

Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky Studies: The State of the Art & New Perspectives

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&

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The Good News

Vygotsky
is on the peak of his popularity!

Vygotsky (1925): the first appearance in the West

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International Conference on the Education of the Deaf

HELD AT
THE LONDON DAY TRAINING COLLEGE.

Southampton Row, W.C.1
(By permission of the London County Council)

ON
Monday, July 20th, Tuesday, July 21st,
Thursday, July 23rd and Friday, July 24th, 1925

AND AT
THE ROYAL SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF.
Margate

(By invitation of the Committee of the Schools)

ON
Wednesday, July 22nd, 1925.

LONDON.
1925.

Printed by Wm. H. Taylor & Sons, 30/30a, Highgate Road, N.W.8.

M. Orellana, Madrid: "Although I have no special qualification to your regard as an official representative of my Govern-

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ment, I wish, nevertheless, in the name of my countrymen, to thank you for the very kind reception I have had here as a teacher of the Institution Nationale at Madrid. I wish also to congratulate my former teacher, M. Thollon, and Mr. Herlin, who has taught me to love to teach the deaf and dumb."

M. Orellana then shook hands with M. Thollon.

Mr. Schorsch, Germany, said: "The time has now come when I must go back to Germany. My little children, with their blue eyes and in their simple words, will ask me what I have seen in London. And I shall say, 'I have seen warm hearts and I have seen very good men from the whole of the world who have good-will and hope to offer you!' In my first quiet moment I shall fold my hands and I shall say, 'I in the future time will more than before value the motto of the Prince of Wales, "Ich dien."'"

Mr. Vigotsky said: "I salute the conference in the name of the Socialist Soviet Republics of Russia and in the name of the Commissioners of the Russian People for Public Education. I thank the committee for the reception in London, and I trust that the discussions of the conference will have real success."

Mr. Sedman, Czech-Slovakia, said: "As delegate of the Czech-Slovakian Government and representative of the public education minister and of the Teachers' Association, I have the honour to thank the conference committee for the most kind and cordial reception you have given both to myself and to the other delegates of foreign countries."

M. Helman, of Poland, said: "I thank the committee for all they have done to make us happy during our stay in London, and couple with it the congratulations on the success of the conference, and best wishes for the continued success of your work."

M. Anderson, Norway: "It is my earnest wish that as a result of this conference we shall all make great progress in helping the deaf children through their mental and spiritual isolation that is the saddest consequence of their defect. This conference has stimulated all who have been fortunate enough to hear the papers and to see the exhibits and the demonstrations. I am delighted to be here myself, and I wish to express my heartiest thanks for all I have seen and heard."

Mr. Anders Hansen, Sweden, said: "It is only a few days since we were total strangers to each other, many of us, but to-day what a transformation has taken place! To-day we are friends—(applause)—we are all looking forward to meeting each other again soon. The conference has been a success. Why? It is not by accident. It is because the conference has been prepared so thoroughly well, and I want to express, on behalf of my countrymen and all the Scandinavians, my admiration and

Vygotsky (1925): the first appearance in the West (*continued*)

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Bohemia.—There are seven private institutes, supported by the country, and one public school established by the capital Prague.

Moravia and Silesia.—Then we have four public institutes, established by the country for Moravia and Silesia.

For Slovakia and Subcarpathian Russia we have five public state institutes and one private school supported by state funds. In the whole Republic we have eighteen institutes or schools, in which 1,457 children are educated.

These institutes are partly residential schools, partly day-schools, partly a combination of both of them.

The education language is—

In ten institutes, Czech (Bohemian).

In four institutes, Slovak.

In two institutes, German.

In one institute, Ruthenian.

In one institute, Magyar.

In these institutes there are 119 teachers.

In the Czecho-Slovak Republic (nearly 14 million inhabitants) there are 112 deaf per 100,000 inhabitants. In the whole Republic we have about 15,000 deaf, 4,500 of them being children obliged by the laws of our state to go to school (from the 6th to the 14th year). But only 1,457 children are educated in our institutes. Two-thirds of the whole number of children obliged to go to school are without any education.

The main cause of this unfavourable state is in the poor care of the Deaf in the former Austrian-Hungarian monarchy and in the fact that in Austria deaf children were not obliged to go to school. Financial means have not been able to catch up, in seven years of liberty, what was neglected in a hundred years before the war.

Another progressive step is the building of a new modern institute in Prague, which is to be handed over for its purpose at the beginning of the term 1926-7. This institute will be in close collaboration with our university in Prague.

As to the evolution of the speech, we advance synthetically, and to correct the phonetic sounds we use the analytic method.

There are some societies in our Republic which pay the expenses of board for some children in the institutes, take care of them when they leave the institute, and support them materially and morally when they become self-supporting, take care of the uneducated deaf, building for them homes in which those uneducated are taught some handicraft or trade, and for old persons, or those who are unfit for work, they build asylums.

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PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL EDUCATION FOR DEAF AND DUMB CHILDREN IN RUSSIA.

By LEO VYGOTSKY.

Director of Education of Children with Defects, under the people's Commissariat of Education, Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, and Lecturer of the Second Moscow State University.

The system of Social Education of deaf and dumb children, based upon principles of which I shall be chiefly speaking to-day, is not only a theoretical construction, but also real, living facts taken from daily life in various fields of pedagogical observation, facts which have been developing before us in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and particularly in the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. Of course, it should be understood that the theoretical and the practical work of this system has not yet been completed, and therefore I should be right in saying that I am here to-day for the purpose of sharing with you the experiments of the first steps in this direction, the first attempts of scientific thought and pedagogical conquests leading to the creation of a system of Social Education of the Deaf and Dumb. However, the chief principles of this system can already be formulated with such exactitude and clearness that I am hoping for some success in my endeavour to acquaint you with the principles of the new movement we are putting into operation.

