boy seemed to have improved somewhat after a few months, but the doctors thought that he could not endure the arduous journey to the Crimea and recommended he be taken back home. Lev Semenovich heeded this advice and returned with his mother and brother to Gomel'. However, the illness continued to progress at home (his brother had the rapid form of tuberculosis). The boy lay gravely ill for about a year; and throughout this time, Lev Semenovich stood by constantly, doing all the chores of looking after him. The younger brother died at the age of fourteen, and the mother fell ill again from disconsolate grief. Once more Lev Semenovich had to look after a person who was close and dear to him. Not a year went by before the family was hit by a new misfortune: Lev Semenovich's second brother died of typhoid fever.

Hence, the first year of Lev Semenovich's time in Gomel' was clouded not only by the difficult situation in the city (the occupation, the hunger, the lack of a permanent and interesting job) but also by the situation in the family (the illness of his relatives, and the death of his brothers, to whom he was very attached).

In early January 1919, Gomel' was liberated from the German occupation, and Soviet power was definitively established. The city began to recover.

Soviet power had the tasks of political, economic, cultural, and social transformation of society. To achieve this they had to create a new system of education and upbringing.

In April 1919, the Gomel' guberniia was formed and comprised almost the whole of the Mogilevskaia guberniia, plus some of the Cherningov and Rechinskii districts. Gomel' became a large provincial center, and a number of administrative institutions were established. A network of general education and vocational schools, technical colleges, courses, and workers' colleges were opened.<sup>28</sup>

"The restoration of Soviet power after the occupants were driven out produced a wave of White Guard uprisings and kulak banditry through-

out the entire area surrounding Gomel'. . . . Many old specialists, including teachers, sabotaged everything new. The Soviet school was born under these difficult circumstances."<sup>29</sup>

Vygotsky devoted himself totally to practical work in public education from the very first days of the establishment of Soviet power in Gomel'.

He began his pedagogical activity teaching literature in the just opened first workers' school in Gomel' after it was liberated from the occupation. This must be pointed out especially since the school's work was interrupted by the sabotage of the old teaching staff; and "Lev Semenovich, who was one of the best teachers and organizers of public education (G.G. Voronov, P.M. Kiianovskii, I.I. Daniushevskii, and others), overcame this sabotage and entered the ranks of the builders of the new socialist school."<sup>30</sup>

Vygotsky's enthusiasm for psychology in his student years provided the impetus for more thorough study of his favorite subject. At the same time, Lev Semenovich began to teach not only literature but also psychology. He gave a course in general, experimental, child, and educational psychology in a number of Gomel' educational establishments: secondary schools, a teachers' college, and teachers' courses,<sup>31</sup> and thus participated in the education of the children and the training of the teachers. His service record in the public schools is worthy of note:

1. First Soviet workers' school—Russian language and literature.
2. Teachers' college—logic and psychology (general, child, educational, and experimental).
3. The Vocational School for Printers (Russian language and literature).
4. The Vocational School for Steel and Metalworkers (Russian language and literature).
5. Evening courses in the Provincial Political Educational School—Russian language and literature.
6. Courses in Soviet upbringing (for preschool teachers)—logic and psychology.
7. Summer courses in retraining teachers—logic and psychology.
8. Workers' courses—Russian language and literature.
9. Courses for rural cultural workers—aesthetics.
10. Public conservatory—aesthetics, the theory of art, introduction to philosophy.
11. Organizer of a Department of Psychology, and permanent lecturer and consultant on questions of psychology.<sup>32</sup>

Leafing through Gomel' newspapers of the 1920s, we found an interesting announcement of a competition for the best teacher. It was held on 6 April 1923 by the editorial staff of *Polesskaia pravda*, together with the public education authority, following the example of the central newspaper *Pravda*. All those wishing to send a letter about a teacher they thought the best and worthy to participate in the contest were asked to do so. The lists were published once a week. In the very next month (22 May 1923),<sup>33</sup> L.S. Vygotsky, a teacher at the K. Liebknecht secondary school, was on the list of the best teachers in Gomel' guberniia. The results of the competition were never summarized, but the very fact that Lev Semenovich was promoted indicates how much his educational work was valued by his colleagues and by his students.

The range of Vygotsky's activity was extraordinary. He was drawn to everything significant and important at that time for the development of culture.

Lev Semenovich was given one other important area of work—he was initially appointed head of the theater subsection of the Gomel' Department of Public Education (1919–1921) and, later, head of the art section of the Provincial Political Education Department.<sup>34</sup>

Recently a photograph came to light showing Lev Semenovich; R. Krongaus, one of the first Party workers in Gomel', who furthered the activity of artists; and I.D. Fail, who was director of the Gomel' State Theater.

L.S. Vygotsky became more closely acquainted with the theater, participated in the choice of repertory, and followed the staging of plays. The repertory of the Gomel' theaters was extremely varied. Since Gomel' did not get a permanent theater group until 1924, Vygotsky would travel to various cities to invite guest speakers and theater work teams. We know definitely that he traveled to Moscow, Kiev, Saratov, and Petrograd for this purpose.

The Gomel' audience gained the opportunity to see famous theater groups: Studio II of the Moscow Art Theater, the Moscow Opera Troupe, the Petrograd (former Aleksandrinskii) Theater, the Petrograd Dramatic Theater Krivoe Zerkolo, the State Academic Theater at Petrograd (the former Marinskii Theater), the Kharkov dramatic theater Krasnyi Fakel, the Kiev Opera, the Odessa ballet, and others. Both classical and modern plays were performed on the Gomel' stage: *Pikovaia dama*, *Aida*, *Carmen*, *Rosalka*, *Mazerka*, *Demon*, *Boris Godunov*, *Faust*, *La Traviata*, *Anna Karenina*, *Zhivoi trup*, *Vlast' t'my*, *Revizor*, *Gore ot uma*, *Deti Vanishchina*, *Ovod*, *Uchenik D'iavola*, *Stakan Vody*, *Obryv*, *Deti Solntsa*, *Otsi i deti*, *Bez*

*Viny Vinovatye*, *Volki i ovtsy*, *Monna Vanna*, *Orlenok*, and many others.<sup>35</sup>

Even the Petrograd newspaper *Zhizn' iskusstva* gave a flattering review of the serious work being done by the head of the Art Department in Gomel'.<sup>36</sup>

Theater reviews written by Lev Semenovich would regularly appear in the local newspapers *Polesskaia pravda* and *Nash ponedel'nik*.<sup>37</sup>

Recently our long searches were crowned with success—we were able to find about seven previously unknown theater reviews. We believe that these are still not all the reviews written by Lev Semenovich in those years.

Complete sets of Gomel' newspapers of the twenties are not preserved in the central libraries of Moscow, Leningrad, and Minsk. Perhaps over time the missing issues will be found and will thus add more items to the already interesting list of theater reviews from Lev Semenovich's pen.

We should also mention Vygotsky's promptness in writing these critical comments. They appeared one or two days after the newspaper announcements of the premieres. He wanted these reviews to help the spectator better understand what he saw.

Vygotsky did not limit his assessment merely to the actors' performance but also gave his view of the play itself—the literary basis of the play. For instance, his evaluation of Tolstoi's play *Vlast' t'my* is interesting:

This is one of the most splendid of Russian dramas. In all respects it contains everything of art and nothing of baseness. This peasant tragedy was, and remains, unexcelled for its artistic universality and the brightness and boldness of its colors. There is but one character in it: Truth, as Tolstoi himself said about something else he wrote. The most unembellished, unidealized, dark but great truth about the peasant, who hitherto has appeared on the stage or in literature either incidentally, as a joke, or "prettied up." By some tacit understanding of all those concerned, it has somehow become established that the tragedy of great movements and passions of the soul, that heroic inner drama, is a property of the Macbeths and the Godunovs, i.e., kings and heroes, either abstract and arbitrary figures, or figures at the highest stage of cultural complexity. But to make the peasant, in all his reality, the focal point of the heroic in an inner drama, i.e., to show what is universally human and great in the upsurge of dark peasant passions, is something literature has never before experienced.

The staging of this play was made extraordinarily difficult precisely because of this unprecedented combination of the most genuine peasant anthropology, the golden display of the speech of the common people, and severe realism with great inner drama of Shakespearian force.<sup>38</sup>

And this is how Lev Semenovich evaluated Lunarcharskii's play *Slesar' i kantsler*: "Don't seek psychology or sociology in the play: it's not there. Nor is there tragic conflict—this is a semiserious, light-hearted performance, an entertaining spectacle, half in humor, half in tears, but a joke on everyday life, a bewailing of a revolutionary theme."<sup>39</sup>

In analyzing the play *Ved'ma*, based on the play by Trachtenberg, Vygotsky wrote: "Here . . . the theme is given on a small plate and woven into the everyday drama of Petersburg furnished rooms. The play itself resembles a furniture store in the sense that no one sleeps in it (except poetry), and no one has left his perverted and vulgar quotations."<sup>40</sup>

All these reviews were written in unusually fresh and bright language. At times Lev Semenovich resorts to unexpected comparisons. The range of his language is so varied that an analysis of it alone would be of interest for the specialist. For example, in a review of the play *Revizor*, Lev Semenovich says that Gogol was an "extraordinary artist, utterly funny, and a monstrous and crude aesthete. He is certainly not a por-trayer of the typical, the ordinary, and the stereotyped. His liar is a superliar, and his fool is a superfool. This piquant comicality, this thundering laughter, was not, and could not, exist in a thoroughly superficial high-school performance."

Or: "A conscientious rendition of the author's texts, an explanatory reading with logical intonations, with clarifying gestures, . . . no one fit the role as Shchepkin required—each had difficulty fitting into his not quite Gogolian and not quite non-Gogolian garments."<sup>41</sup>

In analyzing the performance of actors in the play *Koroleva i zhenshchina*, based on the drama by Victor Hugo, Vygotsky wrote: "This must be performed as loudly, as exaggeratedly, as emphatically, and with such scope as it was written. The villain is the devil himself; the main character should shine with heroism, etc.

The language of the provincial heroine is usually sprayed with perfume, powdered, and twined in curls of intonations—that is just right for conveying the meaning. The art of our day values above all that which is strong and manly."<sup>42</sup>

Lev Semenovich was a sophisticated theater-goer, knew the best plays of the capital theaters, and hence tried to be demanding and objective in

his evaluation of the performance of the actors who appeared on Gomel's stages. The newspaper *Polesskaia pravda* contains a review by Vygotsky of the guest actor Maksimov. In a poster the guest actor is advertised as the "king of the screen."<sup>43</sup> Lev Semenovich wrote an extraordinarily critical, if not to say devastating, review of his appearance in Gomel'. "Maksimov's honeyed declamation combines words and music on the most superficial external level . . . the lyricism of his reading is cheap . . . there was no clarity and sonority in the transmission of the sound constructed by the poet; it was like a patchwork quilt . . . the artist's voice is lean, without peaks; the artist's enunciation was good, but not good enough for him to be a soloist of artistic reading."<sup>44</sup> One can encounter both laudatory and critical evaluations of the same performer in different roles in Vygotsky's numerous reviews. For instance, he was not satisfied with the performance of the actress Igorevna in a number of her plays in which her theatrical talent did not meet the demands of the roles she was performing (*Stakhan Vody, Blagodat*). Moreover, in reviewing the play *Ved'ma*, Lev Semenovich wrote about this actress as follows:

Igorevna, playing the Witch very intelligently, discarded philosophy and the inner enigma of nature. She assumed the role in an everyday, simple way, firmly and clearly, in terms of what it actually meant; and what was saved she saved . . . her sonorous, good voice, which conveyed especially clearly the powerful, dry, firm, and commanding flows directly displayed the activeness and willpower that marks her artistic talent. She is probably of heroic stature. One other striking merit is the absence of the theatrical coquettishness and effusive posing that has become obligatory in the bag of tricks of the provincial heroine. All the risqué dubious love scenes were performed with restraint, cleanly and nobly.<sup>45</sup>

Many theater reviews, which are still unknown to a broad readership since they were published basically on the pages of Gomel' newspapers over seventy years ago (in 1922–1923), reveal a new facet of Vygotsky's creative works. Here he can be considered a subtle theater critic. His love of authentic theatrical art, which was already manifest in his student years, remained with Vygotsky throughout his life.

In Gomel' Lev Semenovich is remembered as one of the creators of the literary journal *Veresk* [Heather]. It published short stories, poetry, theater reviews, literary portraits, and other works of a minor literary genre, all edited by Vygotsky.

But despite the fact that several people have mentioned it, we were unable to find even one issue of *Veresk* (neither in Moscow, in Minsk,

nor in Gomel'). Moreover, nowhere were we able to find even references or descriptions of this unique publication. It was only recently, in the journal *Mastatsva Belarusi* (1990, No. 1), in an article by V. Konan entitled "Papiaredniki," on Belorussia's art periodicals, that we read:

Ten years ago, in the semiclosed holdings of the M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library in Leningrad, we found the first—and it seems the last—issue of the Gomel' weekly *Teatr, literatura i iskusstvo* with the poetic title *Veresk*, for 1922. As far as I was able to discover, the sole copy for some reason is not listed in Belorussian bibliographical periodical references, nor is it in other libraries of the country. The Gomel' group *Veresk* (there actually was such an organization!) published it, and the editor was the well-known art critic Vygotsky, well known later to Soviet psychology.<sup>46</sup>

What a find this was! Roughly a month later, we happily held this issue in our hands in the readers' room of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library (in Leningrad).

Let us now look carefully through the pages of this issue, preserved by some miracle. Its jacket has a silhouette of the great German actor of the eighteenth-century Friedrich Schroeder in the role of King Lear.

The first pages were devoted to advertisements for Gomel' theaters, musical concerts, and individual books, and the last advertised the commercial department of the Provincial Union and restaurants.

The journal was devoted principally to questions of art. This section began with articles of a programmatic nature by the editorial staff. It bore the subheading: "Heather survives on the most meager soil and prepares it for more demanding plants" (*Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*).

