

4

Communist Individuation Выступая

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The Communist Drama of Individuation in Lev Vygotsky

Abstract

The article addresses the concept of individuation in the work of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. It argues that the concept reveals the Soviet epistemological constructions based on a strategic union between Spinoza and Hegel. Although Vygotsky did make an original contribution to materialist philosophy and this contribution cannot be isolated from the Soviet context, he is

better known as a practitioner, whose Marxism is often suppressed as an unimportant holdover from the past. It is suggested that individuation links a Hegelian dialectical logic of mediation with a Spinozist understanding of activity through a

Marxian epistemology explicit to *Das Kapital*. Vygotsky overcomes both mechanistic and teleological conceptions of the individual and class, the social and the collective, in order to be able to sketch a political theory of communization that is an “adequate form” of individuation. This brings us to another, interrelated, observation concerning debates on individuation, developed by Gilbert Simondon, Étienne Balibar, and Paolo Virno.

It is concluded that Vygotsky’s theory may help overcome the Hegel/Spinoza divide in a contemporary radical thought.

Keywords

Vygotsky, *Das Kapital*, Hegel and Spinoza, communism, mediation, individuation

Prelude: The Unwritten Capitals of Soviet Marxism, or the Uncomfortable Unity of Spinoza, Hegel, and Marx

Psychology is in need of its own *Das Kapital*—its own concepts of class, basis, value etc.—in which it might express, describe and study its object (Vygotsky 1997a: 330).

At first, a comparison of Marxist psychology with the new *Das Kapital* sounds obscure, almost paradoxical. One should not be surprised that it never found systematic elaboration in Lev Vygotsky's work. Another great Soviet intellectual and a friend of Vygotsky, Sergei Eisenstein¹ also wanted to write his own *Capital*, but in the form of a film. The result, as is well known, was similar. Eisenstein's staging of Marx's masterwork never took place (Eisenstein 1976). In this respect, these unwritten *Capitals* might be taken as a symptom of "the atmosphere of the 1920s," that "was favorable for all sorts of general projects to be put ahead of concrete research" (Kozulin 1990: 85). Such a prospect forced a number of researchers to conclude that the attitude Vygotsky held toward Marx either points towards the methodological task of postrevolutionary science to build dialectical and materialist foundations for any given discipline, or demarcates his general interest in the Marxist tradition. Accordingly, there are two corresponding approaches to Vygotsky's work. His Marxism is considered as an exotic Soviet rudiment, which should be explained, but at the same time could be easily removed (Doise et al. 1996). The converse case is careful recovery of all traces of Marx, Hegel, or Spinoza in Vygotsky without taking into account method, since it is in the interest of confirming that Vygotsky was Marxist, Hegelian Marxist, or Spinozist—the choice depends on academic preference.² The majority of contemporary readers of

¹ Vygotsky was an active participant in avant-garde art circles. For more information on his art activities, see Kozulin (1990: 20–49) and Van Der Veer (2011: 20–21).

² arcker reviews the most common interpretations of Vygotsky's Marxism in an Anglo-American context and beyond. He provides his own interpretation, which un-

Vygotsky have been raised in the context of a radical choice between Hegel and Spinoza,³ and therefore cannot accept the system of thought that brings together these two thinkers.⁴

The core of the problem is that Vygotsky uses someone else's terminology and fills it with authorial content. Although terms such as "human behavior" and "reflex" refer directly to Pavlov's reflexology and American behaviorism, Vygotsky reinvestigates them in relation to consciousness and the unconscious, thinking and speaking, human and animal. All these pairs interact with one another in a dialectical manner and receive new meanings. Thus, the cornerstone of Vygotsky's project, which will become famous under the name "cultural-historical psychology," is a critical re-examination of various trends in the social sciences—behaviorism, Gestalt psychology, and psychoanalyses. We have to understand the usage of the old concepts in this critical manner, but not as an expression of sympathy with Ivan Pavlov, William James, or American pragmatism.⁵ Overall, it seems that there is no hypotheses regarding what Vygotsky's *Capital* could be and what is the unity of Spinoza, Hegel, and Marx.

In order to approach this unity, we have to take into account the epistemological constructions produced before, during, and after the October Revolution that reveal a striking coexistence of immanence and dialectics.

fortunately falls into a propaedeutic comparison of the Hegelian and Marxian conception of history with Vygotsky's one (Parcker 2008). Langford makes a similar point. He equates Vygotsky's developmental stages with the evolution of social formations in history (Langford 2005: 27–39, 157–60). Some recent studies in psychology also confront the antidialectical and cognitivist approach common in the Anglo-American context. Thus, Dafermos acknowledges the importance of the Marxist tradition for Vygotsky's theory by showing that the notion of development cannot be separated from such dialectical categories as crisis and drama (Dafermos 2015). However, the study does not have an ambition to make broader philosophical conclusions out of the analysis, since the task here is to rethink the hegemonic currents in psychological schools related to Vygotsky's tradition.

³ I allude here to the French debates about Hegel and Spinoza (Macherey 2011).

⁴ To date, I have found only one work dedicated to Hegel and Spinoza in Vygotsky. However, both Vygotsky and Spinoza have been transformed in this work into Hegelian analytical philosophers. Consequently, the Soviet context completely disappears from this study (Derry 2013). In his study of the Russian Spinozist tradition, Andrey Maidansky occasionally appeals to Hegel, but his treatment of Vygotsky is based on a purely Spinozist interpretation (2003, 2012). A similar approach characterizes the philosophically informed work of Russian psychologist Alexander Surmava (2012). I do not take in to account the enormous number of secondary literature related to the field of intellectual history. In most cases such commentaries cover the whole range of Vygotsky's philosophical interests, but another question is how it has been interpreted. See, for example, Kozulin (1990) and Van der Veer et al. (1991).

⁵ See, for example, a comparison with pragmatism in Edwards (2007: 77–100) and with Wersch (1985: 200).

More precisely, the key figures of Russian revolutionary circles have begun to formulate the importance of the Hegelian and Spinozian legacies for Marxism.⁶ Soviet philosophy elucidated what can be adopted from Hegel and Spinoza for the revolutionary project, and why. Instead of asking how to *criticize* capitalist society, it questioned *what society should do after the revolution*. Thus, the whole history of philosophy often serves here as construction materials, regardless of whether a chosen discourse was considered hostile to Marxism in Western political and academic circles. In this respect, peculiar unions of Marx, Hegel, and Spinoza emerged on the basis of an empty space, which the critical Marxist tradition had left open for such speculative questions.

