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# REDISCOVERING MISINTERPRETED CONCEPT OF VOSPITANIYE, CORE CONSTITUENT OF VYGOTSKIAN ZPD, THROUGH SCHOLAR'S SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTUALITY

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**REDISCOVERING MISINTERPRETED CONCEPT OF *VOSPITANIYE*, CORE  
CONSTITUENT OF VYGOTSKIAN ZPD, THROUGH SCHOLAR'S  
SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTUALITY**

**BY**

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**MA IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH LINGUISTICS  
PHD IN ADULT PEDAGOGY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, a renowned Russian psychologist, whose immediate family, academic surrounding, and scientific findings are typically scrutinized by scholars of past and present (Feingenberg, 1996, Kotik-Friedgut, 2008, 2011, Kuzmich, 2006, Vygodskaya & Lifanova, 1999, Yasnitsky, 2011, 2012) was the first to emphasize the holistic multidisciplinary approach to child development of pedology (child pedagogy) and distinguish two equally meaningful components of child education: *obuchenie* (teaching/learning process) and *vospitanie* (fostering). Even though Vygotskian theories are extensively employed in modern educational practices the intricacy of a complex unity of *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* in the process of education was overlooked as both were unified under an overarching English translation of *education* which distinctly demonstrated the existing issues in academic translation as well as cultural adaptation of the content (Nord, 2005, Smith, 2011, Snell-Hornby, 2000). To elucidate

on the under-recognized principle of *vospitanie* which lies at the essence of Vygotsky's educational philosophy, the given research delves into the difference between development, education, *obuchenie*, and *vospitanie* to rationalize previous confusion as well as to promote acknowledgment of the concepts' heterogeneity. Additionally, the outlined concepts are central constituents of the Zone of Proximal Development (Mahn, 2000, 2015, Vygotsky, 1987, 1997), therefore, their understanding is critical to comprehensive conceptualization of ZPD.

Furthermore, to acquire a comprehensive perspective of the socio-cultural forces that orchestrated Vygotsky's own formation through *obuchenie* and *vospitanie*, this research intends to examine historical scene of the turn of the XXth century, in other words, to extrapolate Vygotsky's renowned socio-cultural theory onto his own development.

Keywords: Lev Vygotsky, Biography, History, *Obuchenie*, *Vospitanie*, ZPD, ZAD

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (1896-1934) who stands distinctively among other profound Russian educational psychologists such as S. Rubenshtein, A. Mokarenko, P. Galperin, K. Ushinsky, A. Luria, A. Leontiev, I. Pavlov, and others was among a few whose brilliant mind radiated through decades preserving actuality and novelty of the scholar's theories even for modern day educators. Academic domain has been endlessly debating over Vygotsky's attribution to the guild of general, child, genetic psychologists; patho-psychologists; philologists; anthropologists; defectologists, or art scientists. Yet, most importantly, his figure represented humanism and educational ethics of broad sense which is why numerous psychological disciplines were synthesized in Vygotskian theories.

To determine Vygotsky's authentic attribution to a specific academic guild as well as to discern the most forceful life occurrences of the scholar, numerous researchers of past and present generations have extensively scrutinized Vygotsky's biography for decades after his death. His daughter, Gita Vygodkaya's (1995, 1996, 1999) and Kotik-Friedgut's (2008, 2011) reflections, numerous works of Yasnitsky (2009, 2011, 2015) in co-authorship with Ferrari (2008), and Van der Veer (2015, 2017), along with Feingenberg's (1996) Dobkin's Memoirs of the Way Vygotsky Started were among a few scholars who broadly elucidated on life and professional path of Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky. Yet, most of these researches failed to construct a socio-cultural reality of Vygotsky, possibly anticipating Vygotskian proponents to independently inquire about this reality from specialized historical publications presenting a more substantial picture. For consolidating both biographical and historical content, Chapter II of a given study intends to provide a brief summary of the main life occurrences both social and

private, as well as influential personas and their philosophies that shaped Vygotsky into an enlightener and educator of all times.

The presented historical overview acting as a preface to the discussion of the most quintessential components of education – *obuchenie* (teaching/learning), and *vospitanie* (fostering), is projected to shed light on the essence of these components in Vygotsky’s own intellectual establishment as well as on concepts’ extensive manifestation throughout Vygotsky’s original works in Russian in general. To clarify the implications of the Russian notions of *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* and conceptualize their unique properties, Chapter III of this study presents a methodological review Vygotsky’s vision of both components of education as seen in “Educational Psychology” (1997), “Mental Development of Children in the Process of *Obuchenie*” (1935), “Tool and Symbol in Child Development” (1999), “Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes” (1978), and other works.

Overlooking significance of both concepts in the international academic context derives from the translation issues related to the complexity of both concepts in Russian and their seeming feasibility to be translated into English as a unified term of *education*. Even though the scholars and educators worldwide were able to appreciate the works of Vygotsky on educational psychology without distinguishing the components of education for decades, the fact that in the source text, Vygotsky distinguishes these two notions and equally accentuates both rationalized a comprehensive examination of their distinctions. The misinterpretation or rather undistinguishing of the concepts of *obuchenie* (teaching/learning), and *vospitanie* (fostering) lies within the theories of translation studies that are unambiguously explained in the works Nord (2005), Smith (2011), Snell-Hornby (2000), among others. Consequently, to provide a short justification of the



translation flaws and inaccuracies of the cross-cultural adaptation, an explanation of the phenomenon of concepts mistranslation and misinterpretation will be presented.

The conclusion of this work, Chapter IV provides a discussion of the explored content and summarizes the inferences made in this study.

## Chapter II

### Review of literature on Vygotsky's biography and socio-cultural context

#### **Lev Vygotsky's family**

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, the name by which he is recognized in the world, or Lev Simkhovich Vygodsky, as he was called by his parents at birth, was born into a large Jewish family on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1896 in Orsha, a small district town of Vitebsk province of Belarus<sup>1</sup>. Soon after Lev's birth, his family moved to Gomel which was predominantly populated by intelligent and ambitious Jewish community. For Vygotskys it was a conscious move due to several reasons. From 1791 to 1917 people of Jewish background could only populate certain pale of settlements. Residency outside of these territories was permitted to ennobled, educated, and affluent representatives of Jewish community. For this reason, top educational establishments of Russian Empire located beyond the pale accepted only those individuals of Jewish origin who could demonstrate a profound level of schooling (knowledge of educational content), well-bred social behavior (adaptation to the social, academic, and intellectual context), and exceptional level of intelligence. Gomel of the time was a perfect educational platform providing young aspiring graduates of specialized schools, and college-preparatory high schools with a comprehensive scope of knowledge. Subsequently, Gomel school graduates could effortlessly compete with school graduates from more privileged areas of the country. Upon receiving prestigious education outside Gomel, young individuals returning to Gomel with

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<sup>1</sup> From 1795 and until 1917 Belarus used to be a part of Russian Empire, from 1918 a part of Soviet Union as Belarusian People's Republic, from 1919 - Lithuanian–Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, from 1920 - Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, and only in August, 25 1991 it gained its independence from the USSR. Such geo-political transitions must have caused confusion of ascribing Lev Vygotsky to Russian academic setting rather than to Belarusian.

university degrees propagated liberal ideas, promoted cultural life, and contributed to the financial and industrial prosperity of their home town.

Simha (Semyon) Yakovlevich Vygodsky (1869-1931), father of Lev Vygodsky, a graduate of Kharkiv (now a Ukrainian city) Institute of Commerce served as a deputy of managing director at Gomel branch of Russia United Bank, and after the bank closed during October Revolution of 1917, as an insurance agent. Lev's mother, Tsylia (Tsetsiliya) Moiseevna Vygodskaya (1874–1935) knew several languages and received a degree in teaching, but as a person with high family morals chose to fully dedicate herself to upbringing of 8 children. Vygodskaya and Lifanova (1996) recall that deference, sympathy, benevolence, clemency, courtesy, modesty, human decency, integrity, and consideration to all people in family and society were among the core humanistic values that parents engrained in their children. As Lev was Simha's and Tsylia's second child, he was expected to care for younger children and educate them on the household rules and family principles. It was Lev's earliest calling for the future profession of an educator.

Thoughtful psychological upbringing of the children was complimented by developing such intellectual fundamentals as literature, theatre, fine arts, history, and foreign languages shaping youngers' genuine dispositions. The atmosphere at Vygodskys' Gomel household was particularly conducive for exploring social sciences which predisposed children's early interest for human science. Thus, young explorers turned into knowledgeable polymaths who combined their parents' emotional profundity and necessary underpinnings of cultured and well-educated individuals of that time.

The family didn't acknowledge their attribution to intellectual elite, and regardless of the fact that parents continuously pushed children to refine their academic knowledge, the younger

Vygotskys enjoyed a normal childhood. Kuzmich (2006) wrote that young Vygotsky was growing up a lively, dynamic, communicative, happy, frolic, and a bit mischievous child who spent hours at the river, swimming, and rowing the boats with his friends. That said, such characteristics as kindness, kind-heartedness, sensitivity, responsibility for his deeds, ability to keep promises characterized him from his early years. In those very years, he already had a profound interest for theatre, Russian and foreign classical literature, and poetry of such eminent authors as Pushkin, Blok, Tyutchev. He was absorbed by engrossing novels of Thomas Mayne Reid and James Fenimore Cooper as well as the prose of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. Yet, it was Shakespeare's "Hamlet" that was the literary piece of Vygotsky's choice for life.

With the apparent similarity to other kids in the family, it was Lev Vygotsky's natural genuine curiosity and visionary love to scientific knowledge along with his exceptional determination and diligence that shaped his genius. As his contemporaries acknowledged Vygotsky's memorization skills were phenomenal as well as his *myshlenie*<sup>2</sup>, analytico-synthetic mindset, highly developed imagination, and acute sense for the new, (Feingenberg, 1996). His inquisitiveness influenced the development of Vygotsky's pursuit for research as well as his distinctive idiosyncrasies making a person with such profound level of academic, psychological, and moral construction destined to be a triumphant scientist.

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<sup>2</sup> *Myshlenie*, literally translated from Russian as thinking, is the most complex type of intellectual activity of a human being which is targeted at solving new tasks. There are several types of *myshlenie*: verbal-logical (abstract) thinking, emotional (evaluative) thinking, practical or instrumental thinking (Vygotsky & Varshava, Psychological dictionary, 1931). In Vygotsky's and Luria's (1930) perspective three level structure of *myshlenie* characterized *myshlenie* of humans: the main progress in the process of development of *myshlenie* is related to the transition from the initial usage of the word as a proper name to the next stage when the word acts as a sign of a complex, and finally when the word becomes a tool and a means for the generation of a notion. Through these stages *myshlenie* of humans transforms into *rechevoye myshlenie* (Mahn, 2012), in other words into a complex speaking/thinking system.