In giving the reasons for his choice of title for this journal, the editor writes:

We have written *Heather* on the jacket of our unbound sheets. A dry lean and harsh flower: a wild, bitter and lowly weed; but it is eternally green, in both winter and summer; it grows in sand and in swamp; it covers huge valley steppes and makes the mountains green even at cloud level. Let us put it briefly: In art things are just now [in a state] that gains it not laurels, but heather. The undertaking itself can easily be shown to be vacuous and foolish—to publish a journal on art in a province where art is a lean and negligible undertaking in the extreme. But what of it? It is, and so it must remain.<sup>47</sup>

The founders of the journal set as their aim to unite actors, artists,

musicians, and poets around this journal. The article ends with the words: "Uniting local artistic forces around our journal, sanctifying of local and general artistic life, and serving its interests are our modest tasks. We are far removed from the idea of controlling and lecturing: we are here only to serve and to scrutinize attentively."<sup>48</sup> This article has no signature, although it may be fairly said that it came from the pen of Vygotsky, who was the sole editor of the journal.<sup>49</sup> We presented the text of this article to A.A. Leont'ev, Doctor of Philology and Psychology, and he confirmed our conclusion on the basis of a linguistic analysis. Verses by V. Uzin and D. Vygodskii, a review of Meterlinck's play *Monna Vanna*, a fragment from a work by Anatole France, *The Lady from Verona*, comments about new publications by Meyerhold and events in artistic life, plus a local theater schedule, were to be found on the pages of this issue of the journal *Veresk*.

V. Konan thought that the short life of *Veresk* ended with the first issue. The young enthusiasts of this society were well intentioned—and they did have enthusiasm—but they had neither the funds nor the experience for such a business.<sup>50</sup>

According to the accounts of people who were living in Gomel' at that time (R.N. Smekhova, the future wife of Lev Semenovich, his sister Zinaida Semenovna, Mariia Semenovna, E.L. Geilikman, and V.S. Uzin), the opposite was the case. Probably, a number of issues were published, because all remembered, in particular, that Lev Semenovich had published a major article in one of them entitled "Kachelov Hamlet."<sup>51</sup>

Vygotsky worked intensely in the institutions of Gomel'. He gave talks on questions of science, literature, and art. Lev Semenovich's broad range of interests, his oratorical talent, and his erudition in many areas of science and art always attracted a large audience. The themes of his lectures and his talks were Shakespeare and Mayakovsky, Chekhov and Tolstoy, Pushkin and Esenin, Gorky, and Korolenko. His lecture on Albert Einstein and his theory of relativity was remembered especially well by those who heard it. The halls were filled to overflowing even when Lev Semenovich gave scientific reports such as "Psychoanalysis as a scientific method of investigating the subconscious,"<sup>52</sup> "The theory of internal reflexes,"<sup>53</sup> "On the psychology of the examination,"<sup>54</sup> "Scientific premises of grading pupils,"<sup>55</sup> and "New books in pedagogy."<sup>56</sup>

It is well known that Lev Semenovich sometimes gave public readings of literary works.

The archives of the Gomel' District Museum contain the memoirs of

Lev Semenovich's wife, Rosa Noevna Vygodskaia, in which, in particular, she says that literary "Mondays" were organized on the initiative of Lev Semenovich at which reviews of new poetic and prose works were given. "The 'Mondays' attracted a large number of participants, who listened to these reviews with great interest and participated in the discussion of the literary novelties."<sup>57</sup>

One of Lev Semenovich's pupils told how she clearly recalls one of the "Mondays" devoted to the creative works of the Gomel' artist Aleksandr Iakovlevich Bykhovskii. The artist's graphic works were displayed in the hall: these included watercolors, lithographs, and engravings on linoleum. Lev Semenovich gave a short talk and then explained these works.

The commentary "A.Ia. Bykhovskii's exhibit" was published in the newspaper *Nash ponedel'nik*. Despite the fact that these comments were without a signature, their author may also well have been Lev Semenovich, who regularly appeared on the pages of this newspaper. However, our hypotheses do not provide a sufficient basis for including it in the bibliography of Vygotsky's works. The author of the commentary points out that, following

the established tradition of his older confreres Chagall and Altman, Bykhovskii also pursues the path of the grotesque everyday. He has a sense of satire, but also a sense of the heroic . . . love of detail vies with a striving to achieve a broad sweep and dynamic composition in Bykhovskii's works. Let us hope that the latter will win out, and that the author will then stand firmly on his own two feet.<sup>58</sup>

Later, an album of Bykhovskii's drawings, which opens with an introductory article by Vygotsky, was published in 1926.<sup>59</sup>

Few are acquainted with the pages of Lev Semenovich's biography in which he participated in the creation and operations of the Press Museum in Gomel'.

The museum was founded in the early 1920s. It was actually a library reading room that contained post-Revolutionary publications: books, brochures, journals, and posters. The museum received about a hundred titles of central and local newspapers. Visitors were able to choose any book or newspaper and take it from the shelf or from the display cabinet. The Press Museum was at Sovetskaia Ulitsa No. 18, in two rooms of a former clothing shop (the building had burned down during the war). Later the museum was given several rooms on the second floor of

the building, which now houses the State Bank. In 1922, the museum was converted into a workers' club (in the building of the former Hotel Savoy).

The most interesting aspect of the museum's work was the organization of literary evenings. As Gomel' residents recall,<sup>60</sup> evenings devoted to the creative works of Aleksandr Blok and Vladimir Maiakovskii were especially successful.

If one were to attempt to tell even briefly of just two members of the Council of the Press Museum who were usually speakers at these evenings, it would become clear why these literary evenings were so popular among the young and why they attracted such a large audience. One of the speakers was Vladimir Martynovich Vasilenko. He worked as a secretary of the Gomel' guberniia newspaper, but was better known as a poet. Several collections of his verse had been published in the twenties.<sup>61</sup>

To give an idea of Vasilenko's poems, let us reproduce here from memory a fragment from one of them, entitled "The heart":

Reason says: "Here is a stick.  
Beat the culprit who has fallen into the web."  
But the heart sighs: "What a shame!  
The culprit has small children!"  
Reason says: "Stupid youth,  
You have become a patent victim of Amur—  
Everyone sees, even with the naked eye,  
That the object of your passion is a fool!"  
But the heart finds a loophole,  
The heart vividly recalls a case  
Where a fool gave a beggar a kopek,  
And a hot tear rolled down his nose!  
Heart, heart, even as you heal others,  
You will not make me a Croesus.  
I should like to amputate the heart and  
Replace my heart with a prosthesis.

Lev Semenovich and his cousin David Isaakovich Vygodskii were on the Council of the Press Museum, along with V.M. Vasilenko. Here we shall say only that Lev Semenovich actively participated in all the work done at the museum. (We shall not describe him or the other members of the Museum Council in detail since a whole book has been dedicated to this subject.)

David Vygodskii was three years older than Lev Semenovich. He was

a graduate of Petersburg University and an extremely talented linguist and translator. According to the recollections of Marietta Sergeevna Shaginian,

The Soviet reader is indebted to the translations of David Vygodskii for what we know of the progressive writers of Venezuela, Uruguay, Mexico, Bolivia, the Philippines, Ecuador, and Brazil. He was the first to translate poets from Cuba; he translated Blasco Ibanez, Arderius, Jose Risal, and many other Spaniards. He translated from the Spanish and Portuguese, not only from the originals but also with the approval of the authors (many of his translations are authorized translations). He translated Johannes Becke from German, Vaillant Couturier and André Malraux from French, Germanetto from Italian ("Visiting Lenin"), and Robert Browning and Tennyson from English. Many of us have read enthusiastically his remarkable translations of such novels as Heller's *Siberian express* and Merinek's *Golem*, which became a library rarity. Indeed, numerous articles, scattered among journals and newspapers, on contemporary literature in Spain and the countries of Latin America were almost our only sources of this literature in those years.<sup>62</sup>

Shaginian wrote that David Vygodskii was a very modest and humble person, "It was simply impossible not to love and respect him."<sup>63</sup>

David Isaakovich Vygodskii was arrested on 14 February 1938 in Leningrad; he was accused of planning terrorist actions. He was convicted and spent the last years of his life in the Karagindin camp, where he died.

In 1990 the journal *Iskusstvo Leningrada* published "Requiem" in memory of the poet. Here it is in its entirety:

VYGODSKII  
DAVID ISAAKOVICH  
(1893–1943)

Poet, translator, and literary critic. He translated poetry and prose from thirty modern and ancient Western and Eastern languages. He specialized in Spanish and Latin American literature. In 1930 he was Chairman of the Spanish-American Society in Leningrad. He published in newspapers and journals of Spain and the countries of Latin America, and in the Philippine Islands. O. Forsh, M. Shaginian, O. Mandel'shtam, M. Zoshchenko, Iu. Tynianov, M. Slonimskii, N. Tikhonov, B. Lavrenev, M. Kosakov, Rafael Alberti, and Pla-i-Beltran visited the apartment he shared with E.I. Vygodskaia, a children's writer. He was arrested in 1938 and

died on 27 June 1943 in the Karagandin camp. He was rehabilitated posthumously in 1956.<sup>64</sup>

Lev Semenovich's family archives contain two photographs of members of the Press Museum's Council. On 8 November 1981, a fragment of one of these photographs appeared on the pages of *Gomel'skaia pravda*. The author of the article commented as follows on it:

Posters of ROSTA, the Russian telegraph agency, one of the departments of which was in Gomel', covered the wall. . . . One can look at drawings and inscriptions: "Volunteers to the Western Front!" "The hopes of the imperialists are in vain!" "The Ukraine shall be free!" "Shirkers hinder the work of others!" In the center of the photograph, against the background of phrases of agitational posters, are the first employees of the Gomel' newspapers.

A faint smile plays across the lips of Vladimir Martynovich Vasilenko. He is dressed in a traditional Ukrainian shirt and riding breeches. To his right is Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, a young man with a calm and open gaze.

Their youth coincided with a period of great changes in the country, and it was their lot to participate in the formation of a new culture.<sup>65</sup>

Vygotsky threw himself into the work of creating and editing periodical literature from the very first days of Soviet power. In 1922–23 he headed the editorial department of *Gompetchat*, and in 1923–24 he held the job of literary editor of the publishing sector of the Administration of Party and Soviet press "Polesspechat'" and the publishing house "Gomel'skii rabochii."<sup>66</sup> "Vygotsky performed his job in editing manuscripts skillfully and conscientiously, publishing journals and other publications, copy editing, reading galleys, and performing other technical, literary, and typographic work."<sup>67</sup>

In addition to editing and preparing for print the works of other authors, Lev Semenovich also found time to write his own articles. The themes of these literary articles are varied. Some are devoted to analysis of specific literary works and the anniversaries of writers, and sometimes they contain general literary criticism. Lev Semenovich's writings appeared regularly in the pages of the periodical press. Thus, in December 1923 alone, four articles were published.<sup>68</sup> The reader might be interested in reading them. Let us imagine that we have before us some pages of the newspaper *Polesskaia pravda*, yellowed with time. Let us leaf through it.



We shall find an article from 9 December 1923 written on the occasion of the anniversary of A.S. Serafimovich.<sup>69</sup>

Vygotsky traces the personal and literary career of the writer and states, "Serafimovich is a consistent and sober realist. He writes just what he sees. And he sees things as they are. Hence, his pages are always true to life." Vygotsky continues: "The sole, mundane, unchanging theme to which he is devoted like a knight is labor, its circumstances, its tension, its struggle against capital, its defeats, and its victories." Lev Semenovich thinks that Serafimovich is a great populist writer, whose writing should pave the way to the "popular masses, into the midst of the workers, into the innermost being of the new reader who is just now selecting and examining this book."

This article, with slight changes, could apply wholly to the writer's recently celebrated 125th anniversary of the day of his birth.

Several days later, on 16 December 1923, Vygotsky discusses the fate of Belorussian literature in the pages of the same newspaper.<sup>70</sup> The article is called "On Belorussian literature."

Of course, the Russian language was Lev Semenovich's native language, and, accordingly, Russian literature was closest to him. But he also followed the evolution of contemporary Belorussian literature with great attention and interest. In his article he traced its sources and predicted a great future for it. He compared Belorussian literature to a fife that had absorbed true feelings and bewitching poetry.

Belorussian literature in its present form is impoverished—like a fife compared to a Viennese piano,<sup>71</sup>—in comparison with the literature of Pushkin or Mitskevich, Schiller or Molière . . . the Belorussian poets know this better than anyone else. A heavy, oppressive yoke was borne by Belorussia for centuries. . . . Yet Belorussia has its literature nonetheless . . . the new literature of Belorussia dates back only to the end of the last century. It is still a very young literature. But it has strength and resilience and music in it. The centuries of oppression have given it this. It is a literature like a peasant's fife, strong and firm, above all because it is made from the same material as the peasant himself. It has still not differentiated itself definitively from popular poetry and, like an embryo in a mother's womb, it is still nourished by the same fluids as a simple popular song. . . . But among the chorus of human voices, it has its own irreplaceable voice, a simple and strong popular voice. It is no accident that one of the collections of verses is called [*The Belorussian fife*].

Lev Semenovich wrote that this was, above all, a national literature.

"All poets sing especially of their homeland, of their home regions, bathed in beauty."

He thinks this poetry was nurtured by a popular awakening, by the nature and social rage of the people.

At the end of the article, he writes:

One of these poets has a very symbolic verse.<sup>72</sup> It is called "Servant weavers." The castle weavers have been placed in a sparsely furnished house to weave Persian designs, but, forgetting themselves, their hands weave a native cornflower instead of a Persian design. That is what happens with almost all poets: they reduce every design, in the final analysis, to an image of a native flower. It is this flower, this unconscious bond with one's native land, with its heart, that makes the Belorussian fife strong and precious.

