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Time in L.S. Vygotsky's Creation

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Abstract

Background. Currently, different versions of Russian and foreign concepts are being developed in a single scientific field. In this context, the high heuristic potential of L.S. Vygotsky's concept is revealed as his ideas are in tune with the challenges of information culture.

Objectives. The goal of the current work is to present the integrity of L.S. Vygotsky's concept of culture and the variability of his ideas about emotional experience, sign and tools, the social situation of development, crises at different periods and in different situations in the development of science. The connection between continuity and change over time makes Vygotsky's concept flexible and productive for a digital society.

Methods. The historical-genetic approach, historical hermeneutics and categorical analysis are used to trace the internal logic and stages of the formation of L.S. Vygotsky's scientific views, as well as to outline his opponents and the origins of his methodology and discoveries.

Results. Personal and sociocultural (temporary) factors in the emergence and development of the concept of L.S. Vygotsky were analysed. The role of the initial works on the psychology of culture and theatre in the formation of psychological concepts of emotional experience and personality was shown. A holistic picture of the dynamics of the scientist's views on the development of psyche, the role of the tool-sign, the social situation of development and crises, as factors that determine the boundaries of possible personality changes, the connection between affect and intelligence throughout ontogenesis was presented. The transformation of the concept of interiorisation, which becomes one of the central ones for the development of the psyche in a digital society, was revealed.

Conclusions. Variability over time and, simultaneously, the fundamental integrity of L.S. Vygotsky's approach to culture in its various forms (word, sign, emotional experience, theatre, society) are the basis for the high productivity and creative potential of his ideas, which make it possible to transform them in different social situations of the development of science. The personality of the creator in the context of his life and the life of his ideas gives possibility to interpret it in terms of the psychology of drama, expanding the boundaries of analysis and incorporation of the scientific worldview and concepts of L.S. Vygotsky in modern psychology.

Keywords: cultural psychology, emotional experience, interiorization, tool-sign, social situation of development, affect, intelligence, concept of crisis

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"Times change, and we change with them"

Latin proverb

*"I've known one thought, one and the same,
a thought of passion and of flame"*

M. Yu. Lermontov

The figure of L.S. Vygotsky is complex in that though everyone knows this name, not everyone understands the essence of his work, his personality, changes in both creativity and personality. The attitude to the figure of the creator as an icon, regardless of whether he is a physicist, psychologist, artist, poet, is never productive. Moreover, if we talk about creators who lived and worked at difficult, turning-point times, such as the time at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. Therefore, it seems important to look at how time was reflected in the work of L.S. Vygotsky, and present his life and works as a drama of the artist (his fate and early death, of course, can be considered in terms of drama) with a prologue, acts (periods of creativity) and an epilogue.

Introduction (Prologue)

The beginning of the 20th century was a unique period in the development of science and art in Russia. The turn of the century, starting from the New Age, was reflected by both scientists and artists as a certain turning point, a transition to new realities, new social and ideological concepts, and new approaches to the construction of knowledge. It is not surprising that

many artists associated the last decades of the 19th century with autumn, while the first decades of the 20th were associated with spring.

This understanding of the necessity and irreversibility of changes occurring in the surrounding world was especially clear, more acutely than in previous centuries, and was reflected by people at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. However, it was even more acutely reflected in our time, at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries (Martsinkovskaya, 2015). These periods of time brought together science and art. The commonality in the understanding of changes was manifested in the fact that both scientists and artists believed that times was connected by people and the fruits of their creativity (Asmolov, 2007). The studies of literary scholars and philologists of the early twentieth century were aimed at understanding the psychology of crisis, the psychological characteristics of the era. These studies were extremely important for L.S. Vygotsky.

This time gave birth to many outstanding scientists who created universal theories. Not only great thinkers during this period dealt with a wide range of issues, but it was also a period of creative syntheticism. The breadth of coverage can manifest itself when systematising the material being studied by summing up the results of the work of several groups or even generations of scientists. However, there are eras when scientific thinking leads to new perspectives and constructs that not only unite and systematise known facts, but also consider them from new angles. At this time, tasks are set that open the way for the next generations of scientists. According to T.I. Raynov's definition (Raynov, 1934), this is the era of creative synthesis, such as at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. Lev Semenovich Vygotsky was a scientist who opened up new horizons for the development of science. His views are most consistent with the challenges that science still faces today in connection with the changes taking place in the context of globalisation and the development of a digital society. They help to understand how a person can maintain his uniqueness in a changing and fragile world.