A non-dogmatic appeal to the history of philosophy prepared the ground for original and productive connections of ideas in Vygotsky, who developed a theory of individuation to support an argument that thinking should be understood as a historically developed form of activity. Accordingly, only the accomplished constitution of active thinking could form a communist sociality. Vygotsky redirected the metaphysical dialectics of nature and the physiological understanding of thinking, proposed by an Engelsian type of philosophical materialism, toward a materialist conception of communist subjectivity. It could be argued that this logic avoids the traps of the alternative between Hegel and Spinoza, vitalism and social constructivism.

Sociologically speaking, this communist perspective of Vygotsky's project departs from a very simple question, namely, how in the given context of poverty and mass illiteracy can the new subject of communism be born and who is this new subject? The diversity of Soviet poverty and peculiarity of thinking expressions impress Vygotsky deeply. He dedicated to the analysis of the dialectical relationship between thinking and speech the entire work *Thinking and Speech* (Vygotsky 1987). This interest is rarely taken within a context of the postrevolutionary geological stratum of city jargons, provincial dialects, and street language. However, it is precisely where one may find the sociological roots of Vygotsky's communism. His experimental philosophy was linked to practical work—to clinical research, elaboration of educational programs for Soviet ethnic minorities, a pioneering approach to the deaf and blind education, just to name a few. Thus, this attention to poverty and disability may point to an idea of radical transformation of the image of a strong masculine industrial working class. Instead, the central problem in Vygotsky is the “really existing” postrevolutionary proletarians, peasants, ethnic minorities,

⁶ The line of argument about the unity of Hegel and Spinoza usually went as follows: “Dialectical materialism, according to Deborin, is a synthesis of materialistically reworked Hegelian dialectics and Feuerbachian materialism. And, since Feuerbach's materialism is a modification of Spinozism, the latter is an essential component in Marxist philosophy” (Kline 1952: 25).

women and children, that is, a declassed, mosaic-like assembled cacophony of old and new, progressive and reactionary.⁷

Nevertheless, such an interpretation contradicts the view on Vygotsky's social constructivism that historically coincides with typical discussions about the new Soviet man and socialist "life-building" (*zhiznestroenie*).⁸ This imaginary constructivist projection, one may argue, forced Vygotsky to study the history of consciousness, or better, the history of cultural behaviour. Such constructivism usually departs from the question about how consciousness is shaped. However, Vygotsky does not agree with the traditional Soviet view on consciousness as a simple product of social relations, and rejects a sociological approach to social class as archetypal character, formed by environment. If consciousness is only a projection of the social relations in the mind, there should be just a few human types with predictable behaviour, similar to the socialist realist "typical man in a typical situation."⁹ Instead, the social transforms itself into the psychical through a complex system of mediations: "Changing the well-known thesis of Marx, we could say that the mental nature of man represents the totality of social relations internalized and made into functions of the individual and forms of his structure" (Vygotsky 1997c: 106).

What interests Vygotsky is the history of the conversion of the social into the psychical. This conversion is observed on a level of the formation of perception, thinking, speaking, volition, and affects. He attributes to them a functional and structural nature and calls the structural unity of these functions "higher mental functions," as opposed to the natural

⁷ Interest in the working class "outside" can be detected in the number of projects and studies. See, for example the empirical study of Soviet ethnic minorities conducted in Central Asia in 1931–32 by Vygotsky's laboratory. Vygotsky did not participate in the expedition, but a member of the laboratory, Alexander Luria, undertook the fieldwork under his supervision (Luria 1976). Luria published the results of this research only in the 1970s, because the expedition caused public debates to the extent of accusing Luria and Vygotsky of being fascists. For information about the expedition and its controversies, including the political and economical context of collectivization in Central Asia, see Van der Veer and Valsiner (1991: 242–55). Prior to the expedition, Vygotsky wrote an article where he criticized the "negative" approach to minority studies that usually begun by asking what he or she lacks in comparison to a "civilized" child. He called this perspective "traditional," and noted that it expresses the colonial idea of primitive man. Instead, the positive approach is a historical and concrete analysis of a child's development under given cultural conditions (Vygotsky 1929).

⁸ See Vygotsky's article "The Socialist Alteration of Man" (1994). The term "life-building" (*zhiznestroenie*) belongs to Chuzhak (Chuzhak and Lodder 2009 [1923]).

⁹ I mean the Engelian "typischer Charaktere unter typischen Umständen" attributed to realism and taken as an axiom for Socialist realist art in Soviet Union (Engels 1967: 42). Vygotsky criticises Sombart precisely for this reason (Vygotsky 1997b: 106).

“lower mental functions” such as reflex and instinct. Although the terminology of “higher” and “lower” has metaphysical traces in the scientific mentality of the nineteenth century and demarcates the difference between animal and human, biological and cultural, Vygotsky stresses that “lower” and “higher” point not to the vertical temporality of phylogenetic development, but signify a spatial dimension, the “place in development” (Vygotsky 1999a: 33–34) that, as we shall subsequently see, have a radically different temporal structure. For instance, in the late work *The History of the Development of Higher Mental Functions* (1997c [1983]), Vygotsky notes that the lower biological processes are sublated (*aufgehoben*) by the higher historical processes. He points to the dual meaning of Hegelian *Aufhebung* that is “removal,” “rejection,” and also “preservation” and “saving.” This dual meaning “is usually translated well into Russian by the word *skhoronit’* [to bury], which also has a positive and a negative sense—destruction and preservation” (Vygotsky 1997c: 81). This important remark should be taken into consideration. Precisely this logic of “buried” functions changes the whole perspective on the Vygotskian conception of development that is as much dialectical as it is “geological”:

All cultural behavior [...] involves conflict; the old form is forced out, is sometimes completely disrupted, and sometimes there is a “geological” superimposition of various genetic epochs that make the behavior of a cultured person resemble the earth’s crust (Vygotsky 1997c: 221–22).

The analysis of mental functions appears as a recovery of the “geological” history of the development of consciousness. The meaning of the word “history” and the meaning of the term “historical psychology” refer to the dialectical approach of things. Thinking, speaking, memory, volition, and other forms of cultural behaviour are dynamic structural entities. Each of them has a unique genesis and development, and each of them is the result of a series of mutual negative and affirmative determinations. In *Thinking and Speech*, the higher functions pass through various planes of development from generation to culmination in verbal thinking, and on the level of consciousness the subject moves from sense-certainty to self-understanding. Blunden claims that such an exposition almost repeats Hegel’s *Logic*. In *Thinking and Speech*, Vygotsky starts from the syncretic unity of subject and object (non-verbal thinking and non-intellectual speech) that is then divided into speech and language, while speech and language will be divided into the inner and the outer to finally be reunited again as intellectual speech (Blunden 1997). This is quite a common approach to Vygotsky’s understanding of historical development (see n. 2). However, Blunden’s scheme may appear as an oversimplification if we explore and push forward Vygotsky’s understanding of the totality of mental forms as “spatial temporality” of “buried” functions, another name for which is the process of individuation. In this paper I would

like to question the Hegelian finalism of Vygotsky by means of bringing back a Spinozist understanding of the activity as spatial and structural diversification of behaviour that tends to an “adequate form,” but has no peak point.