Vygotsky's descendants reinforced the legacy of Vygotsky. The majority of the family became prominent humanities-minded figures with a predominant focus on linguistics. Lev's sisters: Klavdiya Semyonovna Vygodskaya (1904—1977), a linguist and the author of Russian-French dictionaries, Zinaida Semyonovna Vygodskaya (1898—1981) – the author of the Russian-English dictionaries; his cousin, a recognized literary critic and a translator, David Isaakovich Vygodsky (1893-1943); Lev's older daughter Gita L'vovna Vygodskaya (1925–2010) who followed her father's footsteps and became a psychologist and a speech pathologist are among most prominent Vygotsky's relatives. Gita Vygodskaya was probably the most recognized author of Vygotsky's biography entitled “L. S. Vygotsky. The Touch-ups to the Portrait” (1996). Daughter of Gita Vygodskaya, Elena Evgenievna Kravtsova is a PhD of psychology, a professor, and the director of The Institute of Psychology named after L. S. Vygotsky in Moscow. Lev Vygotsky's great-grandchildren are also pursuing academic careers in the domain of psychology.

### **Education of Lev Vygotsky**

As stated earlier, Lev Vygotsky was coming from a relatively well-off family background that could afford home schooling of young Lev. Sholom (Solomon) Mordukhovich (Markovich) Ashpiz, who was young scholar's home educator, relied on Socratic method or dialogue<sup>3</sup> as a central teaching-learning modus operandi, and promoted the early development of Vygotsky's *myshlenie*, judgements, and inferences. Ashpiz educated young Vygotsky in the way that the boy would be able to demonstrate profound capabilities in all subjects that were

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<sup>3</sup> Socratic method or dialogue, promotes the development of *myshlenie* through introducing problematic questions during a conversation. Socratic dialogue recognizes three stages of Socratic dialogue: agreement, doubt, and argumentation. At each stage question respondent is pushed to arrive at the answer through answering a series of guiding questions to seemingly arrive at the correct answer him/herself (Carey & Mullan, 2004).

taught at a private university-preparatory school. Before joining high school, Vygotsky had already mastered English, Old-Greek, and Old- Hebrew, over the years of high school Vygotsky added German, French, and Latin to his linguistic baggage.

Nevertheless, Vygotsky was not only an exceptional high-school student, graduating with honors in 1913, his keenness in Jewish history and culture moved him to establish an extracurricular study group exploring Jewish history. Dobkin, a close friend of Vygotsky, who frequented this circle, recalled Vygotsky's enthusiasm, expertise, and preparedness in leading the group of 18 participants (Feingenberg, 1996). It is most likely because of Vygotsky's intellectual acumen and inherent inquisitiveness that he had developed hunger for reading and research, embracing all kinds of literature ranging from fiction to scientific pieces which was also marked by Dobkin (Feingenberg, 1996).

Vygotsky's ability to demonstrate a remarkable level of general education and competitive proficiency in foreign languages secured him a spot among other Jewish youngsters who were fitting the procedural norm, the vacancies for exceptional applicants of a Jewish descend. Nevertheless, the office of admissions rejected Vygotsky's application to the philological department of Moscow State University, forcing a young candidate to pursue less appealing program opportunities. Governmental limitation imposed on the programs available for people like Lev, overburdened and limited his search. Guided by parental advice, Vygotsky applied to the Medical Department of the same university. However, not having developed a liking for medicine, Vygotsky transferred to the Department of Law a year later.

Vygotsky's major academic distraction at that time was his enrollment at the department of History and Philosophy at People's University founded by Alphonse Leonidovich Shanyavskiy (1837–1905), a philanthropist of Polish descent. This educational facility was

purposely designed to be open to all social groups of learners from diverse financial, ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds. Shanyavskiy's wife, Lydia Shanyavskaya-Rodstvennaya recalled that her husband's main dream had always been to use all his capital for the type of a higher educational facility that would be free to attend to all learners even those who didn't have school graduation certificates. It was an educational establishment in which both women and men of Russian and non-Russian descent, all those who were interested in getting higher education could study (Orobey and Lobov, 2001).

This tuition free university was opened in 1908 and allowed all listeners to receive uniform high quality of education over the evening classes which was convenient for all working students. The only major drawback was that school's lack of accreditation could not provide its graduates with a State recognized diploma. Yet, it didn't avert some 3600 attendees among whom were such prominent Russian scholars as V. Vernadsky (natural philosopher and thinker), P. Vinogradoff (Russian and British historian and medievalist), G. Wulff (crystallographer), N. Zelinsky (Russian and Soviet chemist), P. Lebedev (physicist), K. Timiryazev (botanist, physiologist, and a proponent of the Evolution Theory of Charles Darwin in Russia), N. Umov (physicist and mathematician who discovered the concept of Umov-Poynting vector and Umov effect), S. Chaplygin (Russian and Soviet physicist, mathematician, and mechanical engineer) and others. Students of other educational establishments aspired to attend Shanyavsky University simultaneously with their main place of education owing to the fact that at People's University they were able to choose the disciplines of their interest. Taking an advantage of this option, Vygotsky attended lectures of a literary critic U. I. Aikhenvald (1872–1928); L. M. Lopatin (1855–1920) who read lectures on the history of psychology and philosophy; philosopher, psychologist and logician G. I. Chelpanov (1862–1936); philosopher and educator P.P. Blonsky

(1884–1941) whose educational principles and humanistic convictions would later be extensively referred to in Vygotskian “Educational Psychology” (1997); and G. G. Shpet (1879–1937) a famous psychologist, psychologist of ethics, art theorist, translator, and polyglot of 17 languages who also significantly affected Vygotsky’s theories. The students of the Public University of Shanyavsky found public disputes and seminar classes frequented by numerous Moscow professors from all leading Moscow Universities particularly appealing. Here both faculty and audience could engage in thought-provoking discourse which benefited listeners much more than regular classes, or sessions at the Law Department of Moscow State University in Vygotsky’s case. Such extensive humanities education (philosophy, history, ethics and esthetics, literature studies, and jurisprudence), paired with side interest in medicine and Vygotsky’s fascination with Russian, European, and American literature, made his education undeniably implacable.

### **Socio-cultural realia of Lev Vygotsky**

Vygotsky’s authentic appetite for knowledge could be explained by his general intellectual curiosity that established early in his life, nevertheless his notable striving for sciences could as well be rationalized by the political and social turmoil in Russia at the turn of the centuries, which only accelerated progressive ideologies. It is impossible to neglect diverse traumatizing impact of historical occurrences that manifested in all individuals who witnessed widespread occurrences of the beginning of the XX century in Russia. Each individual contributed to the social and political evolving in their own way. There were those who sacrificed their lives over the protests and social confrontations as well as those who devoted their lives to the less visible battles in the libraries, universities, laboratories, and in publishing houses for the sake of intellectual enlightenment of the socially, intellectually, and politically awakening population. Neither of the roles were easy. Intellectual and physical sacrifice came at



a price, disputably higher for educated younger generation that was torn between making social or scientific statements. Shedrovitsky (2005), a scholar who researched life and work of Vygodsky's mastermind described a social setting of Moscow which young Lev Vygodsky joined as a social whirl. There was a lengthy and exhaustive crisis of autocracy, as well as a crisis of state governmental machinery accompanied by the major industrial and trade downfall. It was the decade of both post and pre-revolutionary period, the time of anarchy and reaction, the time of ebullience, and the time of cultural and moral decadence. As public absorption in modern theories were ranging from Marxism, anarchism, social-democracy, materialism to Bergsonism<sup>4</sup>, symbolism, intuitionism, Orthodoxy, futurism, and Neo-Kantianism, dozens of journal articles and hundreds of books were published. A total disruption of ideals brought theories' propagators to religious disputes and lectures, poetry readings, avant-garde performances, student gatherings, and even to secret cabbalistic meetings. In this chaos, younger generation was looking for new ways of being, it was rethinking current events, aspiring to find common engagement to counterpose its energy, talent, and liberating work to wrecking social, cultural, and ethical paradigms. Shedrovitsky's (2005) was viewing the epoch in an idealized way, whereas the factual ferociousness and tragedy of reality was much grimmer. Such famous Russian historians as Luk'yanov, Morozov, Soloviev, Svanidze, Radzinsky who are famous for their meticulous disentanglement of each episode of the turn of the XX centuries as well as reasonable

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<sup>4</sup> Bergsonism is the teaching of a French philosopher Henri-Louis Bergson (1859-1941) who developed process philosophy that identifies metaphysical reality with change and development, and psychophysiological parallelism. In his attempt to explain the relationship of mind and body he stated that each psychological occurrence corresponds with physiological occurrence. In his book "Matter and Memory" (1896) the scientist describes his findings in the aphasia research that led him to believe that the mind or the spirit/soul are independent of the body. His work "Creative Evolution" published in 1907 concludes that the development of instinct lead to the appearance of the insects and the evolution of the intellect caused genesis of humans.

judgements conveyed a phenomenon of Russian revolutions in much darker shades. The publications of these scholars were specifically chosen to outline precedings and actualities of the historical era of Vygotskian Russia to present a rationalization of the complexity, adversity, and prominence of the time that constructed Vygotsky's genuine identity.

Even though this historical background cannot delve into the essence of each event, March 1, 1881 was chosen as a starting point of this outline attempting to present a maximally comprehensive picture. It was this date that signified the beginning of the most violent and unstable period in Russian history drowning from three to four following generations of Russian citizens in blood. Three revolutions, a civil war, Russia's (later USSR's) participation in The First and The Second World Wars, political convictions and prosecutions, mass repressions of the regime antagonists caused several dozens of millions casualties.

March 1, 1881, signified the triumph of the tenth assassination attempt of Russian Emperor, Alexander II (reigned: 1855-1881), organized by the socialist revolutionary movement called Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) just a few days before the presupposed official signing date of the first Russian constitution. The Tsar Liberator, as Alexander II is often referred to, abolished serfdom in Russia in 1861 this way setting around 40% of Russian population free. Even though Alexander II was maintaining an active reformation policy affecting multiple spheres of social life, the ostracized revolutionary underground unities of socialists (Narodnaya Volya (People's Will)) criticized the outcomes of his reforms and expansively propelled socialist transformations of the society. To coerce the governmental reformation course, they proclaimed blood terror as a method of choice, being unable to find a better means of political battle.