Act I. Theatre

In the first decades of the 20th century, the central interests of L.S. Vygotsky were art, theatre and music. From the very beginning, he sought to understand how time is reflected in art, and how the changes taking place in the world relate to human psychology. The decline of Europe was considered by O. Spengler among others as a crisis of the old society in which culture, society, and people were formed. This feeling of crisis contributed to the emergence of personalistic concepts. Prior to this, psychology

intertwined the study or consideration of personality into general theories of cognition and the social arrangement of the world.

We can say that L.S. Vygotsky was one of the first to address the problem of personality, social and spiritual activity of a person who is both a creator, a subject of the emergence of a new situation, and an object of ongoing changes. The initial appeal to art may be due to the fact that artists, before scientists, felt the apocalyptic mood of the crisis and tried to capture it in their poems, canvases, and music (Martsinkovskaya, 2015).

However, by the end of the first decade of the 20th century, scientists realised the need not only to record, but also to reflect on these experiences, turning to science in search of appropriate tools, to the science that was primarily associated with human experiences — psychology. Vygotsky approached psychology from the sphere of art (theatre and speech), trying to reflect the demands of the time. Yet he attempted not only to reflect, but to understand how a person rises above time, overcomes environmental pressure, and becomes a master of life.

Through art and through understanding the language of art, he sought to answer the question of what personality is. He became in essence, not in form, a pioneer in developing the foundations of personality psychology. In personality he saw a holistic fusion of affect and intellect, which manifested itself in emphasising the significance of experiences. This concept became central to many scientists of that time — S.L. Rubinshtein, L.S. Vygotsky, B.M. Teplov (Martsinkovskaya, 2004). For Vygotsky, aesthetic experience was primary, proving that he was aware of the significance of the connection between the psychological state, worldview and art. In dramaturgy, Vygotsky saw not only the acting of actors, but also the literary outline — the word embodied by the actors and the director within the entire performance. (Sobkin, 2022).

This is proven by his subtle and deep theatre reviews, such as an analysis of a performance based on Shakespeare's "Hamlet". These reviews were published by V.S. Sobkin (2015).

Connection with different types of art was of fundamental importance for the choice of psychological problems. For Vygotsky, prose and poetry were of greatest interest. That is, he placed the word in its various forms at the forefront, considering it necessary for psychology to study it from a new perspective — as a tool for the formation of cultural self-awareness and mastery of one's psyche. The fact that the word (sign) is associated with the general laws of development, to some extent determined the interest in general trends in the development of the psyche, and analysis of the patterns of its formation in ontogenesis, including the formation of

speech, thinking, and sign. The word leads to focusing on the conscious, intellectual side of mental development. From this point of view, it becomes clearer why for Vygotsky mastery of a sign was identified with the formation of volition. The significance of his opponent circles, which were comprised of I.P. Pavlov, I.M. Sechenov, V.M. Bekhterev, reflexology, and paedology also becomes clearer. (Yaroshevsky, 1993; 1994). From the very beginning, Vygotsky sought in his constructions to create generalised, complete constructs, no matter how diverse his interests were. Therefore, the experience, which will be discussed below, was considered by him not only as a reflection of the protagonist's emotions, but also as a recording of the general experiences of the era.

Act II. Crises and the social development situation

Since the early 1920s, Vygotsky was actively involved in the field of psychological research, combining psychology and art. Coming to a conclusion regarding the importance for modern science of an integrated approach to the psyche and the development of paedology, he naturally became one of the leading theorists and practitioners in this field (Vygotsky, 1984).

Studying the development of the intellectual sphere of children, Vygotsky focused on the formation of the child's self-awareness, claiming that the concept of "personality" as a cultural, social formation, is identical to self-awareness. At the same time, while developing self-awareness, the child masters his own psyche and his own behaviour and his dependence on the immediate surrounding reality decreases, allowing him to act under the influence of his own motivation. Since personality, according to L.S. Vygotsky, is the result of cultural development like all higher mental functions, it is formed during the process of internalisation of social and cultural forms of behaviour, which become methods of individual adaptation, behaviour, and thinking. From here, the importance of the environment, especially the cultural environment, for the formation of all spheres of the psyche becomes clear.

Reflections on the role of the environment led Vygotsky to the discovery of the "social situation of development". L.S. Vygotsky's approach to an environment that he did not consider immutable and stable was novel. He noted that depending on the age and level of development of the child's consciousness, the meaning of a seemingly stable environment changes. The child experiences the same facts differently and, therefore, at different periods of life, the environment has different influences on the child. Such a change in the social situation of a child's development occurs precisely

during periods of crisis, bringing the child to a new level of development (Vygotsky, 1983).