Before proceeding to the actual principles of Social Education of deaf and dumb children, I should like to mention certain scientific principles on which the new system is based. These principles refer to the psycho-physiological peculiarities of a deaf and dumb child, and to the process of its bringing up. Every physical defect, be it blindness or deafness, alters the child's attitude towards the universe, and, primarily, towards its fellow-beings. Let us take, for instance, the geometrical place of a human being in the social sphere, his part and his fate as partaker of life and all functions of social existence, and we shall come to the conclusion that everything is to be entirely altered in the case of a human being with any defect. A physical defect provokes a social sprain with unavoidable consequences, just in the same way as a sprained ankle, or injured arm, interferes with our movements and makes us suffer from pains and inflammation. It means that an organ is out of order, and regular functioning of the body is interfered with.

The problem of children's defectiveness dealt with psychologically and pedagogically should be made an important social

Vygotsky (1934). Thought in schizophrenia

Выготский (1930/1932)

СОВЕТСКАЯ НЕВРОПАТОЛОГИЯ,
ПСИХИАТРИЯ И ПСИХОГИГИЕНА
SOWJETSKAJA NEWROPATOLOGIJA,
PSICHIATRIJA I PSICHOGIGIJENA

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СОДЕРЖАНИЕ. 1932. Том I. Вып. 8	INHALT. 1932. Bd. I. Heft 8.
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SPECIAL ARTICLES

THOUGHT IN SCHIZOPHRENIA

PROF. L. S. VYGOTSKY
MOSCOW, U. S. S. R.
TRANSLATED BY
J. KASANIN, M.D.
HOWARD, E. I.

Beyond doubt the most significant development in psychology has been the recent tendency to bring together investigations in various fields in order to discover the common principles involved in those investigations. Especially is this true of psychopathology and genetic or child psychology. They have developed independently, and only occasionally heretofore have the results obtained been brought together for comparison.

Meanwhile more and more investigators think that psychologic laws are the same no matter where they are observed. As an example of the growing integration of the various fields of psychologic investigation and the growing feeling of the unity of psychologic laws in spite of the variety of their manifestation, one may refer to the comparative study of the splitting of thought, the phenomena of hypobulia¹ in psychopathology, and the phenomenon of syncretic thinking in child psychology. In hypobulia there are phenomena which were formerly considered a result of schizophrenia or hysteria; in the light of more thorough investigation, however, they now appear to be in reality stages in the normal organization of consciousness as a necessary ontogenetic step in the development of normal personality. Such observations are doubtless widely true: The phenomena of developing thought in the adolescent child are evidently in general closely related to certain aspects of pathologic thinking.

For the past five years Vygotsky, together with Professor Luria, has been doing extremely interesting work on the psychology of schizophrenia, utilizing the experimental technique of the Gestalt psychology. The article was written at my request over three years ago, and since then a great deal more work has been done.

Dr. Charles Trueblood of Brown University edited the translation (translator's note).

1. "The hypobulic type of will is the ontogenetic and phylogenetic lower stage of the purposive will" (Kreischmer, E.: Hysteria, Washington, D. C., Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1926).

The pre-history of the “Vygotsky Boom”

- Michael Cole in 2004 about the beginning of the “Vygotsky Boom” in late 1970s:

“I received the Vygotsky manuscripts from Luria **in the early 1970s**. But even with the expert help of able colleagues and a good translation to work from, **I could not convince the publisher**, with whom Luria had made arrangements, **that the manuscripts were worth publishing.**”

The pre-history of the “Vygotsky Boom”

- Michael Cole in 2004 about the beginning of the “Vygotsky Boom” in late 1970s (*continued*):

“All of the problems that I experienced earlier remained in place. The work seemed **dated**, the polemics either **opaque or outdated**, and the overall product was certain to produce **fiscal disaster**, not to say **personal embarrassment**.”

The pre-history of the “Vygotsky Boom”

- Michael Cole in 2004 about the beginning of the “Vygotsky Boom” in late 1970s (*continued*):

“...We were able to produce a reasonable **selection of readings from the two manuscripts** he [i.e. Luria] had given to me. To these we added **several essays of an applied nature** so that readers could see how the abstract theoretical argument played out in practice.”

The pre-history of the “Vygotsky Boom”

- Michael Cole in 2004 about the beginning of the “Vygotsky Boom” in late 1970s (*continued*):

“The result, entitled *Mind in Society*, was published in 1978. I heaved **a great sigh of relief**: I had finally discharged my obligation to Luria and the publisher, thanks in good measure to the hard work of my colleagues.”

The Start of the Boom, Factor 1: Toulmin's "Mozart"

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The Mozart of Psychology

Stephen Toulmin

SEPTEMBER 28, 1978
ISSUE

Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes

by L.S. Vygotsky, edited by Michael Cole and Vera John-Steiner and Sylvia Scribner and Ellen Soubelman