Liberated peasants strained by excessive land redemption payments and loans imposed by private landers, were forced to relocate to urban areas for earnings, doing 14-hour-long days

at the factories. The working conditions were unbearable and were often burdened by monetary fines which people tolerated due to their long-established obedience. Alexander Herzen (1937), who was inspired by the Decembrists<sup>5</sup>, members of progressive intelligent class, urged members of “Narodnaya Volya” to “Go to people! Manifest your intellectuality and make the people rise against the State!” (Radzinsky, 2014). Yet, the revolutionaries considered the call for awakening of the masses through peacefully organized enlightening gatherings too strenuous, and chose to exert more radical measures for the sake of a ‘promising future’. Alexander III, Russian emperor to follow (reigned: 1881-1894), the son of Alexander II, alarmed by the prosecution of monarchy, deployed a policy of harsh conservatism to oppose the revolutionaries. He limited the freedom of courts, municipalities, and universities, as well as imposed censorship. Such drastic protectionist measures promoted extensive revolutionist violence at the turn of 1880es-1890es, and caused around 17000 victims. Most of the executed people were innocent, just like a young son, teenage daughter, and 60 guests of Pyotr Stolypin, who got severely injured during the assassination attempt of a chairman of the Council of Ministers. The leading conviction of the revolutionaries (also known as as bomb throwers) in pursuit of their ideologies was that happiness of the nation could be achieved through a complete devaluation of human life.

In the upcoming decade, the social unrest accumulated further, resulting in Bloody Sunday of January, 9 1905. On that day, Nikolas II (reigned: 1894-1917), the eldest son of Alexander III, could have prevented approaching eradication of Romanov dynasty and could have directed the peaceful protest of his people towards the triumph of the Russian Monarchy

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<sup>5</sup> Decembrists are 121 Russian army officers who encouraged 3000 Russian soldiers to protest against autocracy and Serfdom, and to prevent Nicholas I’s assumption of the throne. After the Decembrist revolt (December, 25, 1825), which was suppressed, leaving hundreds of deaths. Five leaders of the revolt were executed through quartering, 31 were beheaded, the remaining ones were sent to Siberia for hard labor.

had he not ordered to violently suppress the protestors. On that day, thousands of people coming from diverse socio-economic backgrounds headed towards the central Palace Square from all parts of Saint-Petersburg. They carried a petition to the Tsar, chanting a national anthem “God, Save the Tsar!”. The procession praised the emperor holding his portraits as well as holy banners. The text of the petition suggested establishment of the parliament, abolishment of bureaucracy, as well as the measures against people’s poverty and existing deprivation of their rights. The emperor, being in Tsarskoye Selo (a suburban royal residence outside Saint-Petersburg) at the time of the marches, chose to neglect several hundred thousand demanders for social justice, most of whom represented working class and gaining power bourgeois class. Yet, protestors’ appeal “Soldiers do not shoot at people!” was ignored and at 11:30 cavalry grenadiers started to trample the crowd. As Russian impressionist, Valentin Serov (1905) recalled that a composed, dignified, unarmed mob moving towards mounted attack is a horrifying sighting (Serov, 1986). By evening, 100 people were killed, 300 wounded, and a rough estimate of 4600 to 20000 were injured. From that moment, as Priest Gapon (1905/1926), the leader of the revolt stated, blood between the people and the tsar became a powerful antagonizer of the monarchy.

On October 17, 1905, a month after a defeating Russo-Japanese War taking lives of over 52,000 people, Nikolas II signed the first Russian constitution which was long overdue. Dissatisfied with the lack of practical implications of the constitution, laborers continued to struggle for their rights in numerous armed outbursts in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg which were violently overpowered by city guards. Additionally, some 2000 death sentences were imposed by the drumhead courts on most enthusiastic participants which increased the hatred of Tsarism in the society. Thus, a rapidly evolving unity of socialist movement supporters started consolidating workers’ sentiment around the prosecution of the royalty, state officials, and even

wealthy people, justifying cruel executions of the nobility by the ideals of the revolution. Those who dared to conduct such executions were considered nation's heroes. This way, revolutionaries assassinated Vyacheslav Pleve, the Secretary of Local Affairs and Sergey Romanov, Moscow general-governor in 1904 and 1905 respectively. Revolutionaries were outrageously expatriating the goods from wealthier people and postal carriages in determination to maintain financing of the revolution. Young Joseph Djugashvili (Stalin) was among those, appointed to head such fundraising movement in the South of Russian Empire.

At the same time, the members of an armed monarchist anti-semitic group terrorized people who seemed to have an attribution to a Jewish community. Monarchists were making such judgements based on resemblance of the individuals' appearance with the representatives of the bourgeois class who were allegedly related to the movement of overthrowing monarchy. The police forces and the army were completely reluctant to oppressing such aggressive social confrontation as they were in unrest.

The situation in the rural areas was also far from being stable and peaceful. Peasants were burning landlords' estates in demand for land repartition and maliciously contradicted pervading urbanization. Alexander Blok (1905), a representative of the silver age of Russian poetry wrote:

And we shall rise them of the pitchforks	И мы подыдем их на вилы
'N their noosed bodies we shall swing	Мы в петлях раскачем тела
So, that the neck sinews could dehisce	Чтоб лопнули на шее жилы,
And accursed blood of theirs could	Чтоб кровь проклятая текла
flow.	

to emphasize peasants' hatred towards landlords as well as farmers' barbaric disgust for civilization.

Less than a decade later, on August 1, 1914, Russia announced its commencement in the First World War. Even though the society was enthusiastic about country's involvement in the War anticipating that the participation would become an alternative for the local revolution, the

country's economy and industries were merely ready for a military venture. The recent Stolypin's agrarian reforms were only starting to become operational whereas the armament industry was in total decline. Military supplies were so scarce that in all absurdity, the back line soldiers on the battle field were waiting in trenches for the soldiers at the front line to be decimated to get hold of their guns. The first winter of the war brought some 400 000 deaths causing the army to retreat from the front line. As the war continued, the economy continued to crumble leaving the soldiers not only weaponless but also without necessary medical help. Numerous troops were reluctant to sustain the battle, and the number of escape-soldiers increased. In attempt to prevent such frivolity, commanders either whipped the yielders or simply shot those seen retreating from the field. The last successful war action, a famous Brusilovsky breakthrough came at an exceeding price of almost 500,000 lives, and total losses in First World War from the Russian side were as much as 2,5 million people, including 1 million of destroyed civilians, almost 4 million wounded, and 3 million captured soldiers.

Meanwhile, local anti-czarism dispositions of strikers and nobility increased in an attempt to shatter Monarchy. Even the Cossacks, previously the most reliable supporters of the Tsarism, refused to settle the riot organized by the soldiers' wives demanding bread. In December 1916, Prince Felix Yusupov, the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich Romanov, and the right-wing politician Vladimir Purishkevich assassinated Grigori Rasputin who was known for his close affiliation with the Royal Family.

On February 21, 1917 people of Saint-Petersburg flooded the streets in protest against increasing prices and shortages in food supply. In fear of witnessing the demolition of the city properties and outrageous riots, the Tsar left the capital again. This time it was Mogilev from which Tsar wasn't destined to return to Saint-Petersburg. On his way to the capital, his train was

stopped by the troops of the rioting soldiers who by then had completely lost their loyalty to the Tsar. The royal family would be transported to Alexander Palace of Tsarskoye Selo where on March 2, 1917 the Last Tsar would sign his abdication. On 30 April, 1918 last Romanov family would be moved from Tsarskoye Selo to Ekaterinburg, and assassinated in the basement of Ipatiev House on July 17, 1918. Later in history, the assassination of Romanov dynasty would become one of the most scrutinized historical occurrence, yet in this study it is presented in its most general outline.

The next day after Tsar's abdication, March 3, 1917 marked the start of the February Bourgeois Democratic Revolution that lasted until November 7, 1917, the day of the start of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Bread riots, Anti-War rallies, demonstrations, and Putilov factory workers' strikes turned the city into a 'boiling melting pot' resulting in almost 1500 deaths over the clashes of police with protestants who were joined by the troops now treacherous to the Emperor. Soon after the February Revolution started, the remaining State Duma (government) officials formed Russian Provisional Government, which on November 7, 1917 was overthrown due to their null affiliation with the revolutionaries and vague understanding of demands and needs of working class. This day (November 7, 1917) marked the start of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

Opened on January 5, 1918, a long expected constitutional assembly was supposed to operate as a democratic facility in Russia, but the revolutionaries also known as Bolsheviks, proclaiming principles of Communism were not in favor of developing democratic institutions. Blinded by their growing popularity, Bolsheviks commanded armed soldiers to dissipate the gathering of democratic assembly supporters. This confrontation marked the beginning of the

Civil War (October 1917 – October 1922) which tore Russia into two irreconcilable parts of Bolsheviks (Reds) and Mensheviks (Whites), and led to the formation of numerous republics.

Upon coming to power, Bolshevik government initiated a bitter fight known as red terror against the unities of Mensheviks and socialist-revolutionaries mostly comprised of former army officers, civil servants, and intelligentsia standing in opposition of the communist ideals. These groups of people became prime targets for public execution which were performed with special cruelty and violence. Rapes, robberies, mass killings, medieval torture, beheading, and live burials were the proven methods mastered by the Emergency Committee (Che-Ka), a division of Bolsheviks.

On January 11, 1919 Bolsheviks announced a state-wide grain and agricultural goods confiscation policy called *Prodrazvyorstka* (requisitioning of produce), claiming that all private grain storages belonged to the State. This measure was introduced with a seemingly noble intention - to provide urban population with sufficient food supply. In practice, though, it was leaving peasants and their families with no means to subsist. The first peasant uprising against Bolsheviks befell in Penza where the troops of provisional army began robbing the villages before the executive order came to power. Those who objected the policy or hid the grain were slaughtered. Ongoing confiscations resulted in numerous peasant revolts from Salekhard to Altay which were later oppressed by 2000 chemical weapons commissioned from Moscow. Most importantly, however, the repossessions of food supply that continued for almost two more decades due to the need to export grain and feed city residents lead to mass starvations across country. The mass famine of 1921-1922 took lives of 5 million people. Holodomor, the famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933 exterminated from 2.4 million to 7.5 million people. Both major famines instigated cannibalism of children and people remains.



In the years of civil war, the Whites attempted to fiercely oppose any social manifestation of the Reds, and thus became infamous for turning the war against the Reds into a war against people. Not only did they practice inhumane methods of massacre initially more representative of Bolsheviks, but also they established the first concentration camp on Belamor island Mud'yuk in 1918 where they prosecuted politically unreliable individuals. Every third inmate of the camp died, and those who chose to escape the camp by climbing over the barbed wire were shot.

It is still debatable whose ideologies at the time of the Civil War caused worse consequences, and whose actions were more brutal, but as statistics shows from 11 to 13 million people died over 5 years of the War (1917-1922). The Young Soviet Empire was willing to pay this price to build a promising future. Even more, people of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) had to sacrifice an additional 24,8 million lives over the years of Stalin ideological repressions (1927-1938, 1937 was the year that took the most lives), and 43,448 million people more over the years of Second World War (1939-1945) all in the name of the ideology of totalitarianism.