An important idea to consider here is the idea of crisis, which was the leitmotif of the era. An equally significant characteristic of Vygotsky's cognitive style was the fact that crisis was considered as a dynamic category with alternating stable periods (lysis). The crisis is thought to lead to gradual personal growth and a person's ascent to the cultural psyche, which is mastered through sign, another influence of the era. A sign, in contrast to a symbol, is a cultural tool, it is a culture that grows into a child, giving him the opportunity to rise above himself and grow as a person. This, in fact, is the manifestation of the personalistic idea of crisis as one of the determinants of overall development.

Vygotsky talks about the dynamics of experiences during a child's transition from one age-related crisis to another and shows the connection between experiences and conflict situations. At this time, children perceive the ordinary life situation especially acutely, and this is reflected in their experiences. Experiences, which gradually become one of Vygotsky's central themes, are an indicator of various periods in the life history of children, an indicator that the child has moved to a new level of development. Consequently, the experience represents the personality in a social situation of development. The social situation of development cannot be associated simply with experience (although it remains an important parameter), but must necessarily be supplemented by a cognitive component, or the experience of interaction with people.

In the analysis of the social situation of development, L.S. Vygotsky was the first to move from a statement regarding the importance of the environment for development to identifying the specific mechanism of this environmental influence, which, in fact, changes the child's psyche, leading to the emergence of human-specific higher mental functions (HMF). With this mechanism, L.S. Vygotsky considered interiorisation, primarily the interiorisation of signs and symbols artificially created by mankind, designed to control one's own and others' behaviour.

Vygotsky outlined the first version of his theoretical generalisations concerning the patterns of development of the psyche in ontogenesis in the work "Development of Higher Mental Functions", which he wrote in 1931. This work presented a scheme for the formation of the human psyche in the process of using signs as a means of regulating mental activity. Speaking about the fact that there are natural and higher mental functions, Vygotsky came to the conclusion that the main difference between them is the level of voluntariness. That is, unlike natural mental processes that cannot be

regulated by humans, people can consciously control higher mental functions. This regulation is associated with the indirect nature of HME, and they are mediated by a sign or symbolic means, which creates an additional connection between the influencing stimulus and the human reaction (both behavioral and mental). This situation has already become important for the development of people in the digital world.

It must be emphasised that, unlike a symbol that can be invented by the child himself (for example, a knot on a scarf or a stick instead of a thermometer), signs are not invented by children, but are acquired by them in communication with adults. Thus, the sign first appears on the external plane, the plane of communication, and then passes into the internal plane, the plane of consciousness. At the same time, signs, being a product of social development, bear the imprint of the culture of the society in which the child grows up. Children learn signs in the process of communication and begin to use them to manage their inner mental life. Thanks to the internalisation of signs in children, the sign function of consciousness is formed, and the formation of such strictly human mental processes as logical thinking, will, and speech occurs. That is, the internalisation of signs is the mechanism that shapes the psyche of children.

Based on his view of the psyche, Vygotsky attached particular importance to the symbolic nature of the word, revealing its role as a special sociocultural mediator between the individual and the world. Signs (or symbols) are understood by him as mental tools, which, unlike tools of labor, do not change the physical world, but the consciousness of the subject operating them. Thus, even in the early stages of his work, Vygotsky was already connecting culture and speech with the development of the psyche, self-awareness, and personality of a person. The view of experience is transformed and enriched. The child actively responds to stimuli that come from the environment, otherwise there can be no development. Thus, Vygotsky's work combines the ideas of reflexology, paedology and aesthetic experiences.

Act III Experiences: the dynamic synthesis of affect and intellect

Works by L.S. Vygotsky opened a new page in the study of the category of experience (Martsinkovskaya, 2004). He built his concept on the basis of philosophical theories of emotions, here almost all the leading philosophical and psychological theories of experience by R. Descartes, W. Dilthey and, of course, by his beloved B. Spinoza fell into his circle of opponents.

Vygotsky, like Spinoza, emphasized the energetic and ethical potential of emotions. No less important for Vygotsky was the idea of the

connection between emotions and other categories of philosophy and psychology. Since the emotional component is an indispensable part of the motive, it is natural that the categories of motive and experience are closely related. In this case, experiences are considered as a person's emotional response to the phenomena of the external world and to the actions and thoughts. The regulatory function of experience connects it with the category of activity. The study of the relationship between external and internal activities, the processes of internalization and exteriorization brings to the fore the problem of experience, since the very possibility of appropriating experience and the transition of external activity to the internal plane is based on experience. All these questions update Vygotsky's ideas about the role of experience in the process of modern fluid socialization.