Harvard University Press, 159 pp., \$12.50

The Psychology of Art

by L.S. Vygotsky
M.I.T. Press, 305 pp., \$15.95

Soviet Developmental Psychology: An Anthology

edited by Michael Cole
M.E. Sharpe, 621 pp., \$30.00

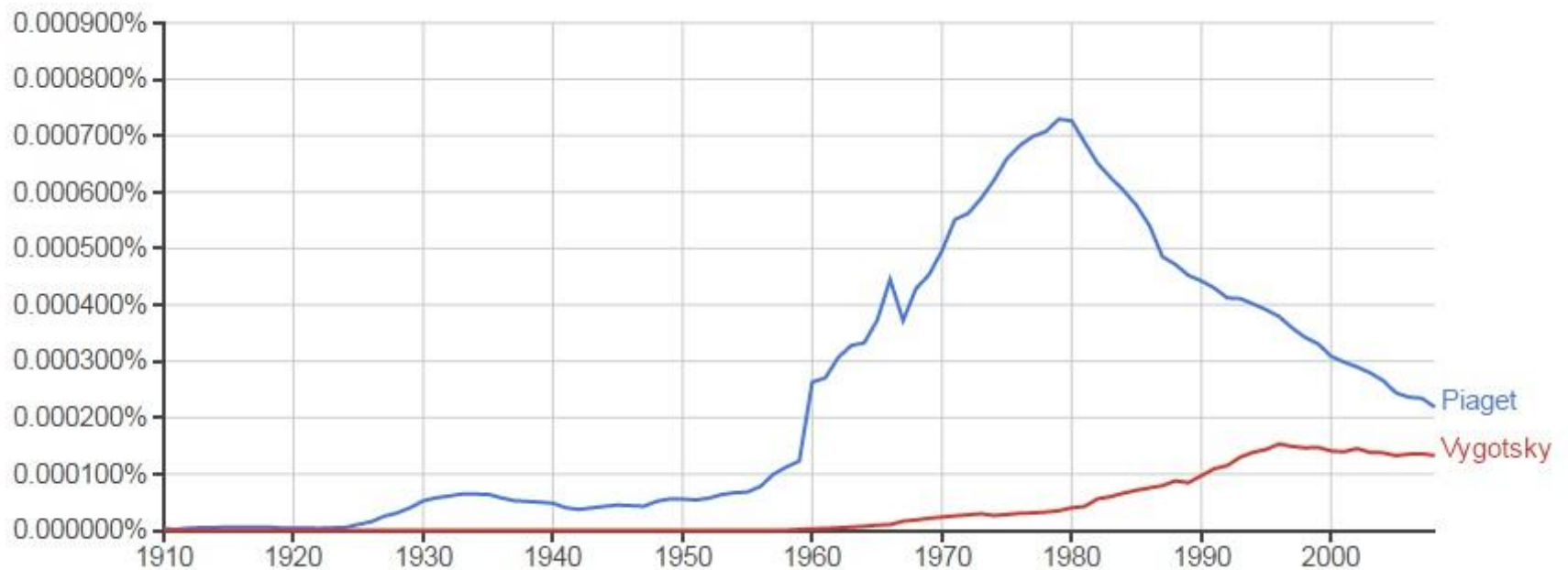
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The Start of the Boom,

Factor 2: “Vygotzky” vs. “Piaget”

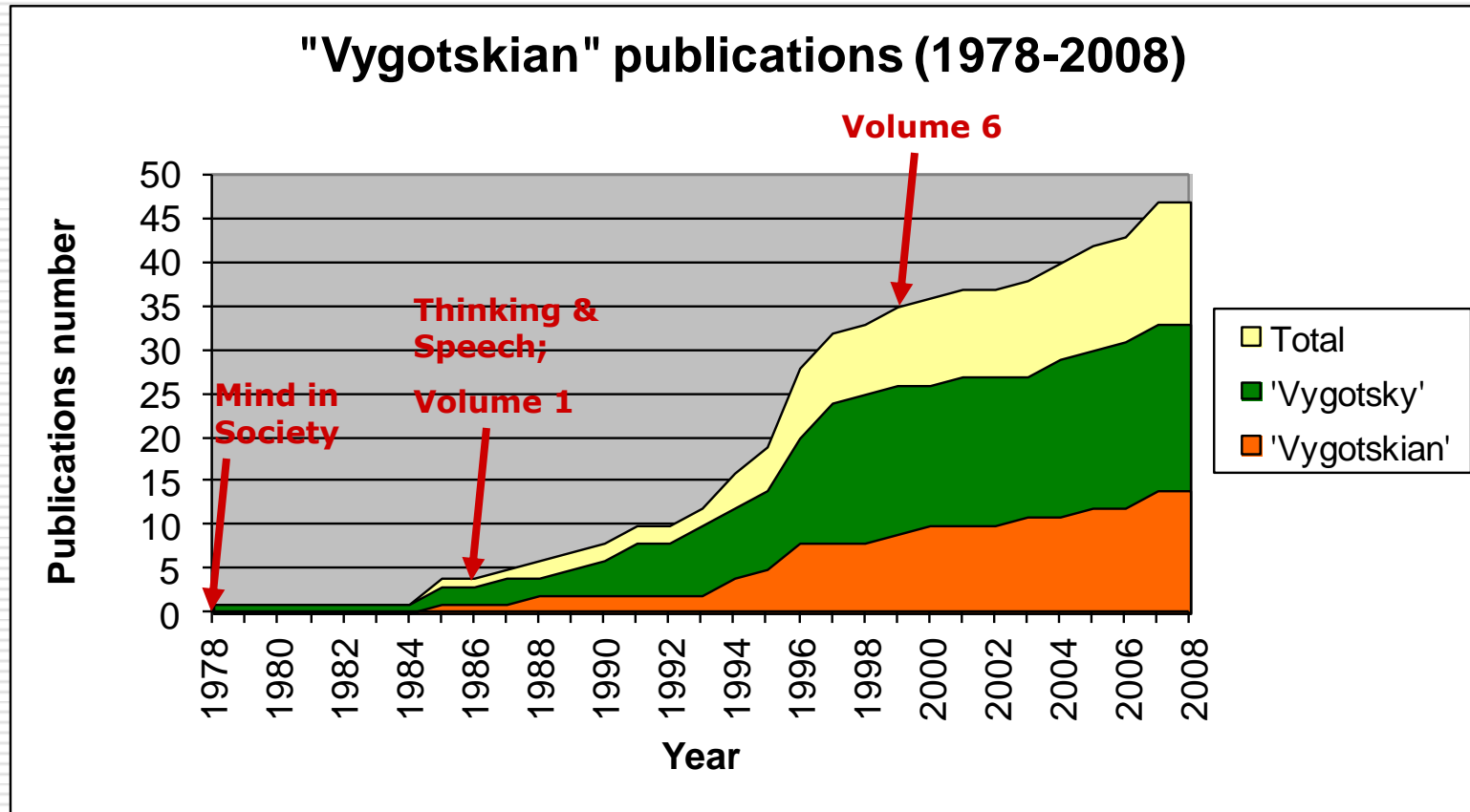


“Vygotsky Boom”:

