

The Complete Works of L.S. Vygotsky: *PsyAnima Complete Vygotsky project*

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This issue of *PsyAnima, Dubna Psychological Journal* completes a series of full-text publications of Vygotsky's early theatrical and literary reviews and essays that originally came out in Gomel' newspapers *Nash ponedel'nik* (Our Monday) and *Polesskaia pravda* (Pravda of Polesie) in 1922-1923 and remained virtually unknown to general readership until this republication in *PsyAnima* that took place in 2011-2012. These early works of Lev Vygotsky were prepared for publication by an international team of enthusiasts—researchers, archival workers, and library staff—from Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, and Switzerland, who joined their efforts and put together highly impressive collection of L.S. Vygotsky's published texts. In the course of research several publications were first discovered by the members of the team and, thus, these texts have not been included in any of the existent bibliographies of Vygotsky's works to day. For the list and an overview of all major bibliographies of Vygotsky's works see (Yasnitsky, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d, 2011e). The completion of this publication series brings us to new, even more ambitious task.

As is well known, the whole range of Vygotsky's written works remains largely unknown up date. Indeed, the largest collection of Vygotsky's works includes six volumes that originally were published in Soviet Union in 1982-1984 in Pedagogika Press and subsequently translated into other languages such as English (*The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky*. Plenum Press/Kluwer/Springer, in six volumes, in 1987 and 1993-1999) and Spanish (Vygotski, L.S. *Obras escogidas*. Madrid: Visor Distribuciones, unfinished, in five volumes, in 1991-1997). There are numerous problems with this and, for that matter, a number of other Soviet editions of Vygotsky's works and their derivatives in translation.

First, the six-volume collection is by no means full. The *collected* works (sobranie sochinenii, obras escogidas) are not *complete* works: the six-volume collection left out quite a few of texts that Vygotsky finished, prepared for publication and even actually published during his lifetime. In fact, the problem dates back to the end of 1990s, when René van der Veer, an excellent Vygotskian scholar and the translator of volume 3 of *The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky* (volume 1 of Russian edition of 1982), noted:

After all, it is not for nothing that the present series of volumes is called *Collected Works* and not *Complete Works*. Limiting ourselves to books, we can make a list of the most important publications not included in the *Collected Works*. These include, in chronological order, *The Psychology of Art* (1925), *Educational Psychology* (1926), *Essays in the History of Behavior. Ape. Primitive. Child* (1930; with Luria), *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood* (1930), *Foundations of Pedology* (1935), *Children's Mental Development in the Process of Education* (1935), and various textbooks. Unfortunately, the editors of the Russian edition never justified their selection of texts nor did they discuss the criteria used to include or reject certain texts. We will not contest their choice here, but at the least one can say that on the basis of Vygotsky's books alone the present edition of the *Collected Works* could easily have contained several more volumes (Van der Veer, 1997, pp. 2-3).

Several additional later publications of varying quality partly compensated for the omissions of the six-volume *Collected Works*, but the gaps are still quite notable and the overall image of

Vygotsky's scientific legacy that we have construed on the basis of these texts available to us is pretty much lopsided.

Second, the six volume collected works and the majority of other Soviet publications that incidentally were used for translations into other languages appear highly unreliable and untrustworthy as long as the quality and integrity of presentation of Vygotsky's original text is concerned. In addition to general discussion of omissions, distortions and outright falsifications made by the editors of Vygotsky's works who censored and manipulated with the original text (Keiler, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d; Van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2011)¹ a series of recent historiographical and textological publications demonstrated these numerous distortions of Vygotsky's original words and ideas in publications of *(Historical) Meaning of psychological crisis* (Zavershneva & Osipov, 2010, 2012a, 2012b), *Tool and sign* (Cole, 2012; Goldberg, 2012; Kellogg & Yasnitsky, 2011; Van der Veer, 2012; Yasnitsky, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b)², and *Thinking and speech* (Mecacci, 1990; Mecacci & Yasnitsky, 2011). In addition, there are serious reasons to question the integrity of the *History of the development of higher mental functions* the title of a manuscript that never occurs among Vygotsky's bibliographies that he wrote during his lifetime and that appears a product of editorial intervention and mere combination of two unrelated Vygotsky's manuscripts of the end of his "instrumental" period of 1920s (Yasnitsky, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d, 2011e).