Lev Semenovich thought that the main concern of Belorussian literature at that time was not to "lose the flavor of the native flower and to master the complex music of contemporary poetry."

If we open the newspaper from 23 December 1923, we will be transported with Lev Semenovich to the days that shook the world.<sup>73</sup> Characterizing John Reed's book as the "truest picture of the October Revolution," he notes that the author of the book was interested in literally everything, even such seeming details as conversations among individual people. "There is no detail, no matter how insignificant, that he would not pluck out of the dust of history, that he would not place in the right place for it to shine with the light of truth and meaning, with the light of heroism."

The article ends with the following words: "Perhaps the most difficult problem in history is the question of the relationship between the masses and the heroes in great events. Reed's book uncovers the truth of this problem."

Nor can we omit Lev Semenovich's work at the Gomel' teachers' training college. The college was opened with long-term courses in 1921.<sup>74</sup> It was located in a small building on Pochtovaia Ulitsa, No. 13. Only six of the eleven rooms in that building were suitable for lessons.

The school's purpose was the noble aim of preparing schoolteachers, which the young republic needed acutely. Newspapers said that 250 applications, mostly from peasants, were submitted from the different districts. The first rush counted 80 persons. The students received their subsidies in the form of flour and suet. It was difficult to work and study

under such conditions: there was not enough firewood, not enough school necessities, and not enough teaching equipment. The teachers received a very low wage. Nevertheless, the opening of this school was an event for the city. Educated enthusiasts dedicated to the cause of enlightenment came to work there: 19 of the 25 educators had a higher education.

The number of students at the school increased rapidly, and by 1922 there were 190.

The curriculum provided for study of the basics of science, lessons in the Russian language, mathematics, history, geography, political economy, plus logic, general, experimental, and child psychology, methods, and subjects concerning aesthetics. Vygotsky is mentioned as being part of the teaching faculty in 1922.<sup>75</sup>

The first mention of his work at the teachers' training school is to be found in the minutes of a meeting of the Pedagogical Council of 15 February 1923.<sup>76</sup> He taught logic and all the courses in psychology.

Lev Semenovich proposed the organization of a section on experimental psychology at the school in a session of 3 May 1923. He formulated his proposals in a report in which he defines the purposes of the department and outlines the necessary measures for its organization, presents an estimate of expenditures, and defines the work for the upcoming months (up to vacation time).

Since the archive materials concerning Lev Semenovich's work at the school have never been published before, we present here the protocol record of this report in its entirety.<sup>77</sup>

### **On the Organization of a Psychology Section at the Teachers' Training School**

#### *The tasks and nature of the section*

1. Demonstration of psychological experiments in the midst of a course of psychology (general and pedagogical). Serving the teachers' training school and all educational establishments in the city.

2. Laboratory for primary scientific research and for practical problems in experimental pedagogy and the psychology of students at teachers' training schools.

3. A department of experimental investigation of abnormal children by assignment from children's institutions in need of individual psychological examinations and from experimental children's homes. Es-

tablishment of scientific forms and methods for observing children and compiling systematic scientific characterizations of them, with the participation or consultation of Doctor Patel'chits, a psychologist.

4. Guiding ongoing work and development of independent research to study and assess schools and educational establishments of all types, the psychology of pupils, questionnaires, development and implementation, compilation of descriptive profiles, experimental testing of methods and other pedagogical procedures on commission from schools. Oral and written consultation on all four points. A plan for the first year must be developed.

#### *Necessary measures for organizing and opening the section*

1. Assigning a room and furniture.
2. Instruments from the former boys' high school.
3. Necessary instruments from physics departments and the museums.
4. Personal staff: director, consultant doctor, laboratory assistant, and technical worker.
5. Money for organizational expenditures as per the attached estimate.
6. Organization of library in experimental psychology (temporary borrowings from other libraries).
7. The purchase of new instruments and equipment.
8. Participation in summer in the All-Union Congress on Psychology.
9. Establishment of a Psychology Council consisting of teachers from the psychology section.

#### *Estimate of expenditures for organizing the department*

1. Writing materials—150 rubles.
2. Minor repairs, mending curtains—350 rubles.
3. Acquisition and preparation of the simplest devices lacking in the section—200 rubles.
4. Purchase of schoolbooks—200–250 rubles.

#### *Immediate work schedule up to vacation*

Prepare samples for the department's work on all four points so that the section can get to work as soon as the school year begins. Finish the organizational part:

1. Investigation using a scientific method (Rossolimo or other) of two abnormal and two normal children.
2. Doing a survey in the Liebknecht school followed by processing of the materials in summer.
3. Development of a course in psychology for the various types of schools.
4. Practical work (laboratory nature) with a small group from the teachers' training school and from the socialist education courses (17 persons).

The question of the psychological section was brought up again by the pedagogical council on 24 May 1923, and a decision was taken to instruct the deputy head of the school to acquire the necessary instruments and equipment in Moscow.<sup>78</sup> The section actually began its work in a vacuum: the necessary material base was lacking. Nonetheless, this work was so well organized that by autumn (and in the summer during the vacation at that!) considerable organizational and experimental work had already been done and had proven very fruitful. This was the basis for the report to the pedagogical council of the teachers' training school on 10 October 1923.<sup>79</sup> The account of what had been accomplished dealt with the points on the work schedule indicated above.

The following had been done within this short period:

1. Twenty-one demonstrations of psychological experiments in courses of teacher retraining, in a pilot school, in a second-level school, in the railroad school, and in the pedagogical courses of the socialist education organization. In addition, demonstration of psychological experiments accompanied the educational process in the school;
2. Laboratory assignments in the Department of Experimental Psychology were done during this time not only with students at the teachers' training school but also with several groups of teachers who were improving their skills in pedagogical courses. In these lessons:
  - (a) Two complete studies using Rossolimo's system were done.
  - (b) An experimental-psychological lesson in the Russian language using the Lazurskii method was given.
  - (c) The suggestibility of pupils of different ages using Nachaev's method was studied.
  - (d) Pupils in municipal schools were surveyed with the aid of two questionnaires.
  - (e) A group of students from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, who

were doing investigations using Rossolimo's system, worked in the department.

- (f) Assignments using the short method of psychological profiling were done for a group of students in the technical school.
  3. The teachers' training school students themselves carried out 22 studies on a system of psychological profiles, and 38 short studies of pupils entering the pilot school were done.
  4. Processing of the findings of the survey was completed, and it was proposed that they soon be published. These findings were supposed to help to answer the questions: "Is what we have at present true co-education, or do we merely have boys and girls sitting in the same classrooms?" and "On the intellectual or subjective moods of school youth."
  5. A number of profiles of abnormal children were studied; studies of the influence of speech rhythm on the respiratory curve were undertaken; and a new procedure for studying memory was developed.
  6. The material base of the section was expanded considerably. The quantity of equipment, books, furniture, and apparatus grew manifold. There were two people working in the department (Vygotsky and Doctor Patel'chits), two laboratory assistants, and two students.<sup>80</sup>
- After this account, Vygotsky presented a broad plan for future work and a list of regulations, which he himself had compiled, for the psychology section to present to the pedagogical council for ratification.

An analysis of the long-term plan shows that the activity of the psychology section was to be multifaceted. Scheduled were a broad range of lectures each day, practical and laboratory tasks performed by students at the teachers' training school, and courses in all the schools in the city. A psychological examination of children in children's homes, a questionnaire survey and investigation of schoolchildren, consultations, and research by colleagues in the psychology section were proposed.

In the discussion of the measures necessary to improve the work of the section, it was proposed that its director be delegated to attend the upcoming All-Russian Congress of Psychologists. This proposal was destined to play a major role in Lev Semenovich's fate (but more about this later).

A few days after (13 October 1923) the long-term plan for the work of the psychology section was approved, Lev Semenovich presented an interesting report on the rural school. In particular, he said that the con-

temporary conditions of the rural school were not good for its development and that the new generation of school workers should do their utmost to find ways to improve it.<sup>81</sup>

Lev Semenovich's enthusiasm and creative effort at the teachers' training school was valued and noted by his colleagues. Thus, we found in the archives mentions of an award he received<sup>82</sup> and of a salary raise he received as a highly qualified teacher: "L.S. Vygotsky is a teacher of psychology. He brings the maximum of enthusiasm, pedagogical tact, and erudition to his teaching of the subject. He has organized a psychology section or office, where he does research."<sup>83</sup>

The work of the psychology office at the teachers' training school contributed to the growth of students' interest in psychology and enabled its director to gather scientific data. Lev Semenovich carried out numerous investigations to test the validity of his theoretical ideas. He analyzed and generalized his findings, and his scientific reports were based on some of this research material.

We have tried to acquaint the reader with the intensive and multifaceted activity of Lev Semenovich in Gomel', which is confirmed by the certificate issued by the Gomel' Department of the Union of Workers in Education:

For five years Vygotsky taught in first- and second-level schools, in the technical school, in vocational schools for printers and metalworkers, and in evening schools for adults of the guberniia political education system. He taught courses in socialist education to train preschool workers and summer courses to retrain school workers, and in the Gomel' workers' schools and in secondary schools. In the workers' schools and in the secondary schools, Comrade Vygotsky gave lessons in the Russian language and literature; in the teachers' training school, courses in logic and psychology (general, child, and experimental), and in the conservatory, courses in aesthetics and the history of art.

A psychology office, which organized broad studies of schoolchildren and children from children's homes, was established on Vygotsky's initiative and through his efforts.

At the same time, Comrade Vygotsky was a consulting psychologist at one of these schools. Vygotsky proved to be one of the most active workers in the guberniia Union House.

He was a regular lecturer on questions of psychology and on general questions of pedagogy and methods of teaching literature. The union considered Vygotsky's course on educational psychology, which he gave in the summer months to rural literacy workers and in courses for teachers

on the western railroad, to be his most valuable contribution. Vygotsky's lectures were an especially encouraging element among literacy workers in the village of Malye Dorogi.

In all of his pedagogical work, Comrade Vygotsky was a conduit for contemporary Marxist pedagogy.<sup>84</sup>

Results of experimental studies done in the psychology office of the teachers' training college were compiled by Lev Semenovich in five scientific writings.

One of these served as a basis for an article published later entitled "On the influence of speech cadence on respiration." Another, "Experimental study of the cultivation of new speech reflexes by a complex-binding method," was never published. Three of the articles were presented at the 2d All-Russian Congress on Psychoneurology in Petrograd. There, in January 1924, he gave these three as lectures, which were well received by the audience. This was Vygotsky's first appearance at such a representative congress of scholars. The interesting reports by the delegate from Belorussia attracted the attention of the specialists. At the end of the congress, Lev Semenovich received an invitation to work as a research fellow at the Institute of Experimental Psychology in Moscow.

Many authors analyzing Vygotsky's psychological views look at his scientific and practical activity only from 1924 onward. The last decade of his life was really extraordinarily fruitful and the most mature. But one must not underestimate the Gomel' period in Lev Semenovich's life; Vygotsky was, as we have attempted to show, remarkable for his engagement and multifaceted practical orientation in public education, culture, and art. His scientific activity begins at about this time.

Studies done by Lev Semenovich in 1919-24 in educational psychology, his development of problems in the psychology of art, and his experimental work in the psychology office attached to the Gomel' pedagogical high school formed the basis for a number of articles and for his first and largest works [*Educational psychology*] and [*The psychology of art*].

It was in this period that the personal qualities of the scientist became defined and established: the breadth and multifacetedness of his interests, his scientific purposefulness, his clear pedagogical talents, his mastery of the art of lecturing, and his considerable capacity for work.

Thus, during his life and activity in Gomel', Vygotsky became an

independent scholar capable of conducting theoretical and experimental work. This stage in Vygotsky's activity was what largely determined the whole of his further career, the career of one of the founders of modern psychology and abnormal psychology.

A new period in the life and activity of Lev Semenovich had begun.

The situation in the country was very complicated. It had been devastated as a result of long wars—imperialist, civil, and interventionist. It was necessary to restore industry and agriculture, get transportation again working normally, revive trade, and improve living standards. The restoration of the nation's economy was impossible without a major rise in the level of culture and the development of education. Industry and agriculture both had an acute need for qualified, well-trained specialists. Hence, a radical upheaval in pedagogical and psychological science was necessary and inevitable.

Here is what one of the greatest scientists, Aleksei Nikolaevich Leont'ev, had to say about the situation that prevailed at that time in psychology:

Although in pre-Revolutionary Russia there was a major tradition of a materialist understanding of the mind, official psychology, imposed forcibly in the universities and taught in all high schools . . . was thoroughly shielded from the influence of this tradition. The atmosphere that reigned in official psychology was openly idealist and extremely conservative. By comparison with the state of world psychology as a whole, which had been undergoing a remarkable revival since the beginning of the century, the science of psychology in pre-Revolutionary Russia remained deeply provincial.

Nor did the opening of the Institute of Experimental Psychology, headed by the well-known Professor G.I. Chelpanov, the author of the most popular textbook on psychology in those years, bring progress.

Such was the general scientific situation in official psychology cultivated in Tsarist Russia. Although at times a quite bitter polemic raged among its representatives, solidarity on the most important issue, namely, the struggle against materialism, remained intact.

It is typical that after the victory of October, in that benighted field officially dubbed psychology, nothing changed at first. The Institute of Psychology continued its work as before, and as before university training of psychologists continued to be headed by Chelpanov. His book [*Mind and brain*], devoted to a criticism of materialism, was republished; and the fifteenth edition of his textbook was published.<sup>85</sup>

Subjective-idealistic views of the mind continued their undivided domi-

nation in the Institute of Psychology, whose director was Chelpanov. Even Kornilov came out against these views [and] advanced his own reactological positions, which he saw as a step along the path toward the construction of a Marxist psychology.<sup>86</sup>

The year 1923 was a notable year for our psychology: the first All-Russian Congress on Psychoneurology was held from 10 to 15 January in Moscow, the first such event under Soviet power. The participants discussed their research and delineated the tasks and the paths of new research work. The central event of the congress was a report by K.N. Kornilov entitled ["Contemporary psychology and Marxism"], the main conclusion of which was the necessity of building a psychology on the basis of dialectical materialism.