Major publications of Vygotsky in the West in 1960s-1990s

- ❑ Thought and Language, **1962** (trans. Hanfmann & Vakar)
 - ❑ Mind in Society, **1978** (eds. Cole, John-Steiner, Scribner, Souberman)
 - ❑ Thought and Language, **1986** (trans. Kozulin)
 - ❑ Thinking and Speech, **1987** (trans. Minick), volume 1 of—
 - ❑ The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky, in 6 volumes, **1987-1999** (ed. Rieber et al.)
 - ❑ The Vygotsky Reader, **1994** (ed. Van der Veer and Valsiner),
 - ❑ *etc.*
-

The early history of "Vygotsky boom": book publications (*in English*) **about Vygotsky**



Lev Vygotsky Superstar (as of 2002): The “elusive genius” (©Bruner, 1985)

- Haggbloom et al. (2002). *The 100 Most Eminent Psychologists of the 20th Century. Review of General Psychology*, 6(2), 139-152:
 - Journal citation list (JCL)
 - Introductory textbook citation list (TCL)
 - Survey list (SL)
 - National Academy of Sciences (NAS)
 - American Psychological Association (APA)
 - “83. Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich” is *unique* as the only individual, whose acclaim and high reputation is based on survey *only* (19 on SL)
-

Lev Vygotsky, the “elusive genius” (as of 2002, according to Haggbloom et al.)

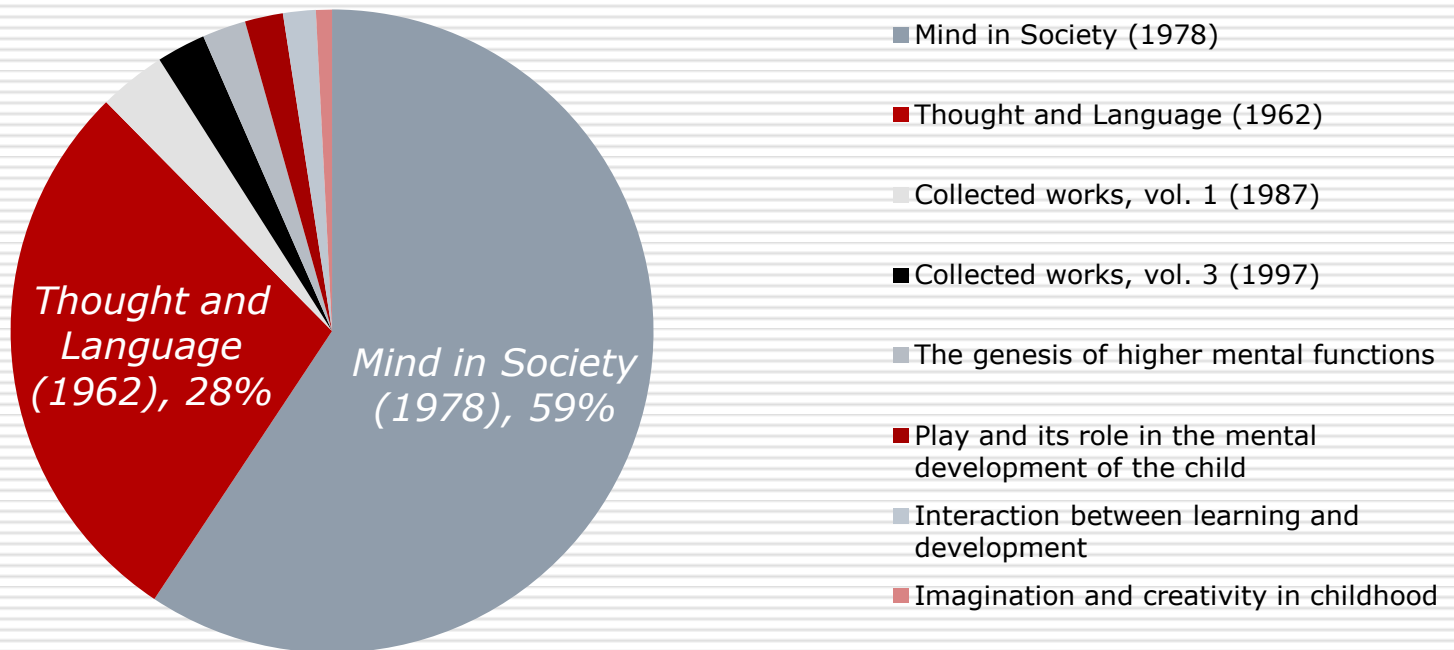
- Haggbloom et al. (2002). **The 100 Most Eminent Psychologists of the 20th Century.** Review of General Psychology, 6(2), 139-152:
 - Cf.:
 - 82. Edwards, A.L.: 17 on JCL *only*
 - 84. Rosenthal, Robert: 22 on JCL *only*
 - 85. Rokeach, Milton: 25 on JCL *only*
 - 96. Witkin, Herman A.: 31 on JCL *only*
 - Cf. also (*other Russians in top-100*):
 - 24. Pavlov, Ivan P.: 22 on TCL & 6.5 on SL
 - 69. Luria, Alexander R.: 24 on SL & NAS in 1968
-