Third, the distortions of Soviet publications of Vygotsky's texts were additionally aggravated by yet further, virtually inevitable "losses in translation" that appear in Vygotsky's translated works. The issue of the transnational migration of Vygotsky's texts, the "import" of Vygotskian ideas, and associated difficulties of yet further mutation and distortion of his scientific legacy alienated from its original social and cultural context has recently become a major topic of critical research on North American (Keiler, 2002; Miller, 2011; Valsiner, 1988; Valsiner & Van der Veer, 1993), Brazilian (Prestes, 2010; Prestes & Tunes, 2012), and West European (Mecacci, 2006, 2012a, 2012b) self-proclaimed "Vygotskian" traditions. These numerous research traditions are typically scrutinized in the critical studies that question the various "versions" and "multiple readings" of Vygotsky and propose to overcome these numerous digressions from original Vygotsky's contribution by getting back to the original sources in order to re-establish Vygotskian science the way it was historically developing towards its most mature and advanced forms (Yasnitsky, 2012c).

All these concerns and considerations about the integrity and reliability of available Vygotsky's texts have brought to life a new editorial project that is partially sustained by the editorial team of this journal.

We are happy to present and by all means support a new initiative of a group of international scholars from all over the world, who launched the hyper-ambitious and unprecedented enterprise—*The Complete Works of L.S. Vygotsky* that was previously announced and is now known under the shortened and somewhat informal name *PsyAnima Complete Vygotsky*³.

¹ See open access publication at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12124-011-9172-9/fulltext.html> or <http://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs12124-011-9172-9> (alternatively, at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/278j5025767m2263/fulltext.html> or <http://www.springerlink.com/content/278j5025767m2263/fulltext.pdf>)

² Most of these materials are available at the web-site of PsyAnima, Dubna Psychological Journal at <http://www.psyanima.ru/journal/2011/4/index.php> and <http://www.psyanima.ru/journal/2012/1/index.php>

³ See <http://psyanimajournal.livejournal.com/3526.html>

As is well known, according to the copyright laws of the Russian Federation, all Vygotsky's works including those that were published during his lifetime are now considered as non-restricted open access materials. However, most original texts of their first editions are extremely rare and virtually inaccessible and, therefore, remain essentially unknown to the broad readership in East Europe and the rest of the world. In order to remedy this utterly intolerable situation with the scientific legacy of the classic of Soviet and Russian psychology and the most cited Russian psychologist all over the world a group of international scholars all over the globe shared their resources, and made first contribution to ongoing publication of *The Complete Works of L.S. Vygotsky*. This project involves three major interlinked and overlapping sets of activities.

First, all texts of Vygotsky's publications are scanned and uploaded online, where they are publicly accessible any time and free of charge. As of the end of 2012 more than a dozen of rare original publications of 1920s and 1930s have been released, for the ever growing list of new publications made under the banner of *PsyAnima Complete Vygotsky* project see <http://psyanimajournal.livejournal.com/3526.html>.

Second, all these scanned works are being converted into proofread and identical to the original scans searchable text files and subsequently published online in pdf format under the banner of "Special projects" of *PsyAnima, Dubna Psychological Journal* and, quite possibly, by a number of other international partner scholarly unions and organizations as well. For an example of such searchable pdf releases see the series of recent *PsyAnima, Dubna Psychological Journal* publications of early Vygotsky's theatrical and literary reviews⁴.

Finally, all these releases of Vygotsky's works are accompanied with historical, textological, methodological, and theoretical studies and critical analyses—like those that are typically presented in the special issues of *PsyAnima, Dubna Psychological Journal*, that cumulatively should be understood as the layer of commentaries on Vygotsky's works provided by expert international scholars. All these activities constitute the three components of *PsyAnima Complete Vygotsky* project that is currently in progress.

Enormous work has already been done by an international team of participants of the project. However, a lot of work still remains to be done. Thus, we are inviting volunteers, partners, and sponsors to join this time-consuming and costly, yet highly noble and rewarding project: the first ever transnational, democratic, and freely accessible *The Complete Works of L.S. Vygotsky*.

⁴ See <http://www.psyanima.ru/journal/2011/4/2011n4a7/2011n4a7.pdf> ;
<http://www.psyanima.ru/journal/2012/1/2012n1a5/2012n1a5.1.pdf> ;
<http://www.psyanima.ru/journal/2012/3/2012n3a6/2012n3a6.1.pdf>

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