In the Beginning Was the Action: The Ontology of Mediation

Vygotsky’s dialectical history of cultural behavior begins with the resolution of the mind/body problem. He claims that a materialist approach to human consciousness should be monist, neither privileging the physical determination of the psychical nor treating the physical organization of the human organism as an effect of the psychical domain. Both causal explanation of the mind and body relationship and parallelism fall into the mechanistic understanding of mental life (Vygotsky 1997d: 114–15) and define body or mind as a *causa efficiens* of mental life. However, there is no privileged place where mental life resides, “[b]ecause for dialectical psychology mind is not, in the words of Spinoza [...] something that is situated outside nature or as a kingdom within a kingdom, it is a part of nature itself, directly linked to the functions of the higher organized matter of our brain” (Vygotsky 1997d: 112). Here Vygotsky translates into his own language Spinoza’s understanding of man as a partial or inadequate cause that lacks autonomy and absolute power (Spinoza 1994 [1677], Eth., III, D1). The third part of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, from which Vygotsky borrows the comparison of man with the kingdom within kingdom, begins with the assumption that human beings should not be understood as exceptional or anomalous things, but rather as things that obey and depend on natural law (Spinoza 1994 [1677], III, preface). From the simple fact of that dependency on natural law follow the unity of the physical and the psychical.¹⁰ However, in order to avoid the traps of solipsistic uniformity of both sides, psychology has to redefine its object and introduce a third term—mental process, which is the real unity of the two opposites that mediates two sides. Psychical and physical are taken here not as two isolated organs of human life, but as one process of that life. Only in this way, when we treat them as process, is it possible to explain what they do.

It is absurd to first isolate a certain quality from the integral process and then raise the question of the function of this quality as if it existed in itself, fully independently of that integral process of which it forms a quality. It is absurd, for example, to separate the heat from the sun, to ascribe it independent meaning and to ask what meaning this heat may

¹⁰ A similar argument about the resolution of mind and body dualism can be found in Vygotsky’s treatise on Spinoza (Vygotsky 1999b).

have and what action it can perform [...] It is absurd to ask whether a given quality can act upon the object of which it forms a quality (Vygotsky 1997d: 114).

The level of the process is the level of performance and on the level of performance it is hard to separate each side. Process is a monistic plane of psychical and physical. It is remarkable that in his essay on Spinoza, Soviet philosopher Evald Ilyenkov explains the unity of body and mind in a similar way, almost repeating Vygotsky's argument decades later:

One does not ask how legs capable of walking are constructed, but in what walking consists. What is thinking as the action of, albeit inseparable from, the material mechanisms by which it is effected, yet not in any way identical with mechanisms themselves? In the one case the question is about the structure of an organ, in the other about the function the organ performs. The structures, of course, must be such that it can carry out the appropriate function; legs are built so that they can walk and not so that they can think. The fullest description of the structure of an organ, i.e., a description of it in an inactive state, however, has no right to present itself as a description, however approximate, of the function that the organ performs, as a description of the real thing that it does (Ilyenkov 1977: 45).

The structure of an organ is not that of human consciousness, since the organ is not consciousness. Vygotsky criticizes Freud and Piaget precisely for their inability to take a monist point of view on human consciousness. The former substantiates libido and reduces the explanation of the psychical life to instinctive behavior (Vygotsky 1997d: 112), while the latter does the same in relation to egocentric speech (Vygotsky 1987: 53–91). Ilyenkov perfectly summarizes this tendency by saying that the study of the “structure of language” or the structure of the brain is only one of the many presuppositions of thinking that has nothing to deal with the process of thinking and thinking as such.¹¹

I understand the concept of mental process as expressing the idea that the problem of behaviour is the problem of activity. The question is not how an organ functions, but how humans behave; what they do and how they act. That means that behaviour as unity of mind and body is a processual structure of activity. But how does this structure look? Human behaviour differs qualitatively from the behaviour of an animal. This qualitative difference is not a simple sum of accumulated conditioned responses to stimuli that Pavlov and reflexology propose as an explanatory

¹¹ This passage is omitted from the English version of the text. See Russian original (Ilyenkov 1984: 37–38).

scheme of transition from the biological to the social. Vygotsky compares the realm of the social with a dialectical leap that takes away human behaviour from the stimuli-responsive scheme (Vygotsky 1997c: 38–39). This dialectical leap is either a transition from quantity to quality, through which diamat explains various phenomena from water boiling to the formation of a mass movement, nor gradual complication of behaviour throughout the course of development of an organism (Engels 1987: 356–61). The dialectical leap is a conversion of the natural into the historical through a radical change of the type of development, from evolutionary to dialectical (Vygotsky 2007c: 226).

Earlier Vygotsky notes that a human differs from an animal by the very fact of a body here setting a chain of reactions reacting to the affections of the body (Vygotsky 1997e: 73). Consciousness is the set of capacities that derive from the ability of a body to affect its own self. Vygotsky compares simple reflection with *causa effectum*, where cause A is equal to effect B, and effect B that causes a new effect C is equal to B: “A pond reflects everything; a stone reacts in principle to everything. But these reactions equal the stimulation: *causa aequat effectum*” (Vygotsky 1997a: 274–75). We may suggest that this symmetrical chain of identities is the realm of immediacy, while the causal chain on the side of human consciousness is what one could call a *causa intentionalis*. This ability to relate reactions to oneself (autostimulation) is the ability to appropriate affections. The concept of autostimulation understood as mental directness may appear a phenomenological concept, but Vygotsky challenged his own theory when he introduced a historical and materialist understanding of autostimulation. He explains that it is not the realm of nature, which enables humans to reaffirm their reactions, but the realm of social life. In other words, the social contact and presence of the other cause a reversibility of the ego. The monist plane of the individual and social is similar to a Freudian splitting of the ego in individual consciousness, but for Vygotsky, id is the social realm of immediacy, the habitat of an “I” that surpasses it in power and force.¹² The social, as the realm of immediacy, is the stage of sense-certainty, where the first split between the unconscious (social) and the subject of this unconscious takes place. It is from this type of immediacy that consciousness begins to mediate itself.