This idea was not supported by the Institute of Psychology or by "university circles" associated with it. Discussions continued in the large auditorium of the institute; Chelpanov tried to "defend psychology in these discussions." A situation was created that simply could not continue. At that time something happened that outwardly expressed and cemented the revolution that had taken place in the development of psychology: the Institute of Psychology was reorganized, K.N. Kornilov was appointed its director, and the institute was confronted with a new task, namely, developing Marxist psychology.<sup>87</sup>

The Second All-Union Congress on Psychoneurology was held in Petrograd from 3 to 10 January 1924. The program of this congress is preserved in Vygotsky's family archives; one can read therein that such outstanding scientists as V.M. Bekhterev, A.S. Griboedov, K.N. Kornilov, P.I. Liublinskii, A.N. Nachaev, A.A. Ukhtomskii, G.I. Chelpanov, G.G. Shpet, N.M. Shchelovanov, and others were among the participants.

By this time the number of supporters of a materialist psychology had increased; hence, delegates to the congress supported Kornilov's talk in which he again spoke of the necessity of building a psychology based on dialectical materialism. During this Second Congress on Psychoneurology, Lev Semenovich Vygotsky participated as a delegate from the Gomel' Guberniia ONO. He presented to the congress, on 6 January and 10 January 1924, reports prepared in the psychological office of the Gomel' Pedagogical High School: ["Procedures in reflexological and psychological research"], ["How psychology should be taught today"], ["Results of a survey of the moods of pupils in graduate classes of the Gomel' schools in 1923"].<sup>88</sup>

As we have already pointed out, these reports by the delegate from Belorussia were noted by the specialists.

Aleksandr Romanovich Luria remembered this as follows: "A very young person mounted the podium . . . Vygotsky was not yet 28 years old. He spoke for more than half an hour—clearly, logically, and flawlessly—about the meaning of a scientific approach to man's consciousness and the process of his development, and about objective methods for studying of this process." Vygotsky's reports made such a great impression on Aleksandr Romanovich (who was, at that time, scientific secretary of the Institute of Psychology) that he "set about persuading Kornilov, the director of the institute, to immediately invite this person, known to no one, to work in Moscow at the Institute of Experimental Psychology. Lev Semenovich accepted this invitation."<sup>89</sup>

Winding up his affairs in Gomel', Vygotsky quickly moved to the capital, where he would live and work.

After passing the examination for the title of second-level Research Fellow (junior research fellow), Lev Semenovich began to work at the Institute of Experimental Psychology. He was lodged in the same building, where he was given a small room in the cellar.<sup>90</sup> Lev Semenovich's fiancée, R.N. Smekhova, followed him to Moscow; and soon afterward, they were married. Later (in 1925 and in 1930), two daughters were born: Gita and Asia.

Before Vygotsky's arrival, the Institute of Psychology had undergone a fundamental reorganization. The staff was changed: new scientists entered the research team with the arrival of the new director. These included P.P. Blonskii, V.M. Borovskii, L.V. Zankov, A.R. Luria, L.S. Sakharov, I.M. Solov'ev, and others. However, none of them had a clear program for the transformation of the institute.

Let us listen to one of them who, at the time, was in the thick of events: Aleksandr Romanovich Luria.

It was proposed that the institute should restructure the whole of psychology, abandon the old Chelpanov idealist science and create a new materialist science. Kornilov even said a Marxist psychology. In his opinion, what was needed was not subjective experiments, but objective study of behavior, in particular, motor responses, which is what his dynamoscope was invented for. At the time psychology was being reorganized in two ways: first, through renaming, and second, through relocating. We called perception, I think, receiving a signal for a response; memory—preserving and reproducing responses; attention—restricting reactions;

emotions—emotional reactions. In brief, everywhere we could, and even where we couldn't, we placed the word *reaction*, sincerely believing that we were doing important and major business. At the same time, we moved the furnishings from one laboratory to another; I remember well how I myself dragged chairs up the stairways, convinced that in this way we were reorganizing our work and creating a new foundation for Soviet psychology.<sup>91</sup>

However, soon the young scientists came to believe that Kornilov's platform was not the path by which we would achieve any substantial changes in psychology.

From the very first months of his work, Lev Semenovich proved himself as a full-fledged scientist. His fellow workers at the institute recalled that in this period Vygotsky could quite rightly be called an independent researcher and leader rather than a beginning scientist.<sup>92</sup>

This is confirmed by A.R. Luria in his scientific autobiography when he writes: "A.N. Leont'ev and I highly esteemed the unusual abilities of Vygotsky and were very happy when he included us in his work group, which we called the Troika."<sup>93</sup> Vygotsky was his "recognized leader," in Luria's own words. The Troika began to meet regularly one or two times a week in Lev Semenovich's apartment, where the participants developed a plan for their further research.

From the accounts of that year,<sup>94</sup> we see that Lev Semenovich worked intensely and productively. Here are some of the themes of his talks at scientific conferences held at the Institute of Experimental Psychology in 1924: ["On the psychological nature of consciousness"], ["The new article by I.P. Pavlov"], ["Studies of dominant reactions"], ["Consciousness as a problem of the psychology of behavior"], ["The new Berlin school of psychology"], and a number of others.

His native intelligence, erudition, and five years of experience working in Gomel' helped Vygotsky not only to do his own experimental research (study of dominant reactions)<sup>95</sup> but also to direct the scientific work of some of his colleagues (e.g., I.M. Solov'ev and L.S. Sakharov).

After moving to Moscow, Lev Semenovich completed some research begun earlier and moved on to intensive work on other questions. His new research concerned problems of educational psychology and the handicapped,<sup>96</sup> problems of consciousness and the relationship between physiology and psychology,<sup>97</sup> and a critical analysis of trends within psychology at that time.<sup>98</sup>

The year 1924 may be considered the one in which Vygotsky began

his work in defectology as well. The whole of the Moscow period of Vygotsky's life and creative work (1924–34) was involved with this science.

The following may serve as confirmation that Lev Semenovich attributed prime importance to questions of defectology. In filling out a personal questionnaire for a worker in the People's Commissariat of Education, this question had to be answered: "In what area do you feel you can be the most useful?" Lev Semenovich's answer was: "In the training of deaf and mute children."<sup>99</sup>

On the recommendation of I.I. Daniushevskii, the organizer of the Institute of Experimental Defectology,<sup>100</sup> Vygotsky was appointed head of the subsection on the education and training of physically handicapped and mentally retarded children of the Department for the Social and Legal Protection of Minors (SPON) attached to the Administration of Socialist Upbringing of the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR.<sup>101</sup> This marked the beginning of his work with the handicapped.

Later, in one of his psychological essays, Vygotsky wrote: "No great cause in life is accomplished without great feeling."<sup>102</sup> Indeed, that is how—with great feeling and total selfless immersion—Vygotsky related to the difficult problems, so important for the country, of homeless children, and of studying, teaching, and rearing children with developmental abnormalities. This is confirmed by the report Vygotsky presented to the 2d Congress on the Social and Legal Protection of Minors (SPON) entitled ["On the present state and the present tasks of rearing physically handicapped children"].

Before the Revolution the education and training of deaf and blind and of mentally retarded children were a matter for their parents or other relatives, or depended upon private charity. But from the very first days of Soviet power, the education and training of abnormal children became part of the overall state system of public education. In December 1919, the Council of Public Education adopted a resolution, signed by V.I. Lenin, that defined the functions of the various People's Commissariats in regard to rearing and protecting the health of abnormal children.

The network of special schools did not meet the needs of those requiring such education, and the lack of qualified cadres was acutely felt; the university departments of defectology had difficulties getting the number of students they needed, and the theory of education and training of

handicapped children was still under the strong influence of dogmatic notions.

Before 1924 the schools for abnormal children lagged considerably behind general educational schools. Children with aberrant development were educated and trained in general isolation from life around them. The principles and methods used in special schools by and large accepted the child's handicap as a given and ignored the potentially positive factors that might contribute to a child's development.

The sensorimotor training widely practiced in the schools in general was of little use in helping to mold the child's personality in light of his handicap or, in particular, to help the child adapt socially to the conditions around him.

By 1924 it was apparent that a fundamental reform of the whole state system of training children with mental and physical handicaps was overdue.

The urgency of this question induced defectologists to reexamine and conceptualize the accumulated experience of working with abnormal children. This was done at the 2d Congress on the Social and Legal Protection of Minors (SPON), held in Moscow in 1924.

Publication of the book [*Problems in the education of blind, deaf, and mute and mentally retarded children*], edited by L.S. Vygotsky, just before the congress was a notable event for the science and practice of defectology.<sup>103</sup> In an extensive foreword to this book, its editor noted that the relative neglect of the problem of abnormal children in the first years of Soviet power had objective historical causes, i.e., more urgent, more important, and more pressing questions that required immediate solution.<sup>104</sup> Understanding that the country was experiencing considerable economic difficulties, he proposed that extreme caution and great humility be exercised in dealing with this burning question [i.e., the education and training of abnormal children—Au.]. Vygotsky wrote: "We are forced, for the time being, to be minimalists with regard to this question."

The clear progress made in the economy in the seven years of Soviet power and successes in public education and the development of pedagogical science eclipsed the social importance and necessity of dealing with the problem of the education and training of abnormal children. Hence, Vygotsky called upon scientists, teachers, and the public to lend a hand in dealing with the major creative task of confronting this difficult but extremely important question. He realized that mistakes would

probably be made on the way to the goal, but it was important that the first steps be taken in the right direction. He concludes persuasively at the end of the foreword: "Our country will have resolved the question of educating blind, deaf, and mute and mentally retarded children before this happens in the rest of the world because these are essentially social questions, and only in Russia can they be posed on a totally new social level."<sup>105</sup> The work of the 2d SPON Congress contributed to improving the education and training of abnormal children.

It took almost a whole year to prepare for this congress. To this end the People's Commissariat of Education enlisted the aid of scientists, doctors, educators, and people engaged in the care of homeless and handicapped children. The agenda for the congress and the subjects of the reports were discussed at the congress office and by the Board of the State Science Council of the People's Commissariat of Education. The purpose of the congress was not only to sum up what had been done in the period since the last conferences on legal protections in children's homes but also to chart clearly new pathways for further work on the social and legal protection of minors, the building and functioning of children's homes and other children's establishments, and the education and training of physically handicapped and mentally retarded children, plus the social education of the large group of homeless children who totally lacked the necessary conditions and means of existence and upbringing.<sup>106</sup>

It was decided by the Board of the State Science Council and at the 2d SPON Congress to create a section for the education and training of abnormal children.<sup>1</sup> The section was divided into three basic subsections: mentally retarded,<sup>107</sup> the hard of hearing, and blind children.

Vygotsky, who was head of the Section on Childhood Handicaps of the SPON Department of the People's Commissariat of Education, was asked to prepare an overall report for these three subsections.

The theses of Vygotsky's report were discussed at a meeting of the People's Commissariat of Education. N.K. Krupskaja<sup>108</sup> made some recommendations. Nadezhda Konstantinovna suggested that the theses be revised to highlight the practically important points.<sup>109</sup> N.K. Krupskaja said at the congress that it was especially important to underscore the point that effective ways had to be found to adapt the training of handicapped children more closely to conditions in the general educational school. She also noted that conditions should be created for involving such children in society and in work.

On 26 November 1924, Vygotsky presented a report entitled ["On the

present state and current tasks of training physically handicapped and mentally retarded children"] that took these proposals into account.<sup>110</sup>

D.I. Azbukin has described this talk:

People went away from the 1924 Conference on Defectology in a way different from the way they had left preceding conferences. They went away from this conference completely new and renewed. The most important event was Vygotsky's report, which many defectologists were hearing for the first time. Lev Semenovich's report was literally thunder in a clear sky and, completely unexpectedly, it revolutionized the whole of defectology. The beginning of Vygotsky's report was met with great consternation; many people looked around them, sometimes shrugging their shoulders in perplexity. A stormy and difficult ending was in the cards. However, Lev Semenovich's deep conviction, his reassuring voice, and his genuine erudition and knowledge of the matter were evident in every line, and everyone gradually began to understand that before them stood not an irresponsible hothead, but a great mind that warranted the right to leadership in defectology. The disapproving and irritated turnings of the head and shruggings of the shoulders became less and less frequent. A young and little known, but somehow special and promising, person had unexpectedly come to defectology; and people listened to him with strained attention, if with eyes still full of mistrust, but with a spark of respect that had already crept in. This session drew a line between the old and the new defectology.<sup>111</sup>

Why did Vygotsky's report arouse such interest? What did he introduce that was substantially new?

Vygotsky's report highlighted the need for generalization of the experience of schools for children with impaired hearing, visual deficiencies, and retarded development; for putting a stop to their isolation from the mass schools; for establishing standards for educational tasks and for determining the specific conditions for accomplishing those tasks. Vygotsky stepped boldly past the old philanthropic tradition that saw persons with various abnormalities as invalids. In his report he mentioned the principal tasks that had to be addressed to narrow the gap between the abnormal child and the normal child. The necessity and possibility of involving these children in socially useful work was the leitmotif that ran through the whole of Vygotsky's report. He raised a number of other important problems for defectology as a whole and for each of its branches. His statements served as a theoretical foundation for the subsequent development of defectology.



The resolution on Vygotsky's report reflected the basic principles that must underlie the activity of the People's Commissariat of Education in the domain of education and upbringing of abnormal children. Special attention was focused on social and political education, close cooperation and close relationships with normal children, and a movement away from crafts to higher forms of work that would also provide the basics of polytechnical knowledge and create an organic link to social life.<sup>112</sup>

Thus, Vygotsky's report contained what was, for those times, a profound approach to analyzing an abnormality, to correcting it or compensating for it, and to a scientific grounding of the goals, the tasks, and the content of special education, based on principles of education and upbringing of the upcoming generation that were the same as those applied in the mass school.