Vygotsky today (as of 2016): Google Scholar, ~86,600 results

- ❑ **[BOOK]** [Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes](#)
 - ❑ **LS Vygotsky** - 1980 - books.google.com
 - ❑ The great Russian psychologist LS Vygotsky has long been recognized as a pioneer in developmental psychology. But his theory of development has never been well understood in the West. Mind in Society corrects much of this misunderstanding. Carefully edited by a ...
 - ❑ [Cited by 65028](#) [Related articles](#) [All 13 versions](#) [Cite](#) [Saved](#) [More](#)
 - ❑ **[BOOK]** [The collected works of LS Vygotsky: Problems of the theory and history of psychology](#)
 - ❑ **LS Vygotsky** - 1997 - books.google.com
 - ❑ Presents a theoretical work originally written in the 1920s, long believed to be lost, by a Soviet psychologist. He responds to the proliferation of different schools within the field with the formulation of a unified theory based on Marxism. For scholars in psychology and the ...
 - ❑ [Cited by 2692](#) [Related articles](#) [All 6 versions](#) [Cite](#) [Saved](#)
 - ❑ **[CITATION]** [Vol. 1: Problems of general psychology](#)
 - ❑ RW Rieber, AS Carton, **LS Vygotsky** - 1987 - library.wur.nl
 - ❑ The Wageningen UR Library Catalogue contains bibliographic data on books and periodicals held by the libraries of Wageningen University and Research Centre and some 15 associated libraries. Holding data are added to each record.
 - ❑ [Cited by 3719](#) [Related articles](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#) [More](#)
 - ❑ **[CITATION]** The genesis of higher mental functions
 - ❑ **LS Vygotsky** - The concept of activity in Soviet psychology, 1981 - Sharpe, New York
 - ❑ [Cited by 2366](#) [Related articles](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#)
 - ❑ [duq.edu](#) **[PDF]**
 - ❑ [Play and its role in the mental development of the child](#)
 - ❑ **LS Vygotsky** - Soviet psychology, 1967 - Taylor & Francis
 - ❑ In speaking of play and its role in the preschooler's development, we are concerned with two fundamental questions: first, how play itself arises in development—its origin and genesis; second, the role of this developmental activity, which we call play, as a form of ...
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 - ❑ [Imagination and creativity in childhood](#)
-

Vygotsky's Fame in Citations: The two books “lost in translation”

References to Vygotsky's works



The **Bad** News

Vygotsky
is at the **peak** of his popularity!

Mind in Society (1978): Citations in Google Scholar



Scholar



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Michael Cole

Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes

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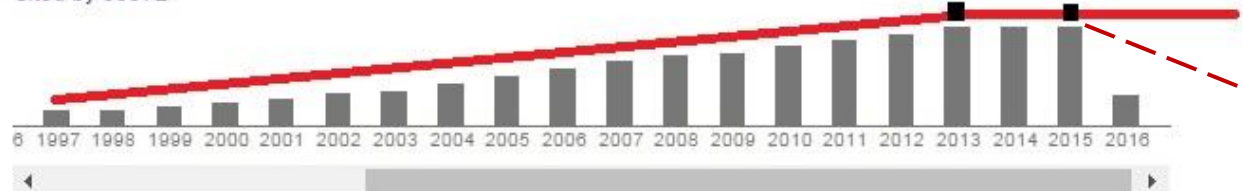
Authors Lev Semenovich Vygotsky

Publication date 1980/10/15

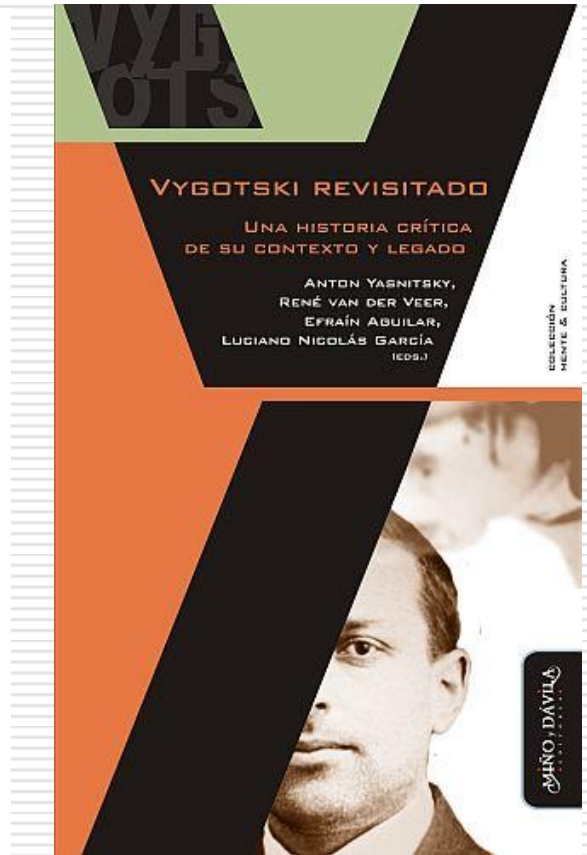
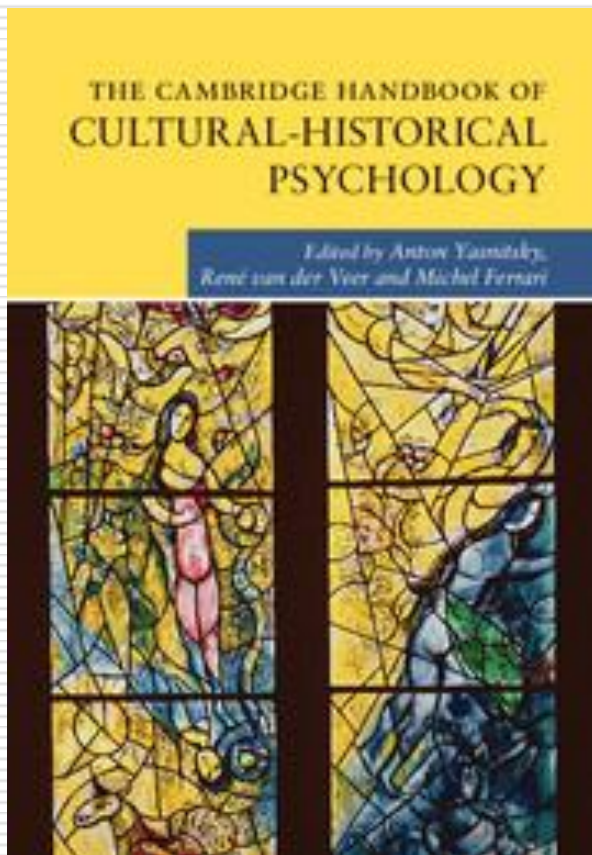
Publisher Harvard university press

Description The great Russian psychologist LS Vygotsky has long been recognized as a pioneer in developmental psychology. But his theory of development has never been well understood in the West. *Mind in Society* corrects much of this misunderstanding. Carefully edited by a group of outstanding Vygotsky scholars, the book presents a unique selection of Vygotsky's important essays.