Vygotsky’s theory does not follow the complete rejection of the biological. On the contrary, he believes that the human psyche is what actually connects “natural history” (evolution) and “history of society” (history as such) (1989: 55). The difference between the biological and the social lies in the very fact that where “further organic development is im-

¹² Instead of a Freudian understanding of the unconscious, Vygotsky takes Høffding’s theory of the unconscious, who “equated the importance of the introduction of the concept of the unconscious in psychology with [that of the introduction of] the concept of potential physical energy in physics” (Vygotsky 1997d: 116).

possible, an immense path of cultural development opens” (Vygotsky 1997c: 229). For instance, disability can be mediated through social and cultural means, a tactile writing system or prosthesis could be just one example of such mediation. Thus, the question here is how to *mediate* a given biological material in order to bring it to a social form. In this respect, the study of human behavior for Vygotsky begins where biological study ends.

In *The History of the Development of Higher Mental Functions*, Vygotsky introduces the concept of mediation by a philosophical anecdote about Buridan’s ass that starves to death, not being able to choose between two similar options of food. This is due to the fact that in such a hypothetical situation both animal and man would be in a stimuli-response model (*causa aequat effectum*), making them incapable of choosing between two identical options of food. However, this would correspond to a passive response to the situation and the fluctuation between two choices (or motives in Vygotsky’s terminology) could be resolved in an active way by introducing a third term into the situation—the artificial stimuli or auxiliary motives. Vygotsky illustrates such a resolution with an episode from Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*. Pierre Bezukhov cannot decide whether he should join the army or stay in Moscow so plays a game of solitaire to determine his choice. Afterwards, Pierre is found in the same state of anxiety and still cannot choose, but the fundamental lesson of Tolstoy, according to Vygotsky, is the solution of *mediation* that helps to avoid the trap of the two motives. The introduction of the third term shows a new structure of artificial stimuli, which helps to determine choice through special outer tools (Vygotsky 1997c: 44–52). Citing Spinoza, Vygotsky underlines the fact that Bezukhov’s fluctuation between choices demarcates the impossibility of “free choice” and “free will,” but exemplifies the human capacity to recognize necessity.¹³

The experiment tells us that freedom of will is not freedom from motives; it consists in that the child recognizes a situation, recognizes the need to make a choice based on motive and, as the philosophical definition states, in the given case, his freedom is the recognition of necessity [...] As we know, the basic law of our behavior states that behavior is determined by situations and reaction is elicited by stimuli; for this reason the key to controlling behavior lies in controlling stimuli. We cannot master our own behavior except through appropriate stimuli. In cases of selection with the die of which we just spoke, the child controls his behavior, directs his behavior through the auxiliary stimuli. In this sense, human behavior is no exception to the laws of nature. As we know, we

¹³ Vygotsky develops the argument about Spinoza and his understanding of free will in Vygotsky (1999c: 207–11).

are subject to nature, comply with its laws. Our behavior is one of the natural processes, the basic law of which is also the law of stimulus-response, and for this reason the basic law of mastering natural processes is mastering them through stimuli (Vygotsky 1997c: 210).

From here it follows that the formation of the higher mental functions—perception, memory, thinking, and speaking—corresponds to the basic scheme of mediation: the connection between stimulus A and reaction B will be always established by means of stimulus X, which will affect B and transform the reaction. Introduction of the artificial stimuli-means characterizes development of memory, when a man ties a knot to remember something or when a child counts on their fingers (Vygotsky 1997c: 44–52). In both cases, stimuli function as a tool so that the appropriation of the social environment emancipates human behavior from the immediacy of perception. We could say that a psychological tool is the means of production of the cultural behaviour.

The production of cultural behaviour is the process of differentiation and stratification of the biological structure, by means of intervention of a new intermediate member into the operational relation between stimuli and reaction. The biological plane, as a basis for the production of human behaviour, remains the same, but artificial organs (tools) transform its functional-operational logic within the environment and introduce a new historical and cultural plane of development—mediated social activity.¹⁴

A similar argument about the modification of the biological structure by means of tool production can be found in Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* (1944 [1911]). He claims that in the biological realm of life, an “instrument forms a part of the body that uses it [...] there is an instinct that knows how to use it,” because an instrument is inscribed into the “organizing work of the living matter.” Modification of this structure “involves modification of the species” or introduction of the logic of intelligence as opposed to the logic of the instinct. The logic of the intelligence is “the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects [...] tools to make tools.” An artificial tool extends the organic body and creates an unlimited outer field for an action that overcomes the closed and cyclical structure of the animal habitat (Bergson 1944: 153–56).

It is not too difficult to see that the understanding of human action as modification of raw matter further refers to the Aristotelian definition of the hand as the tool of the tool and mind as the form of the forms. However, Aristotelianism of this sort is similar to Vygotsky only at first glance. Vygotsky was a reader of *Creative Evolution* and refers to the above quoted

¹⁴ We have to stress that the Russian word *deyatelnost'*—activity—is closer to the German *Tätigkeit*. *Deyatelnost'* derives from the verb *delat'* (to do) and noun *delo* (deed). The English *activity* corresponds to Russian *aktivnost'*.

passages in his notebook. For him, Bergson misses a crucial point, namely, the internalization of a tool and its transformation into the intellectual function. When the tool becomes an internal organ, a new inner construction changes not only the structure of habitat, but also brain functions (Vygotsky 1986:52). One can add that Bergson misses dialectics of mediation and confuses “the logic of intelligence” with the organic and vital force of human life. For Vygotsky there is nothing organic in intelligence, it is a set of complex relations that mediates and buries “the logic of instinct” and not the production of the tools, per se. Here I will digress to observe that precisely this “historical materialist” point separates Vygotsky and Gilbert Simondon’s theory of individuation. Let us explain the logic of internalization further.

Vygotsky stresses the similarity between auxiliary means, which helps to solve psychological situations such as remembering, comparing, or reporting something, and a labor tool (*orydie* or *Werkzeug*). Both auxiliary means and labor tools are the instruments of reason. However, if a tool as means of labor helps to appropriate natural materials that lie outside the human body, auxiliary means is the structure of signification that derives from the means of social communication. Auxiliary means helps to make sense of an action. This structure of making sense is the structure of mediation, which unites tool and sign. In this respect, psychological functions are “not natural structures, but constructions,” “the modes of action from the outside” that seize “internal processes” (Vygotsky 1986:55). Thus, what unites tool and sign is the logic of mediation, and therefore, tool and sign logically operate in the same way, but differ structurally. A tool affects an object of activity and transforms it, while a sign changes nothing in the object, but affects the behaviour of the subject. Thus, tool and sign have different directions—the outer and the inner, but in spite of that difference they are mutually dependent and represent a dialectical unity of opposites.