In his capacity as head of the subsection for the education of handicapped children of the Department of the SPON of the Administration of Socialist Education, Vygotsky carried out extensive organizational and publicity work as well. The first popular brochures and leaflets for village reading rooms were published under his direction: ["Be careful with children's ears"], ["What must be done for deaf and mute children and children who have lost their hearing"], ["Mental retardation and how to combat it"], etc.<sup>113</sup> Vygotsky devoted much attention and energy to the training of specialists in handicaps, including work in higher educational establishments and giving courses in defectology.

Vygotsky began his teaching activities in higher education at this time. On 10 October 1924 Lev Semenovich was approved as teacher at the Moscow Institute of Pedology and Defectology, where he gave a course entitled "Introduction to psychology."<sup>114</sup> At roughly the same time, he began to teach psychology at the Academy of Communist Education (later called the Krupskaja Academy).<sup>115</sup> That same year Vygotsky began a practical course in experimental psychology in the higher educational courses<sup>116</sup> that trained cadres for schools and teachers' training colleges, highly skilled workers in public education in both practical and theoretical matters.<sup>117</sup>

In the 1924-25 school year, the list of establishments where Lev Semenovich taught grew substantially. These included the First Moscow State University (Faculty of Social Sciences, where he gave a course in practical psychology,<sup>118</sup> and the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, where he taught psychology<sup>119</sup>); the Second Moscow State University (where he was a staff lecturer: he taught teaching procedures in the de-

partments of psychology, pedology, and defectology<sup>120</sup>); and the Pedagogical Section of the Conservatory, where he gave a course in psychology.<sup>121</sup>

In 1925 a small article by Lev Semenovich entitled ["Consciousness as a problem of the psychology of behavior"]<sup>122</sup> was published in the book [*Psychology and Marxism*]. He had also addressed this problem earlier, in his report to the 2d Psychoneurological Congress (["A procedure for reflexological and psychological research"]) and at scientific conferences at the Institute of Experimental Psychology (["On the psychological nature of consciousness"], ["Consciousness as a problem of the psychology of behavior"]).

In this article Lev Semenovich demonstrated the necessity of developing the problem of consciousness, which he considered to be the key to psychology. He wrote: "The question of the psychological nature of consciousness is persistently and deliberately evaded in our scientific literature. Effort is made not to notice it, as if it did not exist at all for the new psychology. As a consequence, the system of scientific psychology taking shape before our very eyes bears a number of intrinsic flaws from the very outset."<sup>123</sup>

In the years of Vygotsky's life and creative works, when some psychologists were saying that for the science of behavior, the question of consciousness of acts as an object of scientific study did not exist, his acknowledgment (back in 1925) of the prime importance of the problems of consciousness for materialist psychology was a substantial step forward.

Daniil Borisovich El'konin, a pupil of Lev Semenovich's, said, in discussing this article: "At that time he [Vygotsky] was the only one of those psychologists struggling to prevent psychology from being absorbed by reflexology and physiology who posed this problem with such acuity and urgency. This article, as it were, charted a plan for his further research."<sup>124</sup>

Lev Semenovich's generalization of his pedagogical experience working in Gomel' and in Moscow and his completion of the manuscript of [*Educational psychology*], which was published in 1926, date from this same period. Specialists still rightly consider it not only Lev Semenovich's first major work but also the first ever generalizing effort in educational psychology.

\* \* \*

Thus, the first years of his work in Moscow were in many respects decisive in determining Lev Semenovich's later life and activity. This period

began with the much-remembered report in Petrograd, his intensive research at the Institute of Experimental Psychology, and the beginning of his teaching activities in Moscow colleges and universities and of his activity in an area that was new to him: the study, teaching, and upbringing of homeless children and children with developmental disorders.

The innovative views for overcoming a handicap that he outlined in his report to the SPON Congress and all of his activity in defectology earned Lev Semenovich a reputation as an authority: he became a recognized specialist in this area.

This would seem to explain why, when the British government sent an invitation to the USSR to participate in an international conference on education of the deaf and mute<sup>125</sup> that was to take place in London on 20–25 July (1925), the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR chose Lev Semenovich.

Judging from the resolutions preserved in a letter, his candidacy was discussed and ratified at a session of the Presidium of the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR on 8 May 1925.<sup>126</sup>

Before traveling abroad, Lev Semenovich received detailed written instructions personally from Anatolii Vasil'evich Lunacharskii, People's Commissar of Education. In particular, these instructions called upon him to take an active part in the work of the conference and its sections in order to acquaint himself with the experience and technical achievements of European and American schools in the matter of educating the deaf and mute.

You are instructed to present a report on the organization and principles of social upbringing of deaf and mute children in the RSFSR, with special emphasis on how our system conforms to the general principles of social upbringing, and on such scientific and technical achievements and methodological characteristics of our system as may be of interest to other countries. . . You are asked to prepare a summary of your report and to disseminate it among members of the conference, to take an active part in the exhibits, and to satisfy, by all means, the interest foreign delegates may begin to have in the way the deaf and mute are educated in the RSFSR.

You are instructed to present a report of the work you did to the People's Commissariat of Education as soon as you return.<sup>127</sup>

And so Lev Semenovich was sent abroad by the People's Commissariat of Education, in summer 1925, as a delegate from the RSFSR to

England to participate in an international congress on the education and upbringing of deaf and mute children,<sup>128</sup> and to visit Germany, the Netherlands, and France to study questions of educating abnormal children and to familiarize himself with the psychological research laboratories and educational establishments of those countries.<sup>129</sup>

It is important to point out that Lev Semenovich was one of the first scientists designated to represent Russia in defectology abroad.

One of Vygotsky's best-known photographs was made in Berlin during this trip.

In July 1925 Lev Semenovich spoke at the International Congress, presenting a major report on the status and the methods of teaching deaf and mute children in our country ([“Principles of social education of the deaf and mute in Russia”]). Vygotsky's talk stressed the special importance of the problem of social education of these children. He pointed out to the delegates that this problem could be most fruitfully dealt with only when deaf children were socially protected. The report was published in English in the congress proceedings.<sup>130</sup> The report appeared for the first time in Russian only in 1983, under the title [“Principles of social education of deaf and mute children”].<sup>131</sup>

A photograph of all the delegates to the London congress was published in the book of the congress proceedings; in the photo Lev Semenovich looks like one of the youngest participants in this representative congress.

We can get information about the work of the congress and its organization from an article by Dr. Frantisek Kriz (Pilsen) published in Prague in the newspaper *Obzor glukhonemoty*, 1926, No. 1. The article was entitled “The international congress in London for the protection of the deaf and mute.” Its author stresses that the 1925 London congress was the first international congress devoted to questions of educating the deaf and mute. It was organized on the initiative of English teachers of deaf children. Leading specialists with world reputations from France, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, America, and other countries attended.

The author of the article writes that he received much material from the conference and added, “I also received many brochures about the deaf and mute from Lev Vygotsky, a lecturer at Moscow University.”

Kriz thought that personal contacts with scientists from different countries were very important and helped to forge unity among teachers of the deaf child, and accordingly noted: “Whenever in the future I recall the London congress, I will always have before my eyes three colleagues

with whom the Czech delegation communicated most frequently. These were the keen-witted school principal from Berlin, Skorz; the delicate Professor Sangu from Yokohama; and an active lecturer from Moscow University, Lev Vygotsky.<sup>132</sup> This same newspaper contained a photograph of the Czech delegation taken with the three delegates to the London congress about whom Krirz wrote.

In addition to the reports and the lectures, the program of the congress included visits to progressive establishments for the deaf. Lev Semenovich told his family about this. But we received documentary confirmation of this only a few years ago when Avril Suddeby, a teacher from London, who had profound respect for the name Vygotsky, visited a special school for the deaf where she asked for the "Book of honored guests." In it she found a note written by Lev Semenovich in 1925. Copies of this page and the title page of the "Book of honored guests" were kindly donated by Avril Suddeby to the family archives when she saw how much we valued any document about Lev Semenovich.

When Lev Semenovich returned from his trip abroad, his work was interrupted by illness. He was preparing himself for a dissertation defense that had been planned for autumn. Vygotsky wrote: "In 1925 a Board of Experts released for public defense a dissertation under the name of an independent teacher in higher education and senior scientific worker on the topic ["The psychology of art"]."<sup>133</sup> But none of these plans was destined to be realized, because of his illness, which was becoming chronic.

Hence, the Board of Experts, aware of the positive reviews given to the dissertation by K.N. Kornilov and B.N. Frich, made a decision: In view of his illness Vygotsky was released from public defense of his dissertation and was granted the right to teach in higher education establishments.<sup>134</sup> A month later the Administrative Board of the Institute of Experimental Psychology confirmed this resolution.<sup>135</sup>

The family archives still contain the last (fifth) page of K.N. Kornilov's review of Lev Semenovich's dissertation. Completing his analysis of ["The psychology of art"], he here highly evaluates and petitions for granting Lev Semenovich the title of independent teacher of higher-education establishments and senior scientific worker.

Despite his illness, Vygotsky continued his scientific activity. During this time he completed his years of work on the psychology of art and put his all ideas together in the form of a monograph. This book was destined to lie untouched for forty years before it saw the light of day.

[*The psychology of art*] was published for the first time only in 1965. It was prepared for publication by Viacheslav Vsevolodovich Ivanov. The book was accompanied by commentaries written by him that constitute a scientific investigation in themselves. The foreword to the book was written by A.N. Leont'ev, Vygotsky's comrade-in-arms.

Three years later, a second edition of this book was published, differing from the first in that it contained as an appendix Lev Semenovich Vygotsky's early work [*The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, by William Shakespeare*] ([*The psychology of art*], 1968. Pp. 339-499). The third edition of [*The psychology of art*] was published in 1986.<sup>136</sup>

One can assume that interest in literature and art brought Lev Semenovich to his in-depth study of psychology. "Vygotsky's switch to the speciality of psychology had its internal logic. This logic is imprinted in his [*The psychology of art*], a book that is transitional in the fullest and most accurate sense of the term,"<sup>137</sup> wrote A.N. Leont'ev.

This book brings together his literary talks in Gornel' (about which we have written), the early studies of *Hamlet* and Krylov, and critical articles printed in various periodicals in 1916-22. Lev Semenovich himself wrote about this as follows: "The present book is the product of a number of minor and relatively large studies in the area of art and psychology. The three literary studies on Krylov, *Hamlet*, and how to write a short story, as well as a number of journal articles and commentaries, formed the basis of my analyses."<sup>138</sup>

In his monograph on *Hamlet* (1916), and then in [*The psychology of art*], Vygotsky planned, first, to explore the meaning of an artistic work, basing himself solely on textual material. Hence, the work was preceded by a careful study of literary texts themselves and numerous critical sources. He gradually moved on to a detailed analysis of the work of art. In his preface to the book, Leont'ev writes:

If we compare Vygotsky's book with other works on art at the beginning of the twenties, we cannot help but see that it occupies a special place among them. The author turns to classical works—to the legend, to the short story, and to Shakespeare's tragedies. He devotes relatively little attention to the disputes about formalism and symbolism, or to the futurists and the left front, but rather poses a question of much broader significance: What does a work of art do? What makes it an artistic creation?<sup>139</sup>

In Leont'ev's opinion, Vygotsky approaches the analysis of art as a psychologist using an objective analytic method. Lev Semenovich chose

the path of empirical investigation to deal with the problems aesthetic thought posed in the twenties. He studied the foundations of an aesthetic experience, giving particular attention to material from classical works.

Vygotsky saw as his purpose the re-creation of the structure of the response elicited by a particular work. In his opinion, by proceeding in this way one could unlock the secret of the "grandeur" and "living nature" of individual works of art. The social engagement of art and its significance in the future were consolidated by the scholar's thought. Lev Semenovich thought that as society was reorganized, man himself would change. Bringing his book to a close he wrote: "I cannot imagine what role art is destined to play in this remolding of man, what already existing, but inactive, forces in our organism it will utilize to shape the new man. The only sure thing is that art will have a very weighty and decisive word to say in this process. Without a new art there will be no new man."<sup>140</sup>

In later years Lev Semenovich returned to the problems of art criticism.<sup>141</sup>

A view exists that Lev Semenovich himself did not want to publish his book [*The psychology of art*]. Leont'ev has suggested that failure to publish this book was attributable largely to "internal factors, because of which Vygotsky returned hardly ever again to the topic of art."<sup>142</sup>

M.G. Iaroshevskii shares this view, and, in his book on Lev Semenovich,<sup>143</sup> writes that, because of dissatisfaction and other personal motives, Lev Semenovich decided not to publish his monograph. In the afterword to the book [*The psychology of art*], Iaroshevskii also says that refusal to publish was due not only to the fact that the overall conception still needed much reworking but also to the author's dissatisfaction with the "chosen method of analysis, in his feeling that fundamentally new starting points and explanatory principles were needed.

This point must be borne in mind by those who seek in [*The psychology of art*] answers to the timely questions of the contemporary psychology of creativity and aesthetics. These answers did not satisfy even Vygotsky, and they can surely not satisfy the contemporary scholar."<sup>144</sup>

We cannot agree with this explanation since we have documents that refute this view.

On 9 November 1925 Lev Semenovich concluded a contract with the Leningrad State Publishers to publish the book [*The psychology of art*], which was approximately twelve folios in length.<sup>145</sup>

Later, in a postscript to a letter to L.S. Sakharov, he wrote: "Every-

thing has fallen into place with [*The psychology of art*]. I do not know if it is for the best, but the book will apparently be published."<sup>146</sup>

One may assume that since [*The psychology of art*] was Lev Semenovich's dissertation, he needed official documents from the institution where the dissertation was discussed for its publication. We tracked down an extract from the minutes of a meeting of the editorial board of the State Institute for Experimental Psychology from which it is evident that Lev Semenovich's written request for permission to publish the dissertation [*The psychology of art*] was discussed at that meeting. A decision was taken permitting said publication. "All the material expenses and the responsibility for the printing of the book are Comrade Vygotsky's, according to his declaration."<sup>147</sup>

We do not know the reasons why [*The psychology of art*] was not published in the twenties. But the evidence we have presented indicates that Lev Semenovich did make attempts to publish the manuscript.