For 69 years of communism, Soviet people had to subsist in total egalitarianism and subservience of society coalesced around an overemphasized idea of greater tomorrow and universal greatness. Nevertheless, the professed ideology of country's superiority and mightiness married to political and social unrest urged masterminds of artistic and scientific worlds to generate the country's intellectual legacy for generations to come. At the time of severe censorship, prosecuted ideological dissension, and harshly sanctioned nonauthorized social convictions of any kind, scholars and artists were forced to adjust and readjust their convictions and professional endeavors to comply with Soviet ideologies. Failing to do so they could be endangering their lives and missing an opportunity to contribute to the greater social good which

was considered even a bigger disgrace. In other words, the turn of the XX century set an emotional pendulum swaying from euphoria to diametrically opposed despair, from enthusiasm to apathy, from fearlessness to terror which was not destined to discontinue Russia's deeply rooted pattern of inequality, endurance, and submission to anyone at power. Continuous Bolsheviks' policy of mass oppression and prosecution of social divergents, political, academic, and artistic dissidents seemed to have found an outbreak for the establishment of democracy in 1991 but a course of political reversion was set exactly two decades later.

### **Formation of Vygotskian Scholarly Identity During his Moscow Years**

Back in the time of Russian revolutionary period of 1905, 1917-1918, and the Civil War there could hardly be anybody who would be left out of the turmoil, and even though there was no evidence confirming Vygotsky's active participation in the riots and demonstrations he carefully observed the events and increasing anti-semitic moods. It might seem coincidental but in 1923, after the end of the Civil War, Vygotsky, decided to remove Jewish trace from his last name and patronymic<sup>6</sup> but in accordance with Vygotskaya & Lifanova, 1996 it was caused by the scholar's aspiration to avoid possible anti-Semitic precession. He changed an evidently Jewish patronymic of Symkhovich to a Russian Semyonovich, and slightly modified his family name, remove the trace of 'profit' (*vygoda*) from his last name not to be suspected of his Jewish ancestors' disposition to accumulating financial wealth.

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<sup>6</sup> Patronymic in Russian culture is a part of a full name that derives from the name of a father, by the addition of a suffix. In professional settings, with authorities and seniors in Russia, it is common to hear the address by the person's full first name and patronymic.

Moreover, Vygotsky's meticulous examination and evaluation of people's passions, ideals, deeds, and manifestations which facilitated extensive artistic and scientific response to events facilitated young scholar's fascination with the ideals of symbolism, Shedrovitsky (2005). At the time of instability and unpredictability lasting from 1905 until the end of the Civil War in 1922, political and social transformations current to Vygotsky inspired an establishment of an artistic trend of symbolism which openly and bluntly reflected precarious times. Such literary masterminds as A. Bely, D. Merezhkovsky, V. Bryusov, F. Sologub, Z. Gippius, A. Akhmatova, M. Tsvetayeva, I. Severyanin, S. Yesenin, V. Mayakovsky, A. Blok, and other poets of Silver Age of Russian poetry fiercely protected their own ideals. They manifested their ideological obsession with democratic and anti-monarchist outlook of Russian intelligentsia of that time. Vygotsky found a lot of resonance in symbolists whose literary and intellectual swirl not only appealed to Vygotsky's system of beliefs but also seemed to have propelled his early academic attraction to philosophy of literature and psychology of art, culminating in a psychological analysis of A. Bunin's stories in 1913. In 1916 under the guidance of U. Aikhenvald, Vygotsky wrote his first major analysis "The Tragedy of Shakespearian Hamlet, Dutch Prince" writing of which was first considered by Vygotsky when he still was studying at the college-preparation school, Kotik-Friedgut (2011). Vygotsky's literary scrutiny of "Hamlet" became a central piece of his graduation thesis at Shenyavsky University in Moscow entitled "Psychology of Art". Upon publishing "Psychology of Art" only 60 years after its initial release, a famous art critic A. Anikst (1974) acknowledged that the work of Vygotsky on Hamlet written by a nineteen-year-old young man was written by a genius. To exemplify Vygotsky's genius, Leontiev (2000) explained that for Vygotsky aesthetic catharsis is "a process of interaction of emotions, emotional release, cleansing, and elucidation" (p. 59) which was "the result of the interaction and

mutual destruction of two emotional series: emotions associated with the content of a work of art and emotions associated with its form” (p. 60). Moreover, catharsis for Vygotsky was not just the liberation through art and eradication of suppressed affective inclinations, but rather a solution to a personalized task of the revelation of a higher, and more humane truth (Leontiev, 2000). In Kotik-Friedgut’s (2011) opinion it was this profundity with which Vygotsky presented a psychological analysis of the emotional perception of art that accelerated his transition from emotionality of literature, art, and religion to psychology, more specifically to psychology of language at first.

This shift of academic interests in young Vygotsky was simultaneously encouraged through exploring the academic psychological dissertation of a prominent theoretical linguist Alexander Potebnya (1835–1891) “Thought and Language”. In this work, first released in 1892 which attempted to further ideas of Humboldt and Steinthal<sup>7</sup>, Potebnya (1989) proposed the idea of the unity of consciousness and language, and challenged the history of language which typically viewed these categories in isolation. In this work, Potebnya (1989) looks at the language as a means of *myshleniye* (thought processing) and creation of thought, acknowledging

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<sup>7</sup> W. V. Humboldt, a Prussian philosopher (1767-1835), viewed the language from the dialectical perspective as a process, end product, a part of the psychological activity of an individual, as well as a social occurrence. He proclaimed an idea that the language is determined by the human's attitude to the objective reality and transforms the external world into the property of the spirit. Humboldt’s linguistic philosophy claimed that the word notions are not the reflection of the objective reality but rather a result of symbolic perception that are determined by the linguistic signs and symbols (Apresian, 1960, Leontiev, 1997, Sapir, 1934). While one of his students H. Steinthal (1823–1899), viewed the language solely as a process and was convinced that the language is a social phenomenon which is based on psychological categories. Also, Steinthal categorized the language into language ability, speech (speaking), and language material, and suggested that language researchers should be focusing on the process of *doing* speaking consisting of three components: 1) content of thought, 2) internal speech, and 3) articulation (Steinthal, 1890).

that speech is the genuine condition of the language which makes the act of speech a solely psychological occurrence, whereas the language and the word become attributed to a cultural and social origin of this act. Even though, Potebnya (1989) distinguished the word's external form or its sound from internal form or the immediate etymological meaning of the word, he stated that word meaning becomes apparent only through speech, as in isolation from the context neither lexical nor other formal properties can be detected. At the same time, Potebnya (1989) considered syntax as an ultimate way of distinguishing grammar categories, and the verb, as a constructing element of the sentence. Additionally, Potebnya (1989) highlighted the dominance of the word sense over its form, postulating that not a single word form can be recognized in isolation from other words and forms of speech. In Potebnya's (1989) view the word is the expression of a thought to such an extent to which it acts as a means of its creation, and the internal form which is the only objective content of the word, possesses a meaning only due to the fact that it modifies and perfects such unities of perception that it triggered in the spirit.

Simultaneously, for children in the process of their language origination and development, the word meaning becomes significant only when they attribute their own images and perceptions to this word<sup>8</sup>. Once young language explorers take an ownership of the words and start understanding themselves they start understanding others to a more profound extent.

Potebnya (1989) explains that “the language objectifies the thought ... the thought becomes idealized and free from the influence of the immediate emotional perceptions with the help of the word” (p. 237). Through his extensive analysis, Potebnya (1989) made the first

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<sup>8</sup> Vygotsky in his most fundamental work “Thinking and Speech” (1934) would unite person's individual image and emotional attribution to a word under a more complex and wholesome notion of *perezhivaniye* (emotional experience) highlighting the essence of this component in speech development.

audacious attempt to categorize complex psychological unity of *myshlenie*, meaning of lexical elements, as well as syntax as linguistic or language consciousness (*yazikovoe soznanie*) which in Vygotsky's works transformed into *rechevoye myshlenie*<sup>9</sup>.

In the same work Potebnya (1989) discloses historical evolvement and transformation of different forms of *myshlenie* of humans which the scholar saw in morphological and as a result cultural, scientific, and aesthetic indication. In Potebnya's understanding, the phonetical, grammatical, and syntax structure of a certain language as well as a social domain in which this language is used affects *myshlenie* of people who speak it. The fact that humans not only share their scientific findings and tools for existence but also utilize a non-verbal and even non-linguistic way of scientific coding of math, physics, and chemistry as well as communication through varied forms of art develops another distinctive type of human mindset. Aesthetic *myshlenie*, is what Potebnya sees as a unique and specific characteristic of the humanity. He states that "the creative thought of a painter, creator, musician is not expressed and perfected through a word, yet it presupposes substantial development only through language" (Potebnya, 1989, p. 51). Furthermore, aesthetic *myshlenie* comes in play in perception of art meaning that a literary or artistic piece can affect the reader or the viewer differently than intended by the creator which makes the potential power of literature and art inexhaustible.

### **Post Moscow Years**

In 1917, after graduating from two universities, Vygotsky returned to Gomel where he not only initiated cultural and educational activities for the hometown but as well confirmed his

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<sup>9</sup> *Rechevoye myshlenie*, (can be literally translated as speech thinking) "the relationship between the processes used in thinking and the processes involved in the reception and production of spoken and written speech and their unification" (Mahn, 2012) which just as with *perezhivaniye* became a more specified term to denote the intricate linguistic occurrence.

academic concentration. In Gomel, he taught logic, along with general, childhood, and pedagogical psychology at a pedagogical technical college for the preparation of elementary school teachers. Russian language, literature, political education, logic, psychology, societal education, aesthetics, and art theory were among the subjects that Vygotsky taught at that time to schools' faculty of professional technical school and elementary school teacher retraining programs, encouraging their continuous development.

Vygotsky established a literary and theatrical journal "Veresk". The journal was aspiring to consolidate actors, painters, musicians, and writers to revitalize town's and country's art life. Marking Vygotsky's affiliation with the artistic scene of the time, the young scholar released numerous articles to analyze and explain literary pieces and to review theatrical performances in such journals as "Polesskaya Pravda" ("Truth of Poles") and "Nash Ponedelnik" ("Our Monday"). His striving for social enlightenment of Gomel population encouraged his public readings on art and science, and Russian and foreign literature. Additionally, Gomel theatre life prospered with Vygotsky. To attract top theatrical performers, he traveled to Moscow, Petrograd (former Saint-Petersburg), Kiev, Saratov, and other cities with acclaimed theatrical scene. Owing to his efforts, Gomel viewers were able to see the most celebrated theatrical troupes of the time: Second Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre, Petrograd State Academic Theatre (former and current Mariinskiy Theatre, and from 1935 to 1992 Kirov Theatre), Petrogradskiy (Alexandrinskiy) theatre, Kiev Opera, Odessa ballet, among others. Therefore, with Vygotsky's input, Gomel became one of the most 'theatrical' cities of Soviet Russia in early 20-s of the past century. It might seem insignificant, but this initiative facilitated the change of Gomel status turning an under-recognized provincial town into a local citadel of cultural life. For Vygotsky as a shaping educational psychologist, such major home-town transformation became an all-

encompassing practice of social enlightenment, and people's artistic and behavioral acculturation. Almost a decade later in his work "Educational Psychology" (1926), Vygotsky would be scrutinizing about behavioral and psychological progression in individuals throughout their comprehensive development which to a certain extent is affected by existing and participating in the cultured environment.