The notion of mediation corresponds to the transformative essence of labor in Marx.¹⁵ However, according to Vygotsky’s determination, the transformative function of labor in fact lies outside of labor. *Werkzeug* is a stimuli-object and unless stimuli-means is introduced into the structure, the natural line of development will remain in place (Vygotsky 1997c: 84). Vygotsky deviates from Marx when he introduces the principal role of sign and signification in the human behavior. Marx’s philosophical conception of labor and means of labor (tools) is not so different from Aristotelianism, mentioned above (Marx 1982: 283–86). Nevertheless, Vygotsky clings to a passage from *Capital* about a bad architect and a good bee in order to make Marx an ally of signification theory. Marx says that even the best of the

¹⁵ Vygotsky explains his theory of mediation with the reference to Marx (Vygotsky 1997c: 61–62).

bees build the cell instinctively, while the result of labor “already existed ideally” even in the worst architectural model. For Vygotsky, the worst of the architects represent the distinctive characteristic of human behavior that is “the doubling of experience”—the imagining of the ideal form ahead of a labor act (Vygotsky 1997e: 68). However, in his later writings, Vygotsky shows that the capacity of being ahead of an act develops dialectically and cannot exist “in advance” as a metaphysical attribute of the human. At the beginning of this development, action is affective and it precedes reflection. Once speech is introduced into the structure of behaviour it at first accompanies activity, and only by passing several dialectical steps—corresponding to the process of mastering speaking capacities—thinking anticipates and explains action that is not yet realized (Vygotsky 1999a:24–26). Critiquing the logocentric Christian formula, “in the beginning was the word,” Vygotsky admits that “[practical] intellect is genetically older than the verbal; action precedes the word, and even wise action precedes the wise word,” but action is only the beginning, “the initial point of movement” (Vygotsky 1999a: 65).¹⁶ “[If] the act, independent of the word, stands at the beginning of development, then at its end stands the word becoming the act” (Vygotsky 1999a: 68). It could be argued that labor is a special case of activity (*Tätigkeit*), while activity without signification is the special case of behaviour. Signification begins to transform the activity of labor or any other types of activity with the objects and materials from passive interaction with the environment to autostimulation.

For Vygotsky, a sign is any kind of conditioned stimulus created artificially by man, for man. At first, a sign is only a tool of communication with the external environment. It is a “gesture in itself” that indicates intentional act. Thus, child development begins with unsuccessful attempts to grasp an object, which could be recognised as a “pointing gesture” only by a mother; in other words, the meaning of the whole situation—the pointing gesture—introduced by the other, when a mother begins to communicate the unsuccessful grasping movement with the child. The child will recognize the “gesture for others” only by connecting the idea of grasping with the objective situation that includes a wanted object and a person, who may bring that. At this point the “gesture for others” becomes a “gesture for itself”¹⁷ or a structure of understanding, based on the generation of a meaningful discourse.

¹⁶ Translation modified with word “wise” instead of “mental” to highlight the colloquial meaning of the phrase *umnoe delo* (wise action) and *umnoe slovo* (wise word). See Russian edition (Vygotsky 1984: 86)

¹⁷ Although in the passage about pointing gesture Vygotsky directly refers to Hegel, the English translation masks his Hegelian terminology: gesture in-itself (*zhest v sebe*) translated simply as “pointing gesture” and gesture for-itself (*zhest dlya sebya*) translated as “gesture for-oneself” (Vygotsky 1997c: 104–05). See Russian edition (Vygotsky 1983: 143–44).

Individuation is represented here as a Hegelian movement from being in itself to being for itself, but for a Hegelian–Spinozism of Vygotsky it means movement from an abstract universal (the social unconscious) to the concrete singular (an individual).¹⁸

However, this triadic dialectical logic is complicated by the fact of *double mediation*. In his notebook, Vygotsky writes that man is *homo duplex* (Vygotsky 1986: 54), because all higher functions presuppose a particular model of social relations. In the new structure of cultural behaviour, the sign appears not between subject and object, but between two subjects through the object, where the object begins to signify something only thanks to the communication between the subjects. Social relations form an *external signification*, where the sign appears as “inter-mental function.” At the same time, subject forms *internal signification*, which “transfers the social relation [...] inward into his personality.” In other words, “[the] history of higher mental functions is disclosed here as the history of converting means of social behaviour into means of individual-psychological organization” (Vygotsky 1999a: 41). It means that the subject internalizes not the object as such, but the relation, established through the object.¹⁹

Although Vygotsky claims that the formation of higher mental function is a social process, it is the internalization of the sign, as mentioned above, which changes the structure of the brain. Elements of social environment “begin to be used as active agents that control the mental process from outside” (Vygotsky 1999a: 46). Signification is the mastering behavior of other or one’s own by means of creation of the “connections in the brain from outside.” It allows man to control their own body. The use of signs restructures mental functions. If one may put it that way, the socialization of the brain and individuation of behaviour are just another demonstration of *double mediation*, that is, simultaneity of external and internal movement in the process of development.

What Can Communists Do? The Drama of Individuation

Every mental function “appears on the stage twice, in two planes” (Vygotsky 1997c: 106), as a social relation that becomes intermental

¹⁸ This may appear as a total misunderstanding of Hegel. However, the attempt of Vygotsky to specify his theory of individuation through Hegel and Spinoza has continuation. It could be compared with a recent comparative analysis of individuation and desire in Hegel and Spinoza made by Jason Read (2012).

¹⁹ Paolo Virno analyzes the relationality of the pre-individual means of individuation in terms of transindividual objects, which reify relations between subjects. Reification is “incarnated in the *objects of the relation*, while fetishism is “*a relation among objects*” (Virno 2015: 143).