Total citations Cited by 65572



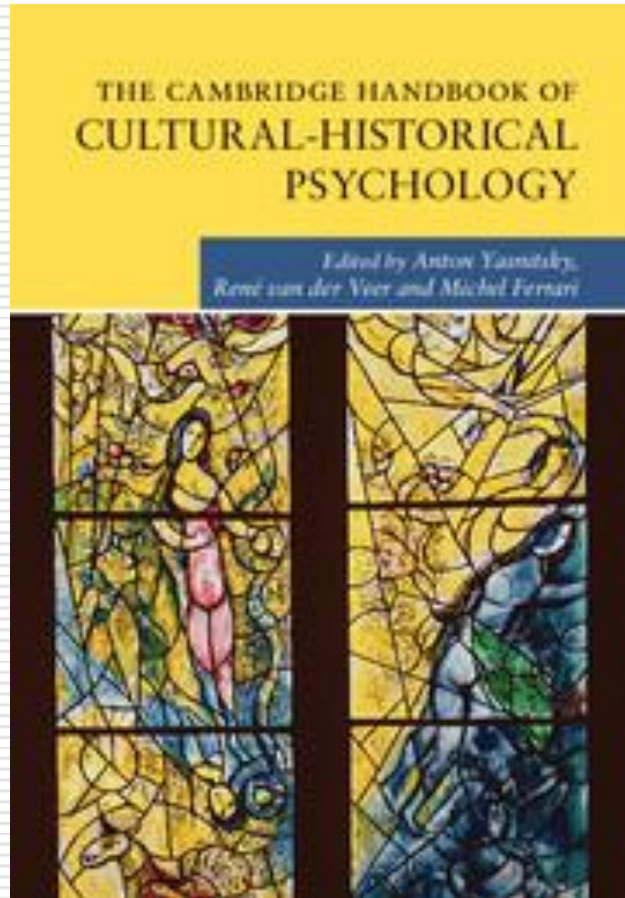
What was done in 2006-2016: Three stages of the “(R)evolution”



The three sources of the Revolution

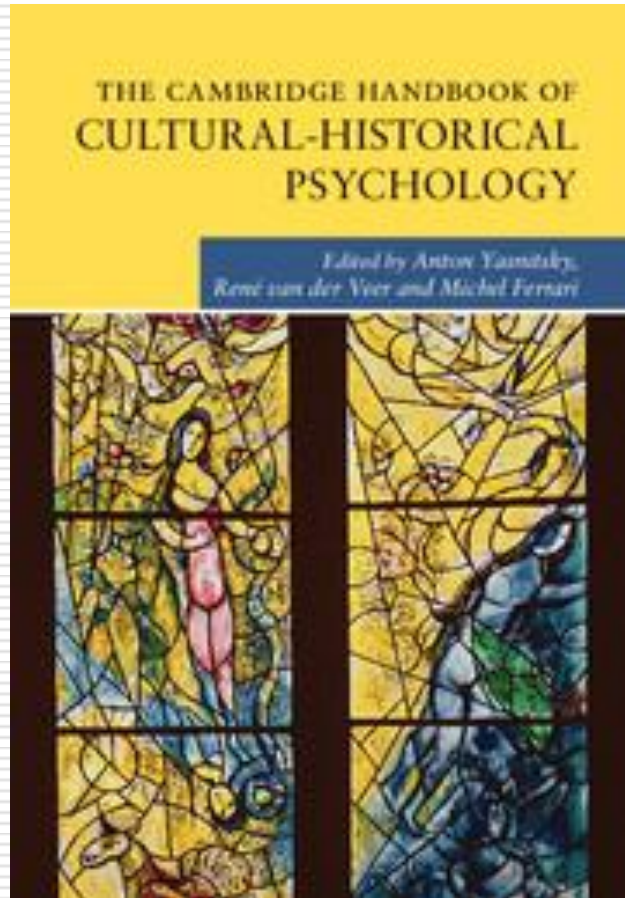
- ❑ Archival research in Russia, Ukraine and in the West—mostly, in the United States (“archival revolution”)
 - ❑ Research focus shift from Vygotsky as such to the “Vygotsky—Luria Circle”
 - ❑ The “revisionist historiography” of Russia and Soviet Union as the contemporary research on the historical background & social context
-

Stage 1, The gold standard of "Vygotskian legacy": *Cambridge handbook of CHP* (CUP, 2014)



- ❑ First ever handbook of cultural-historical psychology
 - ❑ Vygotsky-Luria's project of integrative bio-social psychological science of mind, brain and culture
 - ❑ Beyond psychology: interdependencies with pedagogy, linguistics, semiotics, theory of art, psychotherapy, cognitive, dialogic, and "romantic" science
-

Stage 1, The gold standard of "Vygotskian legacy": *Cambridge handbook of CHP* (CUP, 2014)