We have already said that Lev Semenovich's intense work was interrupted by a long illness in autumn 1925. He was already ill in September, but the medical documents for September and October have not been preserved.

The first of the hospital worksheets<sup>148</sup> found in the archives is dated 4 November 1925, when he was admitted with the diagnosis "pulmonary tuberculosis."

Lev Semenovich was soon transferred to the sanatorium Zakhar'ino at Khimka, a Cossack village. We have in our hands a doctor's note from which we see that despite prolonged treatment there (six months), the patient's condition remained serious. "L.S. Vygotsky, treated from 21 November 1925 to 22 May 1926, with a diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis, accompanied by considerable bleeding at present as a consequence of a dextral pneumothorax, complicated by dextral pleuritis; the patient is unable to move about on his own and must remain bedridden for at least another month."<sup>149</sup>

Lev Semenovich was officially classified as having a Group II disability on 8 June 1926.<sup>150</sup> But we know from existing documents that Lev Semenovich's condition was described by specialists as still unsatisfactory on 10 December 1926.<sup>151</sup>

The only happy event in 1926 was publication of Vygotsky's major work [*Educational psychology*].

V.P. Teplov called 1925-29 a period "when the first attempts were made to construct a materialist psychology."<sup>152</sup> The same period saw an

expansion of research in psychology, a broadening of the circle of people doing work in psychology, the publication of a number of collections of experimental studies, and the appearance of the specialized journal *Psikhologiiia*. In his book [*Thirty years of Soviet psychology*], Teplov noted: "The second half of the twenties saw the beginning of the publication of books of a generalizing nature in which the first attempts were made to construct a system of materialist psychology."<sup>153</sup> Among these books were P.P. Blonskii's [*Essays in scientific psychology*] (1921) and K.N. Kornilov's textbook on psychology; and ranking side by side with them was Vygotsky's [*Educational psychology*] (1926).

This book was published a very long time ago, and has not been republished since then. A few years after it came out, the book was banned—in the words of V.V. Davydov, "for purely ideological reasons," which are, for our day, absurd and all but incomprehensible.<sup>154</sup> The ban was not lifted until the late eighties. Of course, people knew about the book, mainly by hearsay. Because of the circumstances, many professional psychologists have never even held a copy of the book in their hands.

[*Educational psychology*] has now been republished by the "Pedagogika" Publishers. Davydov writes, in the introductory article to this book:

The new edition of [*Educational psychology*] has undoubted historical meaning since it will enable specialists to become acquainted with how a recognized classic of world psychology presented the "new findings" of the science about sixty years ago. And, of course, when reading the book it is very important to note the clear and skilled popular style in which the new psychological findings were presented for schoolteachers and college and university instructors; it is very unique and instructive. But these reasons for the second edition are important for psychologists and educators doing research and endeavoring to translate their results into educational practice. However—and this is most important—acquaintance with the present text will enable the present-day reader and, above all, the lay reader to sense the proximity and affinity of the issues discussed in it with the burning and contradictory problems of our current education concerning which our practicing teachers and educational researchers are wracking their brains. Therein lies the principal meaning of republication of this book. . . .<sup>155</sup>

In [*Educational psychology*], Vygotsky attempted to analyze the contemporary state of world psychology and allied disciplines. The book is testimony to its author's endeavor to put the science of psychology at the service of the practical needs of the new society.

From the very beginning of his activities, Lev Semenovich was a ma-

terialist psychologist striving to master the dialectic method. Thus, one of the features of the new psychology, in Vygotsky's opinion, was that "mental processes are seen to develop in inseparable connection with all the other processes taking place in the organism and are governed by precisely the same laws as everything else in nature."<sup>156</sup>

For Lev Semenovich the idea of the social nature of man was not just words, but had a specific psychological content. In [*Educational psychology*] the author's dialectic method is manifested in his approach to the question of the interaction between the social conditions of upbringing and the distinctive features of the child's natural development. In a special chapter devoted to an examination of the problem of giftedness relative to a child's individual upbringing, Vygotsky stresses that it is inadmissible to underestimate the "nature" of the child, his individual differences manifested in distinctive features of higher nervous activity, temperament, etc.

He thinks that only social upbringing, taking into account these individual features, will enable a child to develop the talents and aptitudes that are his and his alone. This idea of Lev Semenovich's differed from the theory that a child's destiny was predetermined by heredity. At the same time, it sensitized educators to the all-round development of the capacities of every human being.

In this book Lev Semenovich already placed on the agenda the question of the relationship between upbringing and development, maintaining the view that upbringing, as a process, plays a leading role and determines the child's natural development. He goes further and adds to this idea in later writings.

Although the rest of the pages of this book have, of course, become obsolete—after all it was written almost seventy years ago—many of its points are still relevant, yet have never been put into practice in teaching—for example, the problem, widely discussed in pedagogy, of teacher-pupil "collaboration." In Vygotsky we find:

The educational process should be based on the pupil's own personal activity, and the whole art of the teacher amounts merely to guiding and regulating that activity. In the educational process, the teacher should serve as the rails along which the cars move freely and independently, and which only impart to the latter the direction of their movement. A scientific school is inevitably a "school of action."<sup>157</sup> . . . [And further]: The pupil has hitherto always stood on the teacher's shoulders. He examined everything through the teacher's eyes and judged everything through

his mind. It is time to put the pupil on his own two feet and force him to walk and fall, to feel the pain when he hurts himself, and to choose which way to go. The right way to go is something he can learn only with his own legs and his own falls, and this is applicable to every aspect of education.<sup>158</sup>

Vygotsky goes on to stress that the leading role in the formal educational process belongs to the teacher, whose work should be creative and be based on knowledge of child psychology and the laws of a child's education and development (Pp. 366–67).

There is now the urgent problem of people's work training and education, about which Lev Semenovich wrote: "Despite the precise meaning of the word, *polytechism* signifies not multicraftsmanship, the combination of many areas of specialization in one person, but rather a familiarity with the general principles of human labor, with the ABCs out of which all of its forms are constituted."<sup>159</sup> Work must be organized in such a way that a child understands its sense and sees its results, and that work actually is useful (Pp. 227–28).

In [*Educational psychology*] Lev Semenovich also examines the problem of international education, so timely today (P. 244).

As for the moral education of the child, Lev Semenovich warned that "Morality must not be made into the internal policeman of the spirit . . . not to do something for fear of its baleful consequences is just as immoral as to do it."<sup>160</sup> "The new point that should be become the basis of moral education can be most accurately defined as . . . the social coordination of one's behavior with the behavior of the group."<sup>161</sup>

In the opinion of Lev Semenovich, "to educate means to organize life; children grow up correctly in a correct life."<sup>162</sup> In another passage in the book, he continues: "The questions of education and upbringing will be resolved when the questions of life are resolved."<sup>163</sup>

A.A. Leont'ev said about Vygotsky's book that when it was published in 1926, it was not understood or evaluated on its merits. Even in our day, said Leont'ev, there are no similar books. "This is the only work of Vygotsky's in which he touches upon all the basic questions of education and educational psychology."<sup>164</sup> V.V. Davydov called this book interesting and instructive:

Unfortunately, it was undeservedly forgotten. The external reasons for this sad circumstance was that the book was too long "under arrest" in library special archives and hence it was forbidden to refer to it (persons

who became "enemies of the people" after publication of the book were quoted in it several times). But the social situation has changed, and now the reader can again acquaint himself with it from the distance of the present decade, and independently and critically evaluate its merits and its omissions. However, one should bear in mind the time in which it was written, and the fact that its author was a young person who was just making his debut in psychology. Vygotsky developed his true investigative talent after publication of this book; but in my opinion, it was an important stage in the preparation and development of the cultural-historical theory that has given his name renown throughout the world.<sup>165</sup>

Though seriously ill and, in his own words, hovering between life and death, Vygotsky overcame the suffering caused by his disease and the unfavorable conditions of hospitalization (which we know of from his letters)<sup>166</sup> and continued his scientific work.

The unfavorable internal and external conditions should probably have prevented him from undertaking any kind of work. However, Lev Semenovich lost none of his interest in science and found within himself the inner and physical forces to read many psychological works and write critical articles and prefaces to them. We have in mind the books of Thorndike, Schultz, Ruele, Freud, Kafka, and others.<sup>167</sup>

As M.L. Lozinskii, the famous translator, wrote at the time to Anna Andreevna Akhmatova, "A hospital has a monastic delight."<sup>168</sup> Perhaps this monastic solitude helped Vygotsky in some measure to digest what he read. Whatever the case, there, under these conditions, a major work of a methodological nature was conceived and written. Lev Semenovich called it [*The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology*].

This monograph-length work was destined to remain in manuscript for a long time (it was completed in 1927), and was made available to the broad reading public only in 1982, when the first volume of Vygotsky's collected works was published.

At the time this manuscript was written, there were many different currents in psychology: behaviorism, Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis, personalism, etc. Each of these currents laid claim to the leading position in science. "The crisis divided psychology into two camps. The line between them always passed between the author of such a view and the rest of the world."<sup>169</sup>

Many scientists, thinking that the crisis in psychology found expression, in particular, in the battle between these currents, proposed eclecticism as a way out of this crisis. Lev Semenovich "made the only attempt

at the time to explore the profound, primary, philosophical roots of all of these currents."<sup>170</sup>

As M.G. Iaroshevskii wrote: "It is incomprehensible how he was able within a few months—and seriously ill at that—to analyze a great multitude of sources."<sup>171</sup> From his analysis of a huge number of works by psychologists of different schools and currents, Lev Semenovich came to the conclusion that, despite the apparent difference among all the currents in psychology contemporaneous with him, there actually existed only two psychologies: materialist and idealist. These are "two different, incompatible types of science, two fundamentally different constructions of a system of knowledge; everything else amounts to differences in views, schools, and hypotheses—partial, complex, confused, and intermingled blind, chaotic combinations in which sometimes it is difficult to find one's way. But the battle is actually only between two tendencies that are at work behind the backs of all the vying currents."<sup>172</sup>

After completing his analysis of the crisis and its causes in psychology, Vygotsky wrote:

We understand the cause of the crisis to be its driving force; hence it is not only of historical interest but is also of dominant methodological significance, since not only did it lead to the crisis in the first place but continues to determine the whole of its further course and fate. This cause is the emergence of applied psychology, which led to the reorganization of the entire methodology of science on the basis of the principle of practice . . . this principle weighs heavily on psychology and is driving it toward a split into two sciences; it ensures that materialist psychology will develop correctly in the future. Practice and philosophy form the cornerstone.<sup>173</sup>

The last words of this monograph have a quite modern ring:

Our science could not, and cannot, develop in the old society. One cannot possess the truth about the personality or gain purchase on the personality itself so long as mankind does not possess the truth about society and has no control over society. On the other hand, in the new society our science will become the center of life. . . .

In the future society, psychology will actually be a science of the new man.<sup>174</sup>

Let us quote some responses of contemporary psychologists to [*The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology*].

For example, in M.G. Iaroshevskii's view, this monograph

examines a broad range of fundamental problems of the structure and dynamic not only of psychological knowledge but of scientific knowledge in general and its relationship to philosophical knowledge. The pages of this manuscript, now a half-century old, read as if the author was pondering the same questions that are bothering the psychological, philosophical, and scientific thought contemporaneous with us.<sup>175</sup>

Leont'ev writes:

In this work Lev Semenovich Vygotsky was able not only to explore thoroughly the history of and tendencies in the psychology contemporaneous with him, both Western and Soviet, but to lay the foundation of a Marxist psychology and outline a path for its development over many decades, almost a whole century ahead of him! People often say that [*The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology*] formulated a research program that Soviet psychology labors to complete, and will indeed continue for a long time to do so.<sup>176</sup>

In the words of Lev Semenovich's closest pupil, Aleksandr Romanovich Luria, in [*The historical meaning of the crisis in psychology*], Vygotsky "outlines the main milestones along the path his own works and the works of many students later pursued."<sup>177</sup>

The last seven years of Vygotsky's life cannot be said to be filled with outward events. All of his trips were limited to the triangle: Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov. An exception was a long voyage to Tashkent in 1929.

However, these years may quite rightly be called the most productive and the most rewarding of his life, since it was during this time that Lev Semenovich undertook much intense work in numerous higher-education establishments, did his research and theoretical work, gathered around him neophyte scientists to whom he gave unstinting help in consultations with them, and wrote a tremendous amount.

The name "Vygotsky" is widely known in the scientific world as one of the founders of the cultural-historical theory. From 1927 on, almost all his basic studies (of speech, of thought, of attention, of memory, and of other mental functions) began to be pursued from the perspective of the historical development of mind.

Vygotsky concentrated his attention mainly on clarifying the role of the individual's and mankind's social experience in the development of the mind. He felt it necessary to see the behavior of a modern adult human being from three perspectives: as the product of a long biological evolu-

tion, as the product of a long and very complex process of child development, and as the product of historical development. This last aspect, the least studied and, in Vygotsky's opinion, the most significant for the science of psychology, became the object of his investigations. In the course of his analysis of mental development in the context of the historical development of mankind, Vygotsky formulated the main postulates of his cultural-historical theory.<sup>178</sup>

Vygotsky's aim in the cultural-historical theory was to discover the social nature of "specifically human" higher mental functions. Above all he strove to determine the relationship between the social (cultural, higher) and the biological (natural, lower, elemental) in the development of the human mind. This objective also informed Lev Semenovich's main works in those years ("The problem of the child's cultural development"), ["The instrumental method in psychology"], ["Tool and sign in the child's development"], [*Essays on the history of behavior*], ["The history of the development of higher mental functions"], [*Thought and language*] and the works of his colleagues. A.N. Leont'ev began to work on the problem of memory and attention; L.S. Sakharov, on the problem of concept formation; and A.R. Luria, on the study of emotions.<sup>179</sup>

By this time Luria had attracted the most active students in the Second Moscow State University into his student circle for joint work: they included A.V. Zaporozhets, L.I. Bozhovich, R.E. Levina, N.G. Morozova, and L.S. Slavina. These were the students who were displaying a deep and stable interest in psychology. In the words of N.G. Morozova, they were assigned

investigations on Vygotsky's topics: "mastering movement" (A.V. Zaporozhets), "The role of sign and signal operations in a choice response" (N.G. Morozova), "The planning role of speech" (R.E. Levina), "The development of imitation in children" (L.I. Bozhovich and L.S. Slavina).