Nevertheless, Vygotsky's inquisitive and inquiring mind encouraged scholar's continuous pursuit for scientific work and research regardless of his extensive load of practical work. In the early 1920's, he organized a lab for conducting psychology-pedagogic studies at Gomel Pedagogic Technical School. It was the findings of the research conducted in this laboratory that the creation of "Educational Psychology" for middle school teachers became possible. "Educational Psychology", became an anthology of pedagogy unravelling core principles of students' education and their personal development for generations of teachers.

Another Vygotsky's aspiration of the time was to develop a holistic perspective of child development which the scholar saw in approaching the human from an interdisciplinary angle of psychology, physiology, and neurology. To establish touchpoints between these sciences, Vygotsky began exploring the findings of Sechenov, Pavlov, Kornilov, and Bekhterev. Careful examination of the teachings of Pavlov convinced Vygotsky that Pavlov's and Bekhterev's reflexology failed to explain the psychological consciousness. A less mechanistic reaction psychology, developed by Kornilov resonated with Vygotsky more as it considered reflex as an unconsciousness response of the organism to the external triggers, and suggested that it is the reaction to a trigger that utilized active psyche. As Stepanov (2004) stated, Kornilov viewed reaction as a complex unity in which all psyche including psychological, emotional, and motor processes participated. Vygotsky's understanding of the scientific work of the outlined scholars



paired with Vygotsky's personal inferences formed a groundwork for three reports, with which the young scientist triumphantly debuted in the Second All-Russian Psycho-neurological congress in Leningrad (1924) turning "The Method of Reflexological Research in Psychic Study" into a sensation. Vygotsky's poise and style with which he presented charmed another young participant of the congress – Alexander Romanovich Luria (1902 – 1977). Back then, Luria was famous for his profound research in psycho-neurology conducted in affiliation with Bekhterev as well as for his superior familiarization with Freud's psychoanalysis gained through written correspondence with the father of psychoanalysis.

### **Return to Moscow and Other Academic Convictions of Vygotsky**

As Zinchenko (1991) described, Luria, a 22-year-old education secretary at the Moscow Experimental Psychology Institute, was impressed with Vygotsky's flawless and enthusiastic presentational manner and convinced Kornilov, a newly assigned Institution's director, to accept a young man from Gomel yet unknown in scientific circles. Vygotsky barely hesitated when accepting Kornilov's invitation despite the inconveniences caused by living with his wife and children in the Institute's library, located in the basement. Vygotsky dearly embraced the opportunity to cooperate with Luria and other scientists, and in 1920 scholars collaboratively created the foreword to the Russian translation of Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle". In 1928 Vygotsky and Luria published their co-authored work "Tool and a Sign in the Development of the Child", and "The Sketches on the History of the Behavior: Monkey. Primitive. Child" in 1930.

Vygotsky's active involvement in the academic process rapidly granted him a title of mentor and leader of those who initially accepted him to a doctoral program (Luria and Leontiev

(1903–1979)). A famous “*troika*”<sup>10</sup> of Vygotsky, Luria, and Leontiev after Vygotsky’s death turned into an eminent group of eight with Luria, Leontiev, Bozhovich, Elkonin, Zaporzhets, Levina, Morozova, and Slavina. Today Vygotsky's school as well as some of his students still prosper educating and enlightening new generations of child and educational psychologists.

What’s more, it was Luria who promoted Vygotsky’s interest in defectology, and encouraged him to work with children, suffering from various mental and physical disabilities. Vygotsky carefully studied the work of Adler (1999) “The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology”, and in his “Adolescent Pedagogy” (1931) concluded that both normal and ‘anomalous children’, as Vygotsky referred to them, develop under the same laws, yet the biological and cultural processes of development in anomalous children are deviant from the ones occurring in normal children. Vygotsky’s insightful studies and findings in defectology, laid the foundation to the Moscow Research and Practice Institute of Defectology which still advances research in this crucial area.

1927–1928 marked a meaningful experimental period of Vygotsky’s scientific activity, allowing him to formulate the main postulates of the socio-cultural theory of development of individual's specific psychical functions (attention, memory, and *myshlenie*). Additionally, Vygotsky managed to place the problem of the development of the child’s psyche in the forefront promoting the creation of pedagogy, a specific brunch of psychology, which was meant to synthesize the environment and hereditary factors that determine the developmental process in an individual. Vygotsky insisted that pedagogy, as a complex and multidisciplinary combination of

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<sup>10</sup> *Troika* is a Russian word for a vehicle pulled by a team of three horses abreast, a team of three horses, or a group of three people working together, especially in an administrative, managerial, or intellectual capacity.

biology, medicine, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, and other sciences had to be granted a status of an independent science as it was taking a holistic approach to researching an individual. In this period Vygotsky published of such significant publications as “The Problem of the Cultural Age” (1929), “The Pedology of the School Child” (1928), “The Pedology of the Adolescent” (1929), “The Pedology of an Adolescent” (1930–1931), “Instrumental Method in Psychology” (1930), “Tool and Sign in the Development of a Child” (1930).

Another meaningful piece entitled “Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology” that Vygotsky released in 1927 accurately identified existing crisis of psychology of the first decades of the XXth century. After careful analysis of major psychological teachings of representatives of behaviorism, gestaltism, psychoanalysis, and Würzburg school, Vygotsky attempted to reveal the fallacies and misbeliefs of his contemporary theorists. Vygotsky (1927) warned future generations of scientists that non-critical borrowing of scientific beliefs can be threatening, and explained that such approach oppresses dialectically-materialistic *myhleniye* central for all the spheres of reality and consequently for all the spheres of the scientific knowledge. Scholar presupposed that the crisis of the subject, method, and facts interpretation caused evident contradictions between scientific findings and practical demands, and disintegrated psychology into two separate sciences: epistemological<sup>11</sup> and ontological<sup>12</sup>. The crisis of methodological foundation of psychology as Vygotsky (1927) called it, assisted in formulating Vygotsky’s research method as the “vertex/uppermost psychology” – the psychology of consciousness which

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<sup>11</sup> Epistemology promotes a descriptive or phenomenological approach to analysis by taking the most complex occurrences and reporting about them for in accordance with the opinion of it followers.

<sup>12</sup> Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality as well as the basic categories of being and their relations, it unravels the meaning of the occurrences yet ignores all of the complex forms of the human behavior.

counterposed 'superficial' (the theory of behavior), and 'underlying' (psychoanalysis).

Simultaneously, Vygotsky detected that the central problem of psychological research is the research of the conscious which was an endpoint in development of psychology of the time. To clarify the issues of conscious, Vygotsky attempted to place psychological development of animals and children in the same row as well as implemented new experimentally-genetical method of research of psychological occurrences. What's more, in the article "Consciousness as a Problem of Psychology of Behavior" (1925/1997) scholar posed a question about the necessity of concrete-historical analysis of consciousness which he saw as a concrete psychological reality. In the same work, Vygotsky actively promoted the centrality of the research of conscious in psychology, and suggested that the psychological research had to strive to consolidate the viewpoints on psychology. Alongside with the centrality of the conscious, Vygotsky advocated for the divergent ways of studying of the conscious, yet unknown for the time, suggesting that conscious is not a stage, on which the psychological functions perform, and not a common owner of the psychical functions but rather a psychological reality which plays a leading role throughout all life-sustaining activities of the individuals, (Vygotsky, 1925/1997). Vygotsky unlike other researchers of the 1920es, viewed conscious as a 'problem of the structure of behavior' and a philosophically-methodological problem of a colossal scale and importance, as well as a fundamental phenomenon of the general structure of the psychological science. The scholar believed that in order to understand the inner psychological processes, it is necessary to explore the entity in social relations and interaction. As Vygotsky (1926) explained an individual in the process of historical and cultural development accumulating social heritage reached a point at which new moving powers of conduct emerged. As a result, natural needs of an individual underwent a drastic transformation and shaped into social life needs through a

process of historical development.

Such drastic transformation brought about the formation of higher psychological functions<sup>13</sup> which should be examined in linguistic sign, language, tools, and social interactions, and not inside the individual's brain or soul. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that those who hope to find the source of these functions inside the individual make the same mistake as monkey trying to detect its reflection behind the mirror. That is why Vygotsky called his psychology either **historical** for it studied the processes that appeared in the social life of individuals, or **instrumental** for the tools and everyday objects were the units of the study, or **cultural** since these occurrences appeared and developed in the culture. At that time, such inferences sounded paradoxical and were vigorously opposed and misinterpreted. Yet, Vygotsky didn't refer to the actual tools and instruments but rather underlined the means and tools that the humans use to organize their conduct. From Vygotsky's (1978) point of view, a sign is first and foremost a social tool or social means that occur during person's time span.

In his article "The Problem of the Cultural Development of the Child" (1929), Lev Semyonovich claimed that inclusion of a sign in some behavioral processes remodels the whole set of psychological operations similarly to how an instrument (tool) is utilized in a new labor operation. Both the tool and the sign in their psychological relation allow mediated activity to happen, and the difference between them lies in their variable direction. A tool is aimed outside

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<sup>13</sup> Higher psychological processes, as Vygotsky exemplifies in *The History of the Development of the Higher Mental Functions*, (1930-31/1997b), are the unities of the higher strata that occupy the place of the homogeneous, isolated, elementary functions; they are the product of the historical development and evolution of the humans and are not related to the heredity. Higher psychological processes among which are voluntary attention, logical memory, cultural development of the behavior and understanding of the acquired inherent behavioral processes, immerse as a form of social/ communal type of behavior of a child, as a form of collaboration with others and only later do they become the individual functions of the child.

and has to promote changes in the object. At the same time, it is a source of external human activity, aimed at taming nature. The sign in its turn is aimed into the internal, influencing the human behavior. Grasping of the nature and grasping of the behavior are interrelated, since by changing the nature, the human changes his/her inner kind. At the same time, labor, from which human originates, according to Vygotsky (1929) has created upmost mental functions that characterize human as such.