(function for other) and individually intramental (function for itself). In fact, all mental functions show similar structural divergence. Each function appears as a univocal thing unless it is transformed into a process (Vygotsky 1997c: 68). The monist perspective of the process, as has already been shown, allows the dialectical unity of psychical and physical to be revealed, but it also acknowledges a contradiction between how a process appears and how it is structured. This is very close to Marx's analysis of the *verwandelte Form* that describes the conversion of internal relations in a capitalist system, when a complex process is substituted by indirect expressions. For instance, in the phenomena that is value form, the property of social relations is attributed to things without any connection to human activity. One could argue that it is possible to apply *verwandelte Form* to the analysis of Vygotsky's individuation, since the task is to reveal the complex structural character of the totality of mental forms.²⁰

Thus, thinking and speaking are not identical to each other, but appear as identical only when they are presented as a thing. When thinking and speaking have been transformed into the dynamic structure, it is evident that they are two independent functions that may agree or form a disjunctive unity. Thought and speech may contradict one another and could only couple together thanks to the mediatory role of the sign. The external logic of speaking derives from the shared social activity and dialogue with the others that could be reviled in the phenomena of talking out loud or in the egocentric speech of a child. The latter Vygotsky interprets not as autistic and asocial speech, but as an initially social form of a speech. If Piaget sees the social as a violent intervention into the autistic world of a child, Vygotsky shows that egocentric speech is an intermediary form between outer (dialogic) and inner (monologist) speech, or a transitory point between transindividual and individuated forms of subjectivity.²¹ Dialectical unity of the separated functions of thought and

²⁰ We rely on the article by Merab Mamardashvili dedicated to the concept of *verwandelte Form* in Marx (1990). Mamardashvili claims that the concept may function as an epistemological tool for analyzing "complex empirical systems" with the aim of the "disobjectivation" of converted forms and the "sublation" of the unity of object and knowledge. He argues that the *verwandelte Form*, understood in this way, could open a new post-Cartesian possibility for philosophy. *Verwandelte Form* allows for the criticism of phenomenological reductionism and structuralist formalism by means of revealing a complex causal unity of object and subject in social forms (Mamardashvili 1990). It seems that Vygotsky discussed similar issues decades earlier. Bakhurst also argues that Vygotsky borrowed his methodological approach to thought and speech from Marxian analysis of the commodity form. However, he does not explain how exactly "commodity form" functions in his system (Bakhurst 2007: 59). See also the abovementioned text of Virno on reification and individuation. In this analysis Virno relies on Simondon, but does not mention Vygotsky (Virno 2015: 135–68).

²¹ See chapter of *Thinking and Speech* on "Egocentric Speech" (Vygotsky 1987: 53–91)

speech appears only in the meaning, mediated by the word (Vygotsky 1987: 244–45). Thinking and speech thus represent a “difficult unity”²² or a disjunctive unity in our terminology.

In other words, there is a process of making thought, and the success of thought articulation is conditioned by the ability to mediate internal motivations of a speaking person by producing new external effects—a discourse or purposeful behavior grounded by speaking activity. “Development stands not for socialization, but for individualization of social functions (conversion of social relations to psychological functions),” writes Vygotsky (1986: 56). Transition from outside inward or the “ingrowing” (*vrashchivaniya*) a sign to the internal function of a psyche is *individuation*, or a complex psychological structure of double mediation that constantly modifies cultural behaviour.

The external auxiliary means, such as fingers to count, a knot for remembering, a dice to decide, or egocentric speech to think are gradually *ingrowing* into the inner psychological structure. The outer mediation inverts into the inner mediation, when auxiliary means are transformed into the complex psychological systems of inner signification. Auxiliary means begin to play the role of functions, such as voluntary memory (counting without fingers, remembering without a knot), volition (deciding without dice), verbal thinking (thinking to oneself or monologic speech) only after the procedure of *ingrowing*. Individualization is an ongoing process of functional transformation and it seems that in contemporary terms it means *individuation of transindividual* relations. Thus, we may conclude that individuality is the totality of converted transindividual relations or a disjunctive unity of modes of action. Let me explain now what “individual” and “transindividual” mean in contemporary terms.

We borrowed the concept of the transindividual, which was originally coined by Simondon, from Étienne Balibar’s study of Spinoza’s ontology of social relations (Balibar 2007; Simondon 2005). For Balibar, transindividuality, understood in Spinozist terms, is the order of the connection of things and ideas that produces and reproduces, individuates and individualizes individuals. In other words, it is a generative causality where the whole and the parts function as interconnected productive processes (Balibar 2007: 9). The transindividual does not just invert the idea of a separated and isolated individual “I,” when the “I” is simply considered as the aftermath of the social relations. The transindividual questions the logic of “before” and “after.” Pre-individual causality is not transcended in the individualized individual at a particular point of time and space, but constantly destabilizes the autonomy of the individual: “a given individual (let’s call it “I”) continuously abandons some part(s) of it-

²² The expression “difficult unity” is paraphrased in English translation (Vygotsky 1987: 250). See Russian edition (Vygotsky 1982: 306).

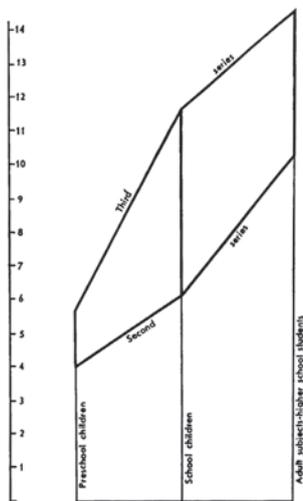
self, while at the same time continuously incorporating some part(s) of others (let's call them "they"), provided this substitution leaves a certain "proportion" (or essence) invariant" (Balibar 1997: 18). The pre-individual spreads across the *pre-* and *after* to manifest *trans-*. In other words, the transindividual is distributed *among* the individuals.²⁵ Balibar's reading of Spinoza and Simondon is quite close to Vygotsky's own understanding of the social unconscious. The social unconscious is the virtual and can reinforce itself through the dialectical chain of mediations that determines individuation. However, what seems to separate Simondon and Vygotsky, and perhaps Balibar and Vygotsky too, is the insistence of the former on biological and physical analogies of individuation (Simondon 1992). In other words, what actually separates in that case Spinozism proper and the Soviet fusion of Hegel and Spinoza is the introduction of the historical and dialectical dimension, which nature lacks. Nature is *causa effectum*, according to Vygotsky. There is no mediation and dialectics in nature, and when there is no mediation, there is no social life, and consequently, no individuation. Individuation, unlike in Spinoza and Simondon, is a social category. This claim has important consequences. Let me try to problematize them.

In 1931 a student and collaborator of Vygotsky, Alexei Leontiev, managed to conduct an experimental investigation of memory that scientifically proved Vygotsky's philosophical hypothesis of mediated behaviour. The so-called *Parallelogram of Memory Development* (2009 [1931]) shown below graphically illustrates the experiment. The group of preschool-, school-aged children, and adults were asked to memorize words in two different ways, with the help of the external aids and without auxiliary means. The social groups are shown in the abscissa axis. The ordinate shows the quantity of memorized words. The upper and lower lines indicate mediated and direct memorizing respectively. The result of the experiment shows that mediation raises memorizing at preschool age, but mediated memory slows down at school age, giving way to the increasing capacity of voluntary memorising. Thus, two modes of behaviour—immediate and mediated—"come together at the lower and upper limits, and form a figure whose shape is approximately that of a not quite regular parallelogram with two truncated angles" (Leontiev 2009 [1931]: 320). *The Parallelogram of Memory Development* demonstrates that mediated and immediate memory develop independently from each other to form a contradiction that could potentially and hypothetically be seen as a dialectical unity of opposites when externally mediated memory sublates mechanical unmediated memory and forms logical memory by means of the inner type of mediation.