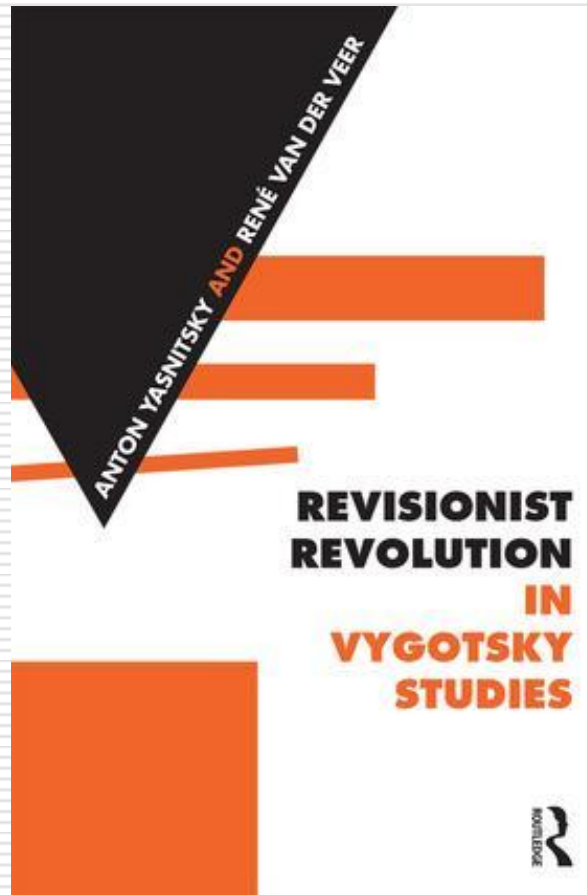


Book reviews:

- **Jerome Bruner:** "What a wide-ranging view of the comprehensive subject of *mind-culture-neurology*! It serves a real purpose both *pedagogically* and in the *scholarly* sense!"

 - **Michael Cole:** "Anyone interested in the ideas of Vygotsky and his legacies will find the book a rich source of information and inspiration"
-

Stage 2, **Vygotsky-Luria project as such:** *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky Studies* (Routledge, **2015/2016**)



A series of studies that deal with

- ☐ History
- ☐ Contexts
- ☐ People
- ☐ Textology
- ☐ Legacy
- ☐ Interdependencies of the Vygotsky-Luria project

Stage 2, **Vygotsky-Luria project as such:** *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky Studies*: Key achievements & discoveries



□ Part I: **Contexts and People**

Comment: Vygotsky Studies have been placed in the historical context in

- (a) A study of the “**Stalinist model**” of science/ psychology: historically and in contemporary Russia
 - (b) A detailed discussion of the “**Vygotsky-Luria Circle**” of two-three dozen individual researchers, scholars, thinkers, and intellectuals in Russia and abroad
 - (c) A critical revision of the dogma of the Stalinist “Vygotsky ban” in 1936-1956: the study demonstrates that **Vygotsky and his legacy was never banned** as such by the Stalinist regime
-

Stage 2, **Vygotsky-Luria project as such:** *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky Studies*: Key achievements & discoveries



□ Part II: **Texts and Legacy**

Comment: Considerable and in-depth historical, archival and textological work that

- (a) Revealed the contents of the **personal archives** of Vygotsky and **his 1930s critique of his theory of 1920s**
 - (b) Presented the **first ever chronology** of composition of Vygotsky's works and assessed their relative importance for the author and his scholarly legacy
 - (c) Resulted in the compilation of the first ever rigorous and **the most up-to-date bibliography of Vygotsky's** works published during his lifetime
-

Stage 2, **Vygotsky-Luria project as such:** *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky Studies*: Key achievements & discoveries



□ Part III. **Holism and Transnationalism**

Comment: The studies of the transnational connections and exchanges of Vygotsky-Luria group that

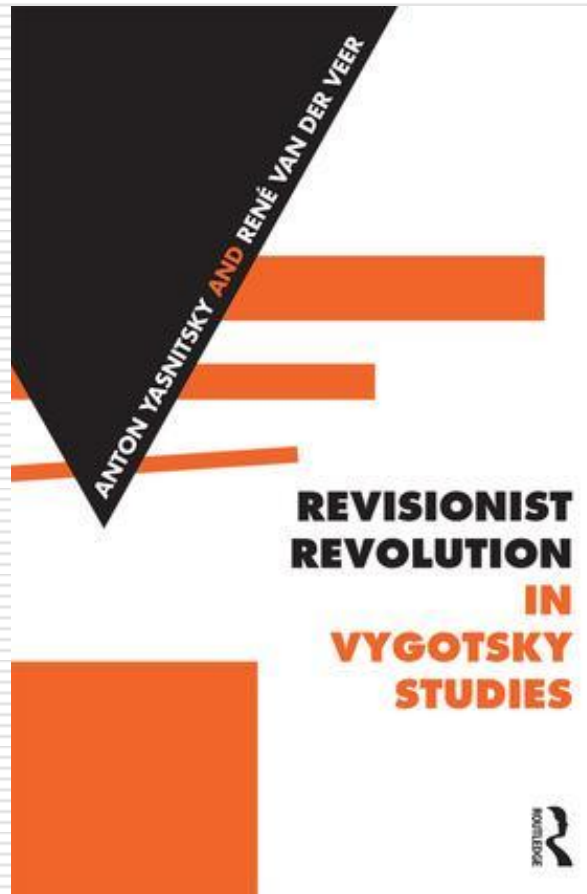
- (a) Presented first outline of the **transnational history** of “**Vygotskian legacy**” outside the USSR
 - (b) Critically discussed the classic story of Luria (USSR) and Koffka’s (Germany-USA) expedition to the Central Asia (1932), the **Lamarckian** and **vulgar Marxist bias** of Vygotsky and Luria, and the aftermath of the trip
 - (c) Outlined the historical convergence of Soviet ‘**cultural-historical**’ scholarship of Vygotsky-Luria et al. and German-American holistic ‘**gestalt**’ psychology of Wolfgang Wertheimer, Kurt Lewin, Kurt Koffka et al.
-