Vygotskian socio-cultural theory of the development of psychical functions of a human itself contradicted the principles of behaviorism and naturalistic approach to viewing a human, which apparently attributed common behavioral mechanisms and adjustive patterns of humans and animals. Nevertheless, Vygotsky apparently supported Potebnya's (1989) postulate that even though an animal vividly projects perception and *myshlenie* while searching for food, protecting itself, and attacking, it possesses only the most basic type of perception which is existent in an individual as well. Although the perception of animals is mostly superior to that of humans, their emotional perception is mostly based on the egoistic pursuits guided by the pleasure and non-pleasure. Besides, as Potebnya's (1989) states, a human's predisposition for unconditional and non-pragmatic pleasure which is extensively utilized through stimuli and delivered through all the senses or spiritual impacts is what distinguishes a human from an animal. To further develop differentiation of animal and humans Vygotsky in his "Educational Psychology" (1997) suggests formulae of both animal behavior and that of humans'. A formula of animal's behavior comprises of "inherited reactions plus the inherited reactions multiplied by the quality of new relations that are present in the individual animal's experience" (p. 31). While the formula of humans' behavior "complemented with new terms" represents "(1) inherited reactions + (2) inherited reactions multiplied by individual experience (conditional reactions) + (3) historical

experience + (4) social experience + (5) doubled experience (consciousness)” (p. 33). Thus, “man’s experience is ... a complex function of the entire social experience of mankind and of his individual groups” (p. 33).

As a result, humans are culturally, historically, and intellectually dependent on the human unique form of interaction – the verbal language. In “Thinking and Speech” (1934) Vygotsky elucidates on the powers that bring about the birth of the word which seem to be reflecting presuppositions made by Potebnya. Potebnya (1989) believed that the ability to speak is granted by the human’s organs. Yet, the speech organs can only be triggered by the spiritual, internal, or mental activity which is activated by the thought and the cognitive ability, without which the organs would produce only a voluntary motion. However, in the unity of human’s internal perception and will they are inseparable from each other meaning that both of them manifest in motor action. Simultaneously, other organs of voluntary motion become the speech organs in the process of mimicking. A human speaks for he/she thinks, just like he/she breathes being surrounded by the air. Just as breathing is an external expression of the internal formative process and voluntary motion manifests through will, the language is external expression of a thought.

However, in a human, as Potebnya (1989) emphasizes, verbal communication is targeted at promoting profound conceptual and emotional understanding delivered to a listener through symbolic language representation while the communication of animals is guided by physiological laws. Vygotsky (1934) complimented Potebnya’s view by providing empirical evidence of that *myshlenie* and speech developed independently from each other, and that it is only humans who combine *myshlenie* and speech and develop *myshlenie* by means of speech.

## Conclusion of Chapter II

As Vygodskaya & Lifanova (1996) hypothesized, Vygotsky, served as an impeccable verification of his own socio-cultural theory. Vygotsky's rich academic background acquired through his continuous research of intertwining scientific domains, participation in cultured activities, highly intelligent atmosphere that expanded his outlooks, deep empathy towards his fellow-countrymen projected through Vygotsky's sacrifice for the greater intellectual good of his home country and facilitated his own fundamentality and brilliance.

Sadly, even though Vygotsky became an eminent psychologist at his time his ideological convictions didn't comply with those of the Communist Party, and Vygotsky managed to avoid prosecution only thanks to his death in 1934 from returning tuberculosis. Vygotsky was recognized for his reflective understanding of authentic Marxism as well as for his liberal and individual-centered vision on pedagogy which didn't comply with the oversimplified, pseudo-Marxism<sup>14</sup> which propagated collective sacrifice for the country's greatness. Soviet Marxism became a core constituent to Soviet ideology culminating with Chapter IV in Stalin's "Short Course" in 1930. Approximately two years after Vygotsky's death, on July 4, 1936, Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union harshly criticized pedagogy, and issued an act entitled "On the Pedagogical Perversion in the System of People's Commissariat for Education" which practically liquidated pedagogy as an independent scientific discipline. In accordance with this act, the method of tests and implementation of the test results into the process of education and fostering children was banned, forcing the pedagogists to retrain into

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<sup>14</sup> Pseudo-marxism entitled "Marxist-Leninist philosophy", promulgated by the scholars Yudin and Mitin, had little to do with the actual philosophy of Marx, but was extensively taught in all Soviet higher educational establishments. Vygotsky was among limited groups of philosophers, psychologists, and idealists who understood the essence of genuine dialectical Marxism, and as marginalized groups of that time were referred to as Mensheviks.



general educators. Had Vygotsky lived to the day the act was issued he wouldn't have avoided fierce accusation of antimarxism followed by harsh consequences like almost all of his countrymen advocating for non-appreciated theories.

## **Chapter III**

### **ZPD and its fundamentals**

#### **Early speech development as a prerequisite of education**

The development of children in the process of education occupies a central place in works of Vygotsky of his later research period (1926, 1931, 1933, 1934, 1935, among others). Throughout these works, the scholar acknowledged that both education and development are guided by external powers. Therefore, social medium and development are interconnected and the knowledge and adoption of certain experiences of past generations occurs through linguistic signs and communal interaction over the span of individuals' evolution. However, an individual is not mastering the content of subjects and collective activities in isolation from mental maturation, which as Vygotsky (1926, 1931) believed can only happen through education. Mental functions given to children by nature are to transform into cultural functions of a higher level only in the process of education turning mechanical memory into logical, associative views into productive thinking or creative imagination, impulsive action into voluntary (Vygotsky, 1931). Such presuppositions promoted the appearance of Vygotsky's theory of the development of higher mental functions which at the same time manifest through the development of social awareness.

To further clarify the process of psychical functions transformation, Vygotsky (1931) stated that any higher psychical function undoubtedly passes through an external phase in its development, as it is a social function by default. The social provenance of any higher mental function in the process of becoming an inner psychical function, signifies a social connection of at least two people. Therefore, a resource of self-influence is initially a resource of influencing others or a resource for others to influence a personality in return. Per Vygotsky (1934), a pointing gesture plays an immensely important role in the development of child's speech and from a historical

perspective is an ancient base of all higher behavioral forms. In “Thinking and Speech” (1934), Vygotsky explains that a pointing gesture or a grabbing movement, aimed at an object symbolizes an anticipated action being the baseline situation for further development. When a caregiver assists a child in satisfying a grabbing intent, the significance of the situation changes, the child and caregivers begin attributing a communicative factor to this move. In other words, a move, initially aimed at an object, transforms into a move aimed at a different person, by turning grabbing into a direction or intention. Moreover, it is through this socialized act that an initial objective situation evolves into an internalized comprehension of the communicative meaning of this gesture.

Vygotsky (1934) observed a similar trend in the process of the child’s speech formation. At first, the word expresses an attitude towards an object, then, it consolidates an objective connection between the functional link of a word and an object to which an adult referred in a communicative situation with a child, and lastly, transforms into a comprehensible internal unity. Such viewing of mental development allowed Vygotsky (1934) to synthesize a general genetic law of cultural development which stated that any function in child’s cultural development appears on two planes: first as an intrapsychic category on the social plane, and then into an intrapsychic category of the psychological inherent organization after a transformation. Therefore, an identity in the process of its evolution shapes through its external projection.

For a comparatively long time before Vygotsky’s findings, pedagogical (educational) psychology as well as child psychology existed in isolation from each other, and the regularities of the psychical development of children were studied with no regard to what and how the child is taught at different periods of life whether at home or at formal institutions. This way a famous Swiss psychologist and philosopher Jean Piaget (1896 — 1980), the creator of operation theory of

intelligence<sup>15</sup>, considered that psychological development of the individual occurs in isolation from teaching-learning process also known as *obuchenie*, and therefore follows its own regulations. Piaget as explained by Inhelder et. al (1976) was convinced that didactic teaching-learning of math has to be based only on progressive organization of the operational structures which Vygotsky (1935) opposed confirming that such education lingers behind the child development and has a focus not on tomorrow but rather on yesterday. Criticizing Piaget's standpoint, Vygotsky wrote that the child's development represented a process, that conforms the natural forces and resembles maturation, whereas *obuchenie* is a solely external usage of possibilities, that occur in the process of development (Vygotsky, 1935).

#### **Development, education, *obuchenie*, *vospitanie***

Vygotsky and his proponents intended to solve the problem of correlation between the psychological development and the processes of the intellectual transformation of an individual. They highlighted that development, education, *obuchenie*, and *vospitanie* are completely different processes with adverse characteristics (Vygotsky, 1926, 1935) which were enabled by external forces that contribute to individual's intellectualization. To explore distinguishing characteristics of these four components of individual's intellectual evolution, the upcoming section of this study presents an analysis of each separate component complementing intellectual maturation of an individual to further demonstrate their relevance to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

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<sup>15</sup> A theory exploring the development of cognitive development that distinguished four stages of cognitive development of children: sensorimotor stage – the knowledge of the environment is received through the sensuous experience (from birth to age 2), preoperational stage - children perceive the world through the game (2 y/o to about 7 y/o), concrete operational stage – children start forming abstract *myshlenie* and understanding of hypothetical notions and (7 y/o to 11 y/o), and the stage of formal operational that presupposed development of logic, deductive reasoning, and abstract ideas (continues from from adolescence into adulthood) (Inhelder et. al, 1976).

## **Development and Education**

Education, acting as an overarching term to describe a purposeful process of *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* that is driven by personal, social, and national goals, presupposes both the process of acquiring subject content in a formal, non-formal, or self-learning setting as well as an ultimate comprehension and mastery of studied academic and heritage material. Though the course of formal or non-formal training in the context of social progress, the values, principles of conduct, and proficiencies of former generations as well as awareness of the socio-cultural legacy are transmitted to younger generations, shaping their intellect, character, and even physical characteristics. An individual, passing steps of educational progression of any kind (personal, communal, academic, occupational, and/or creative) acquires cultural, moral, and emotional viewpoint of the environment, and at the same time, maintains and develops nonmaterial and material achievements of humanity (Mesheriakov & Zinchenko, 2009). Vygotsky (1982) supplements this explanation and suggests that education is a source of development as it enables formation of intellectual functions being a prerequisite for mastering new psychical and life principles.

Development, being the process of identity and personality formation (Vygotsky, 1926), takes place on three planes: biological, internal which combines *myshlenie* and conduct, and social or historical, and is triggered by cultural, behavioral, and psychological forces within an individual. In his research, Vygotsky didn't accentuate biological plane of development, as he was more fascinated with the internal and historical. The development of *myshlenie* and conduct, as Vygotsky believed is driven not by the theoretical interest of an individual but rather by materialistic needs and human's fascination with exploring. In such a way, logical *myshlenie* of a primitive person is shaped under the influence of practical motives that are subdued to high

emotional and instinct reactions (Vygotsky and Luria, 1993).