²⁵ In Simondon's vocabulary, Virno notes, "among" is the pre-individual, the "no-man's land" (Virno 2015:144).

The Communist Drama of Individuation in Lev Vygotsky

For Vygotsky, the parallelogram of memory shows the process of development of all functions that shape the psychological structure (Vygotsky 1999a: 54) of the individuated transindividual. This scheme represents a quite simple dialectical logic of development. One may conclude that individuation at the end looks like a smoothly working assemblage of automatisms made out of sublated external relations.



Scheme 1: *Theoretical or Hypothetical Parallelogram of Development.*²⁴

The hypothetical parallelogram of development, indeed, displays a supra-conscious individual who is able to mentally resolve a differential equation, speak ten languages, and decide the most complicated ethical dilemma in two minutes. The supra-conscious consciousness can transform the social unconscious into self-awareness. This is definitely not the case of Pierre Bezykhov, who cannot decide even after mediating his motives by playing solitaire and endlessly discussing the situation with different people. This is a new human type, capable of being ahead of an action or capable of mentally modeling any action in any situation, a kind of perfect mathematical and logical machine. This new human type is also *alio esse* of the external otherness, but the slavery of externality is restructured here through the generating sets of individual feedbacks.

²⁴ Figure can be found in Leontiev (2009 [1931]: 321). Title to the figure is author's own.

The production of ways and means of thought mastering action, mastery over self²⁵ in Vygotsky's terms, is close to the Spinozian capacity to transform affects into purposeful and meaningful actions.²⁶ It is the capacity of a thinking thing to reach the highest possible intensity, but perhaps this capacity could be revealed only under the rule of communism. It may well be that communism, taken from the subjective side, may appear here as Spinoza's ethical and political program.

In Spinoza you will find a theory (I am changing it somewhat) which says that the soul can achieve that all manifestations, all conditions relate to a single goal. A system with a single center may develop with a maximal integrity of human behavior. For Spinoza this single idea is the idea of god or nature. Psychologically this is not at all necessary. But a person can indeed not only bring separate functions into a system, but also create a single center for the whole system. Spinoza demonstrated this system in the philosophical plane. There are people whose life is a model of the subordination to a single goal and who proved in practice that this is possible. Psychology has the task of demonstrating that the development of such a unified system is scientifically possible (Vygotsky 1997b: 107).²⁷

In any case, the simplicity of the parallelogram that shows the dialectics of internalization and reaffirmation of social relations does not correspond to the complexity of individuation, to the drama of development. In reality, Pierre Bezykhov never acts reasonably. The structure of individuation shows the actual drama of disorder between acting, doing, and thinking that does not necessarily end with the rational unity of word and act. Vygotsky agrees that the dynamics of subjectivity is a drama and psychology could not present itself in terms of processes, but only in

²⁵ The "mastery over self" translated as "self-control," but there is a huge difference between *kontrol*—control and *gospodstvo*—mastery. In our view, it is better to keep the word "mastery" here, also for the sake of pseudo-Hegelian pathos of this concept. On the mastery over self see Vygotsky (1997c: 207–20).

²⁶ In Vygotsky's own words, Spinoza "claimed that man has power over his affects, that the intellect may change the order and connections of the passions and bring them into accord with the order and connections that are given in the intellect," and further "Spinoza [...] correctly said, the knowledge of our affect changes it and modifies it from a passive state to an active one [...] our affects act in a complex system with our concepts and he who does not know that the jealousy of a man who is bound up by the Islamic concepts about women's fidelity and of a man who is bound up by a system of opposite conceptions about women's fidelity is different, does not understand that this feeling is historical, that it changes its essence in different ideological and psychological environments" (Vygotsky 1997b: 103).

²⁷ On the Spinozist elaboration of the problem of freedom in Vygotsky, see Zavershneva (2015b)

terms of drama (Vygotsky 1986: 62). Moreover, the program of relating all conditions to a single goal should not be confused with the successive mastering of mental functions that is a passage from non-verbal to verbal thinking. For instance, he stresses that although writing is the finest social technique of thinking expression, it is not a final developmental stage of thinking, because it neither abolishes oral speech, nor precedes it, but diversifies modes of cultural behaviour. Writing and speaking are preceded by concrete historical conditions and represent two different socially developed capacities of thought expression—the former is generated out of graphic symbolization of a sign and the latter out of phonetic symbolization of a sign.²⁸ Both have “use value” only in a particular context of development. While never abandoning the Hegelian idea of the Concept as the highest stage of development, Vygotsky still has something Spinozist in mind when he talks about the multiplication and diversification of modes of cultural behaviour. This diversification does not negate the primacy of abstract thinking, but rearticulates what abstract thinking is. For Vygotsky, thinking is an attribute of human behavior, and speech is a mode of expression of that attribute. Speech (*rech*) could be manifested in a gesture, an affect, oral communication, or graphically issued speech organized on the basis of alphabetic or hieroglyphic images. In other words, all forms of speech express the same thing—a thought, but each in a different way. Accordingly, we may try to radicalize his dialectical scheme by pointing to the dramaturgy and geological spatiality of the development.²⁹

Sublation, understood as *skhoronenie* (burying), indicates a spatial logic of preservation of the conflicting patterns of development, a history of the “various genetic epochs.” (Vygotsky 1997c: 222). In other words, a history of individuation holds within itself a landscape of multidirected times, which takes the form of geological superimposition. Individuation “resemble[s] the earth’s crust.” (Vygotsky 1997c: 222). The *spatial landscape* of all conflicts, directions, and traces of the development shapes a *structural place* of subjectivity within the social unconscious, within the individualizing transindividual.

Vygotsky summarizes the complex structure of becoming individual in his earlier work *The Psychology of Art* (1971 [1925]). On first view, the book does not correspond to Vygotsky’s later work. However, if we look closely at the methodological instruments he uses, it is possible to conclude with complete confidence that the analysis of the concrete works of

²⁸ See chapter 7, “Prehistory of the Development of Written Language” in Vygotsky (1997c: 131–48). See also chapter 7, “Thought and Word” (Vygotsky 1987: 243–85).