Stage 2, **Vygotsky-Luria project as such:** *The zone of proximal development*



- **Proctor**, Hannah (2016). *Revolutionary thinking: A theoretical history of Alexander Luria's 'Romantic science'*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London
- **Zavershneva**, Ekaterina & **Van der Veer**, René (2017). *Vygotsky's notebooks: A selection*. New York: Springer
- **Yasnitsky**, Anton (2017). *Vygotsky: An Intellectual Biography*. London & New York: Routledge

Stage 2, **Vygotsky-Luria project as such:** *Revisionist Revolution in Vygotsky Studies* A Summary in Five Theoretical Statements



1. Vygotsky (1896-1934) created a **mechanistic "instrumental theory"** in 1920s
 2. Vygotsky **critisized and destroyed** this theory in early 1930s and deliberately **never published** a few of his "foundational works"
 3. Vygotsky was a **Lamarkian, vulgar Marxist, often self-contradictory** and the **beginning holistic 'gestalt' scholar**
 4. Vygotsky made an effort at **reconstructing his theory** in the holistic, gestaltist spirit
 5. Vygotsky eventually **failed** to build such a theory, but stopped at its 'threshold': he died in 1934 and, in his own words, died like biblical Moses, who had only a glimpse of the Promised Land of Israel, but was to never set a foot on it
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Stage 3, Global reception and social construction of “Vygotskian legacy”: Transnational histories of Soviet psychology & reception studies (*a selection*)

- ❑ **Mecacci**, Luciano (2006). La psicologia russa e le scienze psicologiche e psichiatriche **in Italia** nella seconda metà del Novecento | (2015). Vygotsky's reception in the West: The Italian case between Marxism and communism
 - ❑ **García**, Luciano Nicolás (2012). La recepción de la psicología soviética **en la Argentina**: lecturas y apropiaciones en la psicología, psiquiatría y psicoanálisis (1936-1991) | (2015). La “canonización” de Vigotski **en España** y Argentina (1978-1991)
 - ❑ **Woodward**, William (2013). Liebesgrüsse von Unter den Linden (From Unter den Linden, with Love): Eine transnationale Geschichte russischer Psychologie **in Ost-Deutschland**
 - ❑ **Gouarné**, Isabelle (2013). L'introduction du marxisme **en France**. Philosoviétisme et sciences humaines, 1920-1939
 - ❑ **Métraux**, Alexandre (2015). Lev Vygotsky as seen by someone who acted as a go-between **between eastern and western Europe**
 - ❑ **Dafermos**, Manolis (2015). Critical reflection on the reception of Vygotsky's theory **in the international academic communities**
-

Stage 3, Global reception and social construction of “Vygotskian legacy”:

Vygotski revisitado: una historia crítica de su contexto y legado (Miño y Dávila Editores, 2016)



- Spanish/castellano **translation** of “Revisionist revolution” (parts I—III)
- Part IV: the critical history of the **creation and dissemination** of the “Vygotskianism” in Argentina, Spain and Mexico

Back to the Future: Vygotsky in the 21st century

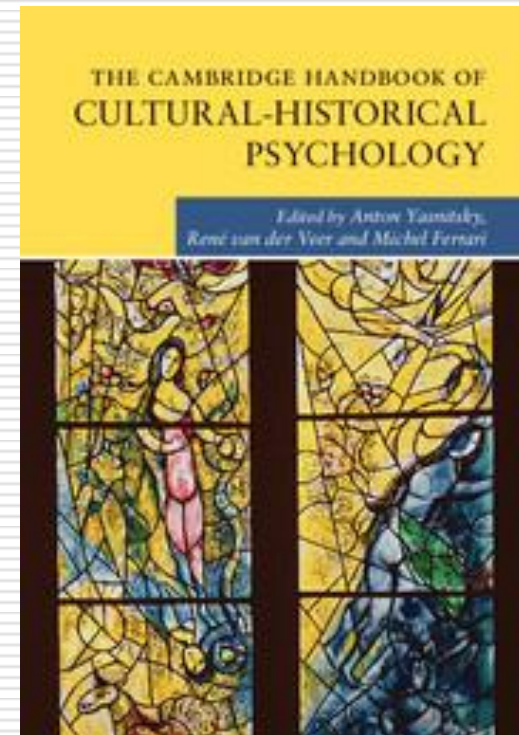
- Stage 1, The gold standard of “Vygotskian legacy”
 - Stage 2, Vygotsky-Luria project as such
 - Stage 3, Global reception and social construction of “Vygotskian legacy”
 - Stage 4, ...
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Vygotsky in the 21st century:

Theory: The *minimalist program*

□ “Cultural-historical gestalt psychology”: Integrative bio-social science of mind, brain and culture in the footsteps of Vygotsky, Luria and many others

□ Example:



Vygotsky in the 21st century:

Theory: The *maximalist program*

- Beyond man *as is* towards the future *new man*: Towards the “**peak psychology**” (Rus.: *вершинная психология*; cf.: Maslow’s “peak experiences”) of an *overman* (Rus.: *сверхчеловек*; Germ.: *Übermensch*; superman) as the **utopian psychological project** of Friedrich Nietzsche—Leon Trotsky—Lev Vygotsky
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Vygotsky in the 21st century:

Method

- Expanding Kurt Lewin(—Lev Vygotsky)'s **method of empirical research** in natural/social settings: holistic research as drama, enactment, living—through (Germ.: *Erlebnis*, Rus.: *переживание/ perezhivanie*), and sense-making (Rus.: *осознание/osoznanie*, *осмысление/osmyshlenie*)
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Vygotsky in the 21st century:

Practical applications

- **Beyond Vygotsky:** Common interbellum (i.e., pre-WWII, 1920s-1930s) **early Soviet experimental social practices** in education, healthcare, medicine, industry, psychophysiology and scientific organization of labour (Rus: *психотехника/psikhotekhnika*), and other **Bolshevik transformative social projects**
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