An important point in Vygotsky's concept was the connection between experiences and intentional, motivational and value structures, as well as with the concept of personality, which was just emerging in psychology at the beginning of the 20th century. Personality is a fusion of affect and intellect, and therefore, when concerned with its development, it is necessary to examine both of these sides: the development of thinking and the development of the child's emotions. From this point of view, Vygotsky did not refute Descartes' position that awareness of experiences is closely related to the mind. Therefore, in an adult, the reasons for his actions and his experiences are the property of self-awareness. However, he disputed Descartes' idea that emotions are not an intentional, dynamic category and cannot determine one's attitude towards the world. Vygotsky considered experience to be a real, dynamic unit from which consciousness is composed, in which all its basic properties are represented. Therefore, experience is the most complete value in the structure of consciousness and acts as a specific form of manifestation of an integral personality.

Experience contains a person's attitude to a particular moment of reality. Experience is not only a fusion of affect and intellect, but also a unification of personality and environment. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account what a given moment in the environment represents for a particular individual. The same situation is experienced differently by different children. Hence, the environment determines the child's development through the experience of external influences. The situation itself, taken without regard to the child, cannot determine the nature of the impact on the course of his further development. The environment is given only in relation to the child, or how he experiences this environment. This "how" depends on the extent to which all the characteristics and properties

of the personality that have developed are involved in a certain moment, at a given time, and in a given situation.

Returning to the idea of experience as a marker of crisis, Vygotsky says that, at different age stages, a child perceives the influences of the environment differently and experiences its influences differently. For example, during the crisis of seven years, a child loses spontaneity, which arises due to the generalisation of his experiences. A preschooler also has experiences, and the child experiences every reaction of an adult as a good or bad assessment of him, but these experiences are momentary, they exist only at a separate moment in life, and then quickly pass. Experiences, therefore, are an indicator of different periods in the life story of children, an indicator that the child has moved to a new level of development.

Thus, in Vygotsky's concept, experience acts as a primary and initial psychological fact.

Conclusion (epilogue)

The digital society has become a new challenge for modern science. New technologies are changing the picture of the world and ways of processing information. This gives cause to say that technological society has already moved to the next stage of development, in which technology is not something external to humans. Man perceives machines not as mechanisms, but rather as a part of our environment, often as an extension of our mental abilities, and not just as tools. We can say that technical means are internalised by people, determining the specifics of their perception of the world, interaction with objects, and communication with others (Voiskunsky, Soldatova, 2021; Castells, 2004; Martsinkovskaya, 2019; 2021). The digital society is specific in that the information and knowledge received become the main parameter for assessing a person and society as a whole.

It is also necessary to take into account that one of the leading challenges today is the problem of maintaining emotional well-being and, at the same time, the desire for self-realisation. These two tendencies (towards emotional stability and towards development, self-realisation) are continuums, sometimes with opposite poles.

In solving this problem, the leading role is played by the sign-tool, which helps to implement human search activity. Thus, a transformed scheme of using a tool (sign) in different space-time continuums (real, network, and mixed) can be proposed as a model for studying the behaviour and experiences of people.

In this context, culture is considered as the stock of knowledge that helps a person to imagine a particular concept, and, therefore, as a tool. The

disruption of connections between individual sections of this knowledge, or the loss of certain sections leads to a disruption of perception, thinking, and speech. The specificity of the action of information as a special type of tool, closely related to different spaces and sociocultural contexts, was tested empirically in the studies conducted by A.R. Luria in Uzbekistan (Luria, 2003), as well as in the comparative study of mental development in primates and children carried out by A.R. Luria together with L.S. Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1983).

The study of personality traits that help work productively with information and the transformation of a tool into a sign adequate to the situation has shown that experiences, both positive and negative, can contribute to the internalisation of certain images, ideas and signs. Thus, the works of L.S. Vygotsky, reimagined for our time and in the new social situation of human development, show that his concepts of a tool, a sign, an experience and, especially, culture, do not lose their meaning. It also appears that the concept of internalisation should become one of the cornerstones in the concept of the information society, as well as the concept of experience.

The heuristic potential of this concept is extremely high, since trends towards considering culture and human activity in a new, changing digital society are increasingly in demand.

Thus, it can be argued that the versatility and depth of the scientist's creativity is one of the most important factors of sustainable interest to his works and to his personality in a changing and constantly updating world.

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