However, for Vygotsky and Luria (1993) a historical plane was the most emphasized as not only was it overlooked by prior scholars, but also it marked the individual's internal transformation over the relation with others, and the relation with the nature. In the interim, human's development, driven by biological and social forces was accentuated by the historical development of the society turning the environment into a source of development. Vygotsky and Luria (1993) emphasized that in case a child is completely or partially isolated from a target intellectual and behavioral social model in the process of development, certain psychical features are threatened to progress slower or remain underdeveloped. Additionally, over the progression of child development which Vygotsky and Luria (1993) recognized as a dialectical process of self-movement, individual's internal perceptions and emotional formations evolved in their entirety. In Vygotsky's and Luria co-authored work "The Sketches about the History of Behavior" (1993) Vygotsky stated that from the moment that the sign was invented and employed, the history of the behavioral development has turned into the history of the artificial secondary means of behavior and into the history of the person's mastery of his or her conduct. Consequently, development of a unified heterogeneous system of an individual becomes conditioned by the historical laws of social behavior more considerably rather than the laws of biological evolution.

Though this complex process of formation, new characteristics which are specific to all individuals on each step of development appear. These new characteristics are predetermined by the preceding flow of maturation and by the conditions of these characteristics on earlier stages of development. Yet, as Vygotsky (1966) highlights, the stages as well as development itself are guided by diverse periodicity and extensiveness which presupposes that an individual not only

realizes, modifies, and combines hereditary traits but also forms a completely new unity transforming these hereditary traits further.

Additionally, in his pedagogical research Vygotsky distinguished two zones of development: actual and proximal which will be explored further in this chapter.

***Obuchenie* (teaching-learning process)**

*Obuchenie*, a transliterated Russian academic term was intentionally brought into the international scientific domain as its multimodality is barely interpretable into English. This notion, perfectly fitting pedagogical context due to its holistic and overarching sense has been extensively employed in international academic context (Cole, 2009, Golombek & Johnson, 2016, Johnson, 2015, Mahn, 2015, among others). Nevertheless, it seems practical to clarify its meaning in this work. The analysis of this lexical unity should allow to better conceptualize Vygotsky’s perspective on *obuchenie* as a pedagogical term and evaluate its significance more profoundly.

A Russian-English dictionary suggests that the word *obuchenie* (noun) can be translated as *education*, training, teaching, tutoring, learning, or study/studying. The confusion comes from the fact that the word *obuchenie* has several morphological elements which complicate the meaning of the word. Table I presents a morphological analysis of the word elements as well as their translation into English.

**Table I Analysis**

ОБУЧЕНИЕ (O-BU-CHÉ-NIE)	Education, a process of teaching, and/or a process of learning (in academia is referred to as teaching/learning process)
ОБУЧАТЬ (O-BU-CHÁT’)	To teach
ОБУЧАТЬСЯ (O-BU-CHAT'-SIA)	To study
УЧИТЬ (U-CH-Í-T’)	To teach or to learn (usage depends on the

Examples: Я УЧУ СТУДЕНТА (YA U-CHÚ STU-DEN-TA)	context)  I teach a student.
Я УЧУ ФРАНЦУЗСКИЙ (YA U-CHÚ RUS-SKIY)	I learn French.

From the table, it becomes evident that *obuchenie* has two processes (teaching and learning) naturally ingrained in the Russian word which makes a laconic translation of this notion into English challenging.

Concurrently, it is worthwhile addressing the Russian definitions of the notion of *obuchenie*. In accordance with Great Russian Encyclopedia (2004), the prime word definitions recourse of Russian, *obuchenie* is the main way of receiving education, the process of acquiring knowledge, abilities, and skills under the guidance of educators and mentors. Over the differentiated or varied course of *obuchenie*, which promotes the development of individual capabilities and the interests of the students, the social experience is processed and the wholesome emotional attitude to the reality is formed.

Other resource (Ozhegov, 2007) states that *obuchenie* is a process of knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs acquisition through individual's learning and experiencing, which lead to certain well-established and measurable transformations in the conduct, or which allow an individual form new mental models of conceptual knowledge of values and beliefs or reconsider old ones. In this definition, the emphasis is placed on the fact that *obuchenie* depends on the practical experience and supplements the change in the individual's conduct.

Dal (1880) suggests that *obuchenie* is a process of accumulated experience and knowledge delivery to a younger generation. Experience accumulated by previous generations reflects the objective reality in the form of facts, apprehensions, concepts, and the laws of



science. Close collaboration of youngsters with more experienced generations in the process of *obuchenie* make it a socially organized and guided process of teacher-student interaction, targeted at learner's mastering of knowledge, skills, abilities, as well as formation of the outlook, development of intellectual power, and potential capabilities of the students. The social process of *obucheniye* which presupposes experience share, appeared at the time of society's formation and was continuously refined throughout the course of development of society. For the constant evolving and for the uninterrupted exploring of the world, the society has been equipping younger generation with the ways of obtaining knowledge and exploring the world. Moreover, through the guided process of *obuchenie* the learners are expected to strengthen skills of self-education to be able to realize their educational goals without further guidance.

Vygotsky's understanding of the basic definitions of *obuchenie* as well as its semantic field, promoted his own pedagogy related clarification. In "Structural Psychology" (1972) Vygotsky does not see the process of education as the acquisition of the elements unified in more or less complex unities, but rather as a formation of comprehensive structures, without which the education itself is impossible. What's more, the scholar believed that *obuchenie* of the child is an internally required condition for psychological development. In "Thinking and Speech" (1934) he explains that only in case *obuchenie* foreshadows development, it can properly assist the learner in making a progress, as in this case it awakens and brings to life the whole complex of functions, that are on the stage of maturation, that is in the zone of proximal development<sup>16</sup>.

Vygotsky (1997) insisted that the teaching/learning has to move development ahead and focus on

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<sup>16</sup> Vygotsky (1978) defines ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p.86).

the goals of tomorrow. However, Vygotsky (1997) didn't detect any parallelism between the dynamics of generated processes of internal development and the processes of school education, as the educational process may be capitalizing on already developed functions and this way not be affecting the internal unity.

***Vospitaniye* (fostering, upbringing, nurturing, mentoring, mental training, cultivation of personality)**

Even though, the Russian pedagogical concept of *vospitanie* is not new to international academia, it was utilized in prior academic research of Long (1984), Hans & Fund (2011), Holmes et al. (1995), and others, the concept hasn't gained widespread popularity. It must have happened due to the fact that the world pedagogical community didn't recognize *vospitanie* to its full complexity by substituting it with *mentoring*, the closest English analogue.

Mentoring, an extensively researched component of education is seen by scholars as multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing, and supporting (Koki, 1997), or a voluntary collaboration of mentor and mentee or protégé from which the later benefits professionally or intellectually (Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1985; Rhodes, 2005). Such scholars as DuBois & Karcher (2005), Kram (1985), Rhodes (2005) have been extensively researching mentoring as a part of the individual's educational and professional development suggesting that mentoring promotes constructive development of the youngsters or less experienced individuals, and advances their careers as well as academic adjustment, retention, and success. Johnson (2006) and Mullen (2011a) believe that the essence of mentoring lies within critical support, encouragement of academic development, collaboration, and shaping of a professional identity of a mentee which the mentor achieves through the relationship of fostering. In the mentoring process both mentor and mentee benefit from co-constructing new learning and organizational

space in which they invent new educational practices (Allen and Eby,2007) and through which they “benefit from reciprocal learning, activism, and agency” (p. 10, Fletcher and Mullen, 2012 citing Mullen and Tuten, 2010). Fletcher and Mullen (2012) also consider mentoring as a “journey that encompasses both or all parties – implied is the notion that learning is open-ended, creative, and uncertain” (p. 7). As the modern scholars’ clarification indicates, mentoring is characterized by the voluntary and exceedingly academic nature of coaching which overlooks a socio-cultural component of cultivation of personality ingrained in the very essence of Russian term of *vospitanie*. To understand the leading principles of *vospitanie*, detect the touch points as well as mark the distinguishing characteristics between *vospitanie* and mentoring, it is worth exploring the morphology and semantics of *vospitanie*.

The Russian word *vospitanie* can literally be translated as upbringing, nurturing, fostering, or mental training. Its morphological analysis suggests that it derives from the verb *vospitivat’* (perfective aspect of the verb to bring up, foster, nurture, cultivate, and civilize), or *vospitovat’* (imperfective aspect of the verb which can be interpreted as to be fostering). This verb itself consists of two parts prefix *vos-* which denotes ascent, achievement, or fulfilment of something, and verb *pitat’*, literally translated as nourish, foster, nurture, or feed. This way, the actual translation of *vospitaniye* should consolidate the element of emphasis with achievement to create, in other words deliver a message of an enhanced fostering or nurturing.

The definitions of the Russian word *vospitanie* reveal the following:

1. Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language by Dal (1880) suggests that *vospitat’* (imperfective aspect) means to care about material and moral needs of the younger individual until his/her age of maturation; first to nurture, feed, and provide clothing, and later to teach, mentor, and educate about everything that is

- required for life.
2. Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary (1892) states that *vospitanie* is adult's premeditated influence on a child or younger (less experienced individual), the main target of which is to develop such capacity of trainee's independence at which the he/she can perform his/her life purpose on earth.
  3. In accordance with Sigmund Freud's main theoretical construct (Mesheriakov & Zinchenko, 2009), *vospitanie* is determined as a process incentivizing to replace gratification principle with the realistic principle.
  4. Explanatory dictionary of Ozhegov (2007) defines *vospitanie* as behavioral competence inculcated by the family, school, environment which are manifested in the social life.
  5. Great Russian Encyclopedia (2004) provides a different definition: *vospitanie* is a practice of transferring socio-historical experience to next generations; a systematic and purposeful influence on individual's consciousness and behavior with an aim to form this individual's specific paradigms, ideas, principles and system of values which stipulate conditions for individual's development as well as social and professional life.
  6. Blonsky (1924): "*vospitanie* is premediated, methodical, continuous influence on the development of a given organism" (p. 5). It was exactly the definition that was core to further Vygotsky's elucidations and exemplifications of *vospitanie*.

It is also interesting to trace the evolution of recognition of *vospitanie* in the Russian academic contest. Back in the time of Vygotsky, the theories and practices of developmental education didn't distinguish between *obuchenie* and *vospitanie*, not to mention that nobody

before Vygotsky made these notions antitheses. Prior to Vygotsky these two notions represented a unified and comprehensive educational process. At the dawn of the scholar's era marking the flourishing of pedagogy, *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* manifested as separate components of education which equally contributed to individual's comprehensive intellectual development. As it was stated in the previous chapter, in Stalin's era pedagogy was severely criticized for it centered the educational process around the learner's uniqueness and teacher's pedagogical empathy to this uniqueness, which diverged from collectivist standardized education agenda designed for homogeneous education of working masses. It was only at the time of Gorbachov (General Secretary of the Communist Party 1985-1990, and from 1990 to 1991 President of the Soviet Union) when new pedagogical perception placed the issues of *vospitanie* at the forefront. This way, the ideas of Vygotsky about the essence of upbringing, pedagogy of collaboration, personality transformation through child's mastering of humanity's historical experience, and acquiring the ownership of this practice were given a second birth.