Lev Semenovich did not believe that we students would be able to assimilate his basic ideas and was very surprised and delighted that five young psychologists had come so close to his theory of cultural development.<sup>180</sup>

These people were the so-called five, each of whom was destined later on to become a well-known scientist.

Many dozens of pages both in the foreign and domestic literature have been devoted to analysis of Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory. The works of Lev Semenovich and his pupils are now available to the reader, so we do not need to touch upon Vygotsky's theory, which is now well known.

However, we must say that his work was not immediately highly esteemed. What is more, in the thirties, a torrent of enraged and unjustified criticism descended on it in the pages of journals in psychology and abnormal development and within the walls of a number of scientific establishments.

Now, when one reads archival materials, minutes of meetings, and articles that were part of the open discussion of the cultural-historical theory, one can understand how oppressive and dramatic was the situation in which Lev Semenovich had to work in the thirties. At times this looked like overt sabotage of the scientist.

The criticism in the speeches and articles was nonobjective, biased, and devoid of sound argument.

A.V. Petrovskii writes about this period as follows: "In assessing the statements of those times that refer to the so-called cultural-historical theory, we must note not only the dubious nature of many of the concrete charges against Vygotsky (for example, [those of] P.I. Razmyslov) but also the general onesidedness and tendentiousness of all of that criticism."<sup>181</sup>

A clear example of this criticism is a review, found among Vygotsky's papers, of his book [*Essays on the history of behavior*], which he wrote together with A.R. Luria. Let us take a small diversion here to show the goals pursued by the author. In the foreword to the book we read:

Our task was to outline three basic lines in the development of behavior—evolutionary, historical, and ontogenetic—and to show that the behavior of a cultured human being is a product of all three lines of development and can be scientifically understood and explained only if one applies the three different approaches of which the history of human behavior is composed.<sup>182</sup>

The book consists of three chapters, which examine, respectively, the behavior of the primate, of primitive man, and of the child.

[*Essays on the history of behavior*] was published in 1930.

The author of the review of this book is unknown to us since only 19 yellowed typewritten pages have been preserved. Only the initial letters of his first and last names are known: A.Sh. It is called ["Against the cultural-historical perspective in psychology"]. We do not know when this article was published, but do know with certainty that Lev Semenovich read it.

Here are a few extracts from this so-called criticism.



One example of a noncritical perception of various positions in bourgeois psychology is the work of L.S. Vygotsky and A.R. Luria, which has not yet been subjected to any essential criticism.

Positions that are formalistic and idealistic in their essence are combined in a bizarre way with quite a number of mechanistic moments. However, despite all the eclecticism of Luria's and Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory, idealistic positions constitute the core of its methodological principles.

For the cultural-historical theory, the psychological evolution of collective farm workers in Tajikistan consists solely in their transformation into simply cultured people. The fact that this is a process of transformation of the peasant into an active conscious builder of socialist society is absolutely beyond the ability of the cultural-historical theory to ascertain.

The abstract historicism of Vygotsky and Luria, expressed in the thesis of cultural man is general, is idealist in essence. This abstract historicism of the authors of the cultural-historical theory emanates from their basic methodological approach to the problem of development.

All works built on the basis of the cultural-historical conception require disregarding the child's active social involvement.

Seen through the eyes of cultural-historical theory, one cannot discover what is most important in the evolution of the mind of the Tajik collective farm worker: one cannot understand what is specific, what is due to the socialist character of restoring the economy and the everyday life of the Tajik village.

Let us limit ourselves here to these quotations.<sup>183</sup>

Among the published works that have come down to us and have a severely tendentious character and that criticized Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory during his life, one of the leading ones was an article by P.I. Razmyslova.<sup>184</sup> So as not to leave this unsubstantiated, let us present some small fragments from them.

The cultural-historical theory of psychology has not yet been constructed, but it has already been able to do harm to the psychological portion of the theoretical front, facilely concealing its pseudo-scientific and anti-Marxist aspects with quotes from the works of the founders of Marxism. This theory is militantly making a place for itself in pedagogical practice.<sup>185</sup>

Everywhere where one should, in our view, have been speaking about the class and productive environment of the child, about the influence of the school of the Pioneer brigades and the Komsomol movement as conduits for the influence of the Party and the proletariat on children, about

the fact that categories of thought reflect and sum up social and industrial practice, and that they are stages in understanding the world, Vygotsky speaks simply about the influence of the collective, without disclosing what collective he is talking about, and what he means by a collective.<sup>186</sup>

Instead of exploring processes of obsolescence of forms of egocentric thought in the child under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism, Vygotsky and Luria, in their *Essays*, derive this egocentrism not from the class environment of the child, but from his biological nature. . . . Vygotsky and Luria are very boastful of the fact that they are developing the problem of thought in its "movement," in its historical aspect.<sup>187</sup>

P.I. Razmyslov sums up:

Vygotsky is not interested in whose good the reactions favor. For him the psychological nature of the educational process is the same whether it is in the education of a fascist or of the proletariat. He does not understand the tasks of a class-based upbringing and the laws of development of human society.<sup>188</sup>

What conclusions can we draw? Without a doubt, Vygotsky and Luria appear objectively as guides of a bourgeois influence on the proletariat. Not knowing Marxism, not having mastered the method of dialectical materialism, they have been constantly capitulated by one or another "popular" bourgeois psychological trend, distorting and misinterpreting the positions of Marxism.<sup>189</sup>

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## Notes

### Preface

1. Thus, in a review by I. Izmailova of the play *Krotkaia*, based on a tale by Dostoevsky at the Moscow Art Theater, we read the following: "One gets an impression that, as Vygotsky said, is situated deeper than the eyes and the ears."
2. In a play by Olga Kuchkina, entitled [*The wheel moves*], the following conversation takes place. One of the female characters in the play says that she is reading Vygotsky's "Study of Hamlet" and then: "What temperament, what red-hot passion!" The second: "I read it, I remember. There are two ways not to love art: one is not to love it at all, the other is to love it rationalistically. Is that what he writes?" The first: "A remarkable person. I can imagine how his name would resound now. Why do the best die young?" (*Teatr*, 1978, No. 3).
3. V.P. Zinchenko, [A.N. Leont'ev and the development of Soviet psychology]. In A.N. Leont'ev, [*Selected psychological works*] (in 2 vols.). Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers, 1983. Vol. 1.
4. V.V. Ivanov, [*Vygotsky, L.S. The psychology of art*]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986. P. 496.
5. Ibid. P. 497.
6. Toulmin's article was published in the journal *The New York Review of Books* in September 1978. The Russian translation of the article was published in the journal *Voprosy Filosofii* (1981, No. 10, p. 135).
7. From the editorial board of the journal *Voprosy Filosofii*. See: *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1981, No. 10, p. 127.
8. V.V. Ivanov, [*Vygotsky, L.S. The psychology of art*]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986. P. 497.
9. See S. Toulmin [The Mozart of psychology]. *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1981, No. 10, p. 137.
10. Letter of 11/27/1964, personal archives of L.S. Vygotsky.
11. In a recently published book by A.A. Leont'ev, the author writes, in particular: "Vygotsky's personality and activity have begun to be shrouded in myths. . . . One must struggle to maintain the truth about him. His name must be purged of everything quasi-scientific, including the openly circumscientific shell that has accumulated around it" (A.A. Leont'ev, [*L.S. Vygotsky*]. Moscow: "Prosveshchenie" Publishers, 1990. P. 5)
12. A.N. Leont'ev, [*L.S. Vygotsky*]. *Sovetskaia Psikhonevrologiia*, 1934, No. 6.
13. The wife of V.K. Shabel'nikov, head of the Department of the Actors' Workshop at the Alma Ata Institute of the Dramatic Arts.

14. From a letter by V.K. Shabel'nikov of 9–14–89. The Vygotsky family archives.

15. This was written at the end of the seventies and published in the first volume of Vygotsky's collected works (see: [*Collected works*], in 6 vols. Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers, 1982. Vol. 1, p. 41).

16. [*The red book of culture*]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1989.

17. V.P. Zinchenko [Culture and technology]. In [*The red book of culture*]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1989. P. 65.

18. Ibid. P. 69.

19. In this book the names of the archives are given as they were during the period of our research.

20. A.T. Tvardovskii.

### Life and Works

1. The administration of the regional philharmonic is now in this building.
2. In 1775–78 Catherine II made Gomel' the possession of the heirs of Field Marshal Petr Rumiantsev-Zadunaiskii in perpetuity. The city then passed to his son Nikolai Rumiantsev, who spent the last year of his life in Gomel' rebuilding and transforming it. After his death, the city passed by inheritance to his brother Sergei, who in 1834 gave it to the State Treasury (see [*Gomel': A historical and economic essay*]. Minsk: Nauki i tekhnika, 1972).
3. In the last years of his life, Semen L'vovich Vygodskii was the director of the Arbat Department of the Industrial Bank in Moscow. TsGA RSFSR—F. 482—Op. 411—L. 644—L. 6.
4. See [1905 in Gomel' and in the Polesk District]. [*Gomel': Gomel's works*—1925. P. 208.
5. The widow of Semen L'vovich's brother.
6. From letters of E.O. Vasilenko to G.L. Vygodskii of 5/24/1972 and from 6/26/1972. The Vygodskii family archives.
7. S.F. Dobkin, [*Centuries and days*], quoted by K.E. Levitin, [*One is not born a personality*]. Moscow: "Nauka" Publishers, 1990. P. 20.
8. Tape recording of a talk by S.F. Dobkin on 11/27/1984 at the Department of Psychology of Moscow State University.
9. Certificate No. 5567 issued by the private boys' gymnasium of A.E. Ratner in Gomel'. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.
10. This list could be continued. D. Granin mentions among those who graduated from the university in 1911: K.A. Timiriazev, P.N. Lebedev, and N.D. Zalinskii. Granin, D. [*The conservative*]. Moscow: Izvestia, 1987.
11. From a tape recording of a talk by S.F. Dobkin at the Department of Psychology of Moscow State University on 11/27/1984.
12. S.F. Dobkin, [*Centuries and days*], quoted by K.E. Levitin [*One is not born a personality*]. Moscow: "Nauka" Publishers, 1990. P. 23.
13. Examination book no. 1260 of a student of the Imperial Moscow University Faculty of Law, issued 11 February 1914. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.
14. M.K. Polivanov [The fate of G.G. Shpet]. *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1990, No. 6.
15. A.A. Mitiushin [Shpet and his place in the history of our psychology]. *Vestnik MGU, Ser. Psikhologiia*, 1982, No. 2.

16. D. Granin, [*The conservative*]. Moscow; Izvestia, 1987. P. 31.
17. TsGA Moskovskoi oblasti—F. 937—Op. 3—D. 49—L. 2.
18. Information about Vygotsky's preceding work. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.
19. Personal file. TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 42—D. 499—L. 11. (Hereafter the names of archives are shortened to what they were in the period during which the authors were working with these documents.)
20. See the bibliography of Vygotsky's works, Nos. 5, 6, 10, 11.
21. *Letopis'*, 1916, No. 12, p. 328.
22. *Novyi put'*, 1916, No. 47, p. 32.
23. Lev Semenovich used some of the material of his diploma dissertation when he wrote the monograph [*The psychology of art*] (1925). The second edition of the book [*The psychology of art*], which included "Hamlet" for the first time, was in 1968.
24. From a talk by A.A. Anikst on 18 February 1987 at an evening meeting entitled ["Essays on books"] at the TsDRI on the occasion of the publication of the book by A.A. Puzyreii entitled [*Vygotsky's cultural-history theory in contemporary psychology*]. Moscow: Moscow State University Publishers, 1986.
25. A.A. Leont'ev, [*L.S. Vygotsky*]. Moscow: "Prosveshchenie" Publishers, 1990. P. 18.
26. A holiday leave card of student No. 5210 issued by Moscow University on 14 December 1917. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives..
27. The information was taken from a brief description of his life written by L. S. Vygotsky on 14 October 1925 in Moscow.
28. [*Gomel': A historical and economic essay*]. Minsk: Nauka i tekhnika, 1972. Pp. 56, 78—79.
29. L.K. Feigina, ["The Gomel' period of Vygotsky's life"]. A talk given in Minsk at a conference on the 90th anniversary of the scientist, December 1986. The L. S. Vygotsky family archives.
30. T.A. Vlasova, Introductory words at a meeting of the Scientific Council on Vygotsky's 70th anniversary, 12/27/66. *Arkhiv nauchno-issledovatel'skogo instituta korektsionnoi pedagogiki RAO*.
31. Personal file No. 922—073. GA Moskow Obl.—F. 937—Op. 3—D. 49—S. 2.
32. L.K. Feigina, ["The Gomel' period of Vygotsky's life"]. A talk given in Minsk at a conference on the 90th anniversary of the scientist, December 1986. The L. S. Vygotsky family archives.
33. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 901, p. 3.
34. Personal file. TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 42, D. 499—L. 13.
35. Information on the guest actors and the repertory of the theaters was found in Gomel' newspapers for 1922—1923.
36. *Zhizn' iskusstva*, 1922, No. 37 (860), p. 6.
37. These reviews are included in the bibliography of Vygotsky's works at the end of this book.
38. L.S. Vygotsky, [The power of darkness]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1010, p. 3.
39. L.S. Vygotsky, [The carpenter and the chancellor]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1038, p. 4.
40. L.S. Vygotsky, [The witch]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1008, p. 4.