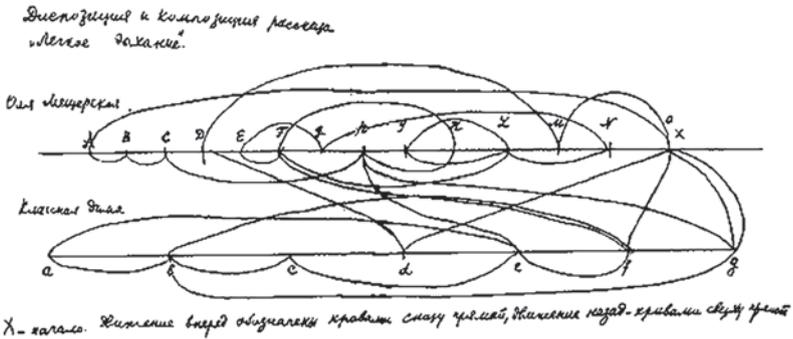
²⁹ There is growing interest in the problem of dramaturgy among Vygotskian psychologists. See, Davis et al. (2015) and the above-mentioned text by Dafermos (2015). Veresov stresses the importance of the conceptual framework of drama in Vygotsky’s dialectical theory of development. For him, the drama of development is the subjective resolution of “interpsychological collisions” (Veresov 2010, 2016).

art in many ways repeat his theory of individuation, which in this case is understood as the transformation of the material—everyday relations, stories, cases, situations, characters—into a form or *construction* of art. An art form is the active force of transformation and conversion of the material (Vygotsky 1971: 145–49).

Analyzing Bunin’s short story *Gentle Breath*, Vygotsky draws the scheme of individuation of a material in the art form. The *construction* of the short story is represented as the curve of the art form and the material of the work as a straight line. Stylistic functions that form a curved line make up the “purposeful teleology” of the *Gentle Breath*.

Here we can see how familiar Vygotskian terminology intervenes in the art field. The material is the story of a provincial middle-class girl who had a sexual relationship with a married man and then with a military officer, whom she betrayed and who shot her dead at a railway station. Bunin, Vygotsky argues, made a gentle breath of life out of the banality of the material—out of an insignificant philistine life—by recomposing the elements of the narrative in such a way that the typical provincial story has begun to signify the lightness and movement of life. Exactly this contradiction between content and form creates a strong esthetical reaction.

This contradiction is a violation of causality by means of “dialectical leaps” that is the accentuation of one element of the story and suppression of the other, or a jump from the end of the story to the beginning (Vygotsky 1971: 150–60). The “dialectical struggle” between what is given as a material and how this material is recomposed, or rather reaffirmed, in the “curve of the art form” is the same capacity to relate external to one self.



Scheme 2: Disposition and Composition of the Short Story *Gentle Breath*³⁰

³⁰ This scheme can be found in the Russian edition of *The Psychology of Art* (Vygotsky 2000 [1925]: 209).

What the scheme shows is the “melody” or the curve of the individuation. It is similar to the parallelogram’s dialectical logic, but structurally it has a topological origin. Only the detective like eye of an analyst could map it. Indeed, such mapping would demand a work of anatomy (and that is precisely how Vygotsky describes it), where the appearance and functioning of each element of the story should be analyzed in accordance to the material of a concrete life narration. The difference between the *parallelogram of development* and the *composition of development* lies in the logic of disposition of the disjunctive unity of behaviour. The parallelogram shows a simplified ideal form⁵¹ that brings to the agreement conflicting functions, creating, at the very end, the picture of the self-aware subject, whereas the composition demonstrates a narrative of the conflict topologically, breaking with the linear logic of movement towards Understanding and Concept. It presents the geology and geography of the dialectical structure of internalized externality. Dialectics here is drawing and psyche is an artwork.

I contrast these two schemes of mediation in order to stress that the drama of individuation explored by Vygotsky poses certain problems. Although individuation is formulated here as a process of conversion of the social unconscious, it is meticulously studied only from the side of psyche. In other words, it is unclear how the “subordination to a single goal” or communist individuation is to be achieved. Indeed, Vygotsky’s theory tells us what it means to be communist, but it does not tell us what communism as a society is. Individuation can be seen as communization, when it tends to an “adequate form” or reaches highest possible intensity and “subordination to a single goal.” The psyche as an artwork is a communist psyche. That is to say that even in pre-communist societies there is a tendency to communization. Vygotsky lived a short life and perhaps he aimed to elaborate his formal scheme of individuation with regards to the concrete study of how particular types of sociality produce particular forms of individuation. By now, I can only suggest rethinking the politics of individuation by bringing in to current debates Vygotsky’s *Capital* or his critique of the political economy of the individual.⁵²

⁵¹ Ekaterina Zavershneva also stresses the simplicity of the operational logic of mediation (that in our analysis corresponds to the parallelogram of development). Referring to the new materials from Vygotsky’s archive, she demonstrates that in 1930–34 he began to develop a semantic understanding of consciousness (Zavershneva 2014, 2015a). However, it does not challenge her to rethink the idea of subjective development. In spite of the great number of topological analogies in the analysis, Zavershneva repeats a familiar idea about vertical developmental levels. She is dangerously close to the diamat tradition, “Hegelian triad” of transition from nature (thesis) to culture (antithesis) and the sublation of the latter in freedom (synthesis) is applied to Vygotsky’s understanding of personality (Zavershneva 2015b: 103–05).

⁵² In the reviewed literature, I was able to find only one study of individuation that counts Vygotsky. It is the works of Paolo Virno, who tries to rethink the relation-

Similarly to the French philosophers of the 1960s, Vygotsky reflects on the importance of the spatial and causal dimension in historical development. However, the structural component of his dialectics does not reject a temporal line of development. Vygotsky brings together time and space by looking at the formation of consciousness through a materialist and monist perspective of the relationship between subject and environment. The asymmetrical and converted logic of the exchange between the two elements creates polyphonic layers of mediatory functions in human behavior. This leads Vygotsky to the conception of individuation that is a semantic articulation of the temporal and spatial structure of consciousness. The unity of Spinoza, Marx, and Hegel allows him to demonstrate the material preconditions of dialectics and the temporal dimension of the constant affirmation and reaffirmation of the human content. However, his theory of communism is due to be written.

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ship between "pre-individual," "individuation," and "transindividual" in relation to the Marxian concept of "general intellect" and the Spinozist theory of "multitude" (Virno 2015: 221–36). The analysis of Virno and the existing literature on individuation demands a separate study. In this article my aim is to point to the further elaboration of the problem.

The Communist Drama of Individuation in Lev Vygotsky

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The Communist Drama of Individuation in Lev Vygotsky

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