41. L.S. Vygotsky, [The inspector general]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1011, p. 4.
42. L.S. Vygotsky, [The queen and the woman]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1036, p. 3.
43. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1067, p. 3.
44. L.S. Vygotsky, [The guest actor Maksimov]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1072, p. 3.
45. L.S. Vygotsky, [The witch]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1008, p. 3.
46. V. Konan, Papiaredniki. *Mastatsva belarusii*, 1990, No. 1, pp. 28—31 (in the Belorussian language).
47. [Editorial]. *Veresk*, 1922, No. 1, p. 7.
48. Ibid.
49. On page 15 is written: "Editor—L.S. Vygotsky." The postal address of the editorial board of the journal is indicated on the jacket: Gomel', Sovetskaia 46. This was the home address of Lev Semenovich.
50. V. Konan, Papiaredniki. *Mastatsva belarusii*, 1990, No. 1, p. 30.
51. The authors would be delighted to learn that some readers have information about other issues of this unique publication.
52. The following announcement was placed in the newspaper *Polesskaia pravda*, No. 492, of 8 January 1922: "On Monday, 9 January, at the House of Workers in Art and Education, there will be a lecture by L.S. Vygotsky on the topic: ['Psychoanalysis as a scientific method for study of the unconscious']. It begins at six in the evening. Admission is free to members of the Trade Union of Workers in Art and Education."
53. Announcements about Vygotsky's lecture ["The theory of internal reflexes"] were published in the newspaper *Polesskaia pravda* of 15 December 1923 and 16 December 1923.
54. The agenda of the cultural department of the provincial administration announcing this report. GA Gomel' obl.—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 6—L. 54.
55. A protocol record of this report given on 12 September 1923 at the Provincial Conference on Methods in Professional and Technical Education. GA Gomel' obl.—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 9—L. 83.
56. A report on this lecture was published in *Polesskaia pravda* in February 1923 (No. 831).
57. Archives of the Gomel' oblast local museum. Inventory No. 2407—D. 509—S. 5.
58. [The exhibit of A.Ia. Bykhovskii]. *Nash ponadel'nik*, 1923, No. 32.
59. [*The drawings of A. Bykhovskii*]. Moscow: Sovremenaia Rossiia, 1926. Pp. 5—8.
60. The information is taken from an article by T. Korzhemiakina entitled [The Museum of Printing], published in *Gomel'skaia pravda*, No. 224, 21 November 1981 (in the Belorussian language).
61. Later, V.M. Vasilenko worked in Moscow as a department head at the newspaper *Izvestia*.
62. M.S. Shaginian, [Pages of the past]. *Sovremennik*, 1964, No. 5, p. 100.
63. Ibid. P. 98.
64. [Requiem]. *Iskusstvo leningrada*, 1990, No. 2.
65. V. Tarasova, [The beginning of the quest]. *Gomel'skaia pravda*, 1981,

No. 215. This article (in the Belorussian language) is accompanied by publication of a fragment of a photograph of the Council of the Printing Museum (the whole photograph, which depicts all the members of the Museum Council, is in *Gomel'skaia pravda*, No. 224, 21 November 1981).

66. Personal file, TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 42—D. 499—L. 13.

67. Information sheet No. 534 issued by the Administration of the Party and Soviet Press and the State Typolithography of Gomel' *Polesskaia pechat'*, "Gomel'skii rabochii" Publishers, 9 February 1924. The family archives of L.S. Vygotsky.

68. Three of them were found in the GA of the Gomel' oblast by L.K. Feigina.

69. [A great writer of the people]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1069, p. 3.

70. [On Belorussian literature]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1075.

71. The comparison is touched upon in [The blind musician], by V.G. Korolenko.

72. The poem by Maksim Bogdanovich entitled "The weavers of Slutski." A Russian translation of this poem done by David Vygotskii, Lev Semenovich's cousin, is published in this issue of the newspaper.

73. L.S. Vygotsky, [*Ten days that shook the world*]. *Polesskaia pravda*, 1923, No. 1081.

74. *Polesskaia pravda*, 27 October 1921, reported on its establishment.

75. Certificate No. 1600, issued by the Gomel' Teachers' Training School. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

76. GA of the Gomel' oblast—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 11.

77. Kept in the GA of the Gomel' oblast—F.2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 28.

78. Protokol zasedaniia pedsoвета Pedtekhnikume ot 24 Mai 1923. GA of the Gomel' oblast—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 34—49.

79. GA of the Gomel' oblast—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 83.

80. Protokol zasedaniia pedsoвета. GA of the Gomel' oblast—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 83.

81. Protokol zasedaniia pedsoвета. GA of the Gomel' oblast—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 84.

82. Protokol zasedaniia pedsoвета of 10/14/23. GA of the Gomel' oblast—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 72.

83. Protokol zasedaniia pedsoвета of 12/1/23. GA of the Gomel' oblast—F. 2084—Op. 3—D. 4—L. 96.

84. Certification of the board of the Gomel' Provincial Department of the All-Russian Section of Workers in Education of February 1924, Gomel'. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

85. A.N. Leont'ev, [The beginning of modern psychology]. *Znanie-sila*, 1978, No. 5.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Personal file No. 922.073. GA of the Moscow oblast—F. 937—Op. 3, No. 49—P. 2.

89. A.R. Luria, [A heroic, inspired work of a scientist]. *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, 1977, 8 September.

90. The building of the Institute of Experimental Psychology was on Mokhovaia Street No. 9. It is now the Psychological Institute of the RAO (Marx prospekt No. 9,

corpus B). The Laboratory of Language and Thought was located in the room where Lev Semenovich lived for a short time.

91. Quoted in K.E. Levitin, [*One is not born a personality*]. Moscow: "Nauka" Publishers, 1990. P. 131.

92. V.N. Kolbanovskii, [On Vygotsky's psychological views]. *Voprosy Psikhologii*, 1956, No. 5.

93. A.R. Luria, [*Stages on a trodden path*]. Moscow: Moscow State University Publishers, 1982.

94. [*Problems of contemporary psychology*], edited by K. N. Kornilov. Moscow, 1926. Vol. 2, p. 28.

95. The results of this study are reflected in the article [The problem of dominant reactions], published in 1926 in the second volume of the collection [*Problems of contemporary psychology*] (pp. 100–123).

96. They are reflected in the works [*Educational psychology*], [*On the psychology and pedagogy of children's abnormalities*], and in the foreword to the collection [*Problems in the education of blind, deaf and mute, and mentally retarded children*].

97. These are [Consciousness as a problem of the psychology of behavior], [A method of reflexological and psychological studies], and [The problem of dominant reactions].

98. This analysis is reflected in Vygotsky's prefaces to books by Lazurskii, Shul'ts, Thorndike, and Freud.

99. TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 42—D. 42, D. 499—L. 12.

100. TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 42—D. 42, D. 499—L. 15.

101. TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 42—D. 42, D. 499—L. 5.

102. L.S. Vygotsky, [*Imagination and creativity at school age*]. Moscow, 1930. P. 46.

103. Publication of the Department of SPON of the Administration of Socialist Education [Glavsotsvos] of the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR, Moscow, 1924. The book was printed by the Gomel' typographers "Polesspechat'."

104. [*Problems in the education of blind, deaf and mute, and mentally retarded children*]. Moscow, 1924. P. 3.

105. Ibid. P. 5.

106. [Minutes of the Organizational Office of the Congress of 19 May 1924]. TsGA RSFSR Archives of the Ministry of Education of the Russian RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 69—Ed. khr. 329.

107. Vygotsky gave a report on the topic [Methods of screening and study of mentally retarded children] at a subsection on work with mentally retarded children. TsGA RSFSR—F. 1575—Op. 1—Ed. khr. 531.

108. [Minutes of the Organizational Office of the Congress of 19 May 1924]. TsGA RSFSR Archives of the Ministry of Education of the Russian RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 69—Ed. khr. 329.

109. [Minutes of the Scientific-Pedagogical Section of the GUS of 22 November 1924]. TsGA RSFSR Archives of the Ministry of the RSFSR, Leningrad—L. 144.

110. *Narodnoe prosveshchenie*, 1925, No. 1, pp. 112–20. The report was published in this journal under the title [Principles of educating physically handicapped children]. Later this report was published with additions in the book [*Ways to edu-*

cate the physically handicapped child]. Moscow, 1926. Pp. 7–22.

111. D.I. Azbukin, [Recollections of L.S. Vygotsky]. Archives of Professor Kh. S. Zamskii; manuscript, pp. 2–3.

112. Resolution 2 of the All-Russian Congress on the Protection of Child Labor and Child Welfare. TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op. 69—D. 329—L. 2.

113. D.I. Azbukin, Op. cit. (note 111). Pp. 8–9.

114. GA of the Moscow Oblast—F. 937—Op. 3—D. 10—L. 21 (Minutes of meetings).

115. GA of the Moscow Oblast—F. 937—Op. 3—D. 10—L. 2 (Minutes of meetings).

116. GA of the Moscow Oblast—F. 924—Ed. khr. 15—L. 15.

117. Ibid.

118. Information about the preceding scientific and teaching activities of L.S. Vygotsky of 14 September 1925. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

119. L.S. Vygotsky's workbook. Entry No. 14 (Basis: Certificate No. 1506). The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

120. Instructions on the Second MGU No. 77. GA of the Moscow Oblast—F. 948—Op. 1—D. 168—L. 132.

121. Vygotsky's workbook. Entry No. 13 (Basis: Certificate No. 31726 of 04–07–25). The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

122. [Consciousness as a problem of the psychology of behavior]. [*Psychology and Marxism*]. Moscow-Leningrad: GIZ, 1925. Vol. 1, pp. 175–98. Ibid. [*Collected works*] (in 6 vols.). Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers, 1982. Vol. 1, pp. 78–98.

123. L.S. Vygotsky, [*Collected works*] (in 6 vols.). Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers, 1982. Vol. 1, p. 78.

124. D.B. El'konin, [*Selected psychological works*]. Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers, 1989. P. 417.

125. Letter of the Administration of the Deputy of the People's Commissariat on Foreign Affairs attached to the government of the RSFSR for No. 750/3717 o/P of 25 April 1925. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

126. Ibid.

127. Instructions to the delegate of the People's Commissariat of Education, Comrade L.S. Vygotsky, of 7/11/25, No. 51424. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

128. From Vygotsky's workbook. This entry was based on: (a) a certificate of the People's Commissariat of Education of 7 July 1925, for No. 51424; (b) a certificate of the Ambassador of the USSR to Germany for No. 1198 of 7–U111–25.

129. Information on L.S. Vygotsky's preceding research and teaching activity of 14 September 1925. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

130. The principles of social education of deaf and mute children in Russia. *International Conference on the Education of the Deaf*. London, 1925. Pp. 227–37.

131. L.S. Vygotsky, [*Collected works*] (in 6 vols.). Moscow: "Pedagogika" Publishers, 1983. Vol. 5, p. 101–114.

132. F. Krzhizh [The international conference in London on the protection of the deaf and mute]. *Obzor hluchonemykh*, Cisló V. Praze 1, dne 1, ledna, 1926 Rocnik 8.

133. Information on L.S. Vygotsky's preceding research and teaching activity of 14 September 1925. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

134. Extract from the Minutes of the Board of Experts of the Institute of Experimental Psychology of 10/5/25. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

135. Extract from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the GNIEP of 11/5/1925. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

136. [*The psychology of art*], with an afterword by N.G. Iaroshevskii, was published as an addition to the collection of Vygotsky's works by "Pedagogika" Publishers in 1987.

137. A.N. Leont'ev, Preface to L.S. Vygotsky, [*The psychology of art*]. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986. P. 6.

138. L.S. Vygotsky, Ibid. P. 15.

139. A.N. Leont'ev, Op. cit. (note 137). Pp. 6–7.

140. L.S. Vygotsky [*The psychology of art*] (3rd ed.). Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986. P. 329.

141. See: [Bykhovskii's drawings] (1926); [Modern psychology and art] (1927–1928); a review of the book [*Dramatic school work on the basis of a study of children's creativity*] (1929); [Imagination and creativity in school age] (1930); [On the question of the psychology of the creativity of the actor] (1932).

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145. Agreement No. 2872/2992 of 11/9/25. Signed by Vygotsky's own hand on 26 December 1925. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

146. Letter from L.S. Vygotsky to L.S. Sakharov written in the hospital on 2/15/26. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

147. Extracts from Minutes No. 7 of 24 November 1926 of the session of the Editorial Board of the GIEN. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

148. Vygotsky's hospital file, No. 109720 of 11/4/25. TsGA RSFSR—F. 2306—Op.42—Ed. khr. 499—L. 10.

149. *Meditinskaiia spravka*, No. 917 of 5/22/26. The L.S. Vygotsky family archives.

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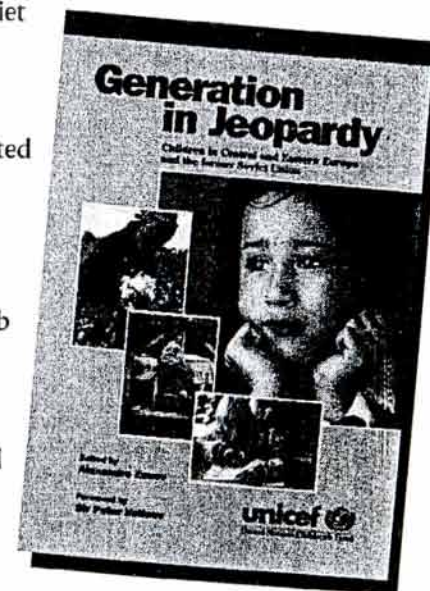
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