Even though the component of *vospitanie* was obliterated for decades, when scrutinizing psychologically-pedagogical research of Vygotsky in Russian, it becomes evident that Vygotsky's study revolved around the very concept of *vospitanie* rather than *obuchenie*. This word choice was rather intentional for not only did it represent a more integrated unity rather than *obuchenie* but also accentuated social fostering of the individual, which was a quintessential process of education. To underline the role of *vospitanie* in educational process, Vygotsky (1997) insisted that it is "the responsibility of general pedagogics, and of social ethics, to

pinpoint and map out the goals of education (in Russian text *vospitanie*)”<sup>17</sup> (p. 55) as *vospitanie* is what shapes social entities. Vygotsky (1997) warned that indistinctly set goals of *vospitanie* fail to promote “the development of an indivisible and harmonious personality, or of an educated and civilized person” (p. 55), while clearly established goals of *vospitanie* proliferate “an entirely specific and exact form, the particular system of behavior” (p. 55). To epitomize the unambiguous goals of *vospitanie* that a society stated, Vygotsky proposed an example of “obedient and uncomplaining serfs” (p. 55) in the epoch of Feudalism. Consequently, the main goal of *vospitanie* should be to shape new forms of behavior, new conditioned response, and reaction in a mentee (Vygotsky, 1929).

Even though the fostering of a ‘specific system of behavior’ may sound restraining especially for the modern educational context what it essentially promotes is adjustment of the human’s initial forms of biological behavior to socially appreciated practices. In “The Fundamental Problems of Defectology” (1993), Vygotsky explains that childhood is the time of

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<sup>17</sup> Snell-Hornby (2000) explains that translation inaccuracies are determined by the centrality or dominance of the language into which the source content is translated. Centrality of the language typically sets “the natural standard against which other languages are measured” (p. 15) and leads to unification and simplification of the source text and its elements especially when this lingua franca lacks cultural recognition of the translated terms. Therefore, the translators are forced to adopt such notions for a “target situation” (Nord, 2005, p. 32) as well as for further unified “supra-cultural communication” (Snell-Hornby, 2000, p. 17) through providing incomprehensible equivalents rather than to preserve the complexities of the source meaning. Such translation discrepancy becomes especially apparent when deep symbolism of Russian language conceived by Russian historical censorship is attempted to be translated into English. This way, cultural consciousness and breadth of socio-cultural and historical implications of classical Russian literature of Gogol, Turgenev, Pushkin, Dostoyevsky (Smith (2011) as well as Russian scholars can be unattainable when read in translation. Consequently, both components: centrality of English into which works of Vygotsky are translated and complexity of Russian language led to flaws in translation of terms employed by Vygotsky in his works. The fact that a certain amount of Vygotsky’s works still remains untranslated (Yasnitsky, 2011), the translators and scholars are more concerned with the accessibility of these works for international academic community rather than with solving translation discrepancies.

inferiority and disadvantage, as well as the time of active social positionality search. Therefore, *vospitanie* does not cater for the natural needs of an individual, it rather interferes with the learner's inherent inclinations, clashing, grouping, and regrouping those inclinations with each other in such a way that their chaotic and spontaneous nature is channeled into organized and formalized *vospitatelno* (*fostering*)-social environment (Vygotsky, 1997). This way the process of *vospitanie* loses its smooth and peaceful attribution to the care for a child or a learner as it is a highly dialectical and even a tragic process of continuous evolution of new social opportunities by the means of disappearance of prior less endorsed social possibilities. *Vospitanie* becomes an uninterrupted, unabated battle which represents a dynamic, active, and dialectical process, resembling a discontinuous and revolutionary course of perpetual combat between a person and the world rather than a slow and evolutionary process of growth, Vygotsky (1997). Consequently, the target role of education is to transform a given biotype or biological unity into a sociotype, matured personality, or a wholesome socio-cultural entity through holistic *vospitanie* of social, labor, moral, aesthetic, and emotional principles of a given society. Such channeled influences should assist an individual in shaping a predisposition to contribute to the benefit of the community as well as be a civilized and integrated part of this community.

Since Vygotsky did not presuppose *vospitanie* to artificially nurture ideals that are initially alien to the child, he emphasized the necessity to awaken and guide the ideals, models, and beliefs that are already existent in a child or a learner (Vygotsky, 1967). In the process of supervision of *vospitanie*, Vygotsky (1997) attributed a role of a facilitator to a teacher, who is supposed to reduce his/her educational involvement to the organization and regulation of the conducive learning space, as well as ensure that *vospitanie* is comprehensively administered and governed by the actual experience of the student. Only in this case the new emotional and

behavioral formations and reactions customized through the interaction of the organism and the environment will have a fostering power, Vygotsky (1997).

### **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD, perhaps one of the most renowned and extensively exploited concept of Vygotsky in the modern academic realm, is presented in this work to demonstrate the correlation of ZPD and education or a unity of *obuchenie* and *vospitanie*. For the clarity of correlation, a brief clarification of the concept of ZPD is introduced below.

Vygotsky (1978) defines ZPD as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p.86). In the same work as well as in “*Obuchenie* and Development in the Preschool Age” (1980), the scholar explains that ZPD defines the functions that have not yet matured but which are in the process of this maturation. These are the functions that cannot be yet be called the fruits of this development but are rather its buds and flowers. Consequently, ZPD focuses on the intellectual development that the individual will have tomorrow. While detecting the level of actual development of a learner or what this learner can do independently, an educator explores the past which is still indispensable for understanding the learner and his/her potential in an educational process, considering and capitalizing on the actual level of development of an individual at present moment. Yet, when an educator explores what the learner can do in collaboration with more experienced supporters, the teacher explores the development of tomorrow which promotes mediational process and accelerates the learner’s internal processes of development. Consequently, ZPD and extensiveness of teacher’s/peer’s and learner’s



involvement and collaboration that it presupposes, are transforming new academic and/or psychological proficiencies into an internal asset of the learner (Vygotsky, 1991).

The notion of ZPD is the logical consequence of the law of the formation of the higher psychological functions that are first formed in collaboration and slowly transform into the internal psychological processes of the subject, as it has been described earlier in this chapter. It happens identically to the process of school education, when a child studies new material under the guidance of an educator or in collaboration with peers, and uses previously acquired content as a platform for constructing new skills and abilities. Although, the learner's initial formation of new intellectual capabilities occurs through imitation of instructors or more experienced peers. This imitation is everything that a child cannot do independently but is something that he/she can learn and what he/she can perform under the guidance or in collaboration. Therefore, this imitation is not characterized by mechanical, automated, and unconscious action but rather sensible and conscious based on understanding and internalization of this imitation and performing of the intellectual action.

### **ZPD and education (*obuchenie-vospitanie*)**

The clarifications of the terms provided above laid a foundation for evaluating the role of *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* as the elements of guided education, in the Zone of Proximal Development. As it has been established, education both at the educational facility or outside of it, is an all-encompassing process targeted at formation of a new intellectual and behavioral characteristics within an individual. The methodical process of education itself presupposes external influence occurring on two planes: content exploration (*obuchenie*) and psychological and behavioral maturation (*vospitanie*) in a specific socio-cultural context. However, in order for both *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* in the process of education to stimulate far-reaching development,

an educator has to first define the learner's Zone of Actual Development (Vygotsky, 1991). Through comprehension of ZAD an educator will outline his/her role in contribution to individual's holistic development and establish the possibilities and goals of the Zone of Proximal Development of a learner.

As it has been previously stated, over a course of subject and personal sophistication, a learner is dependent on the assistance of either an instructor, a more knowledgeable peer, or any external resource that explicates the content of the subject matter as well as the psychological and/or behavioral nuances of a given socio-cultural realm. In a conventional and formalized learning situation, the principal role of a facilitator of both mediums (content and socio-cultural) is attributed to the instructor who acts both as a trainer and a fosterer, ensuring that he/she caters for the ZPD of the learner. Yet, prior to accommodating the educational goals to the ZPD, educator needs to comprehensively analyze the zone of the actual development (ZAD) of the learner which, in the modern educational context, seems relatively easy to do through an extensive selection of tests and evaluations. However, most of such tests fail to examine the temperament of a learner, and thus, test results do not equip an educator with the knowledge essential to wholesome academic and psychological treatment of a learner. This way, as Vygotsky (1997) acknowledged, the difficulty of the educator's role in the developmental and educational process originates from the fact that he/she has to have a strong acumen and developed capability to identify the psychological uniqueness as well as distinctive regularities of the learners' abilities, interests, and behavioral patterns in general.

For the establishment of psychological and behavioral regularities, Vygotsky (1997) suggests educators to consider both structure of the body and the character of learners, referring to the Kretschmer's "Physique and Character" (1925) as "the temperament ... has a clear

influence ... on the psychaesthesia<sup>18</sup>, ... on the mood coloring, ... on the psychic tempo, ... on the psychomotility<sup>19</sup>” (p. 301). To equip educators with the awareness that a generic test cannot provide and to simplify deciphering learners’ individual characteristics, Vygotsky (1997) exemplifies four types of temperament: sanguine – active, social, and enthusiastic; phlegmatic – even-tempered, persevered, and peaceful; choleric – engaged, short-tempered and fast; and melancholic – vulnerable, sensitive, and analytical. Additionally, the scholar suggests to consider four types of individuals’ behavior developed by Kornilov (1922): active-muscular characterized by strong and rapid mode of response; passive-muscular - weak and quick mode of response; active-sensory – strong and slow mode of response, and passive-sensory – weak and slow response, (Vygotsky, 1997).

After having established ZAD of a wider scale that includes both the content and psychological background (culture, family, and behavior) knowledge of a learner, the teacher is able to utilize this knowledge in the process of both material teaching and personality training. Even though, the ZPD is something that is to occur in the educational process of tomorrow an educator has to constantly look back and capitalize on the learner’s existing knowledge for all-encompassing rapid development in the ZPD. Additions, extensive cognizance of the psychological specifics of the learners should assist an educator in finding a holistic approach to ZPD of a given learner through observing a core pedagogical law (Vygotsky, 1997) of promoting students’ interest in a specific activity before initiating it. Motivating learners’ interest in the education can be ensured by teacher’s utilization of apperception which is assisting the learners

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<sup>18</sup> Psychaesthesia is “abnormal sensitivity or insensitivity to psychic stimulation”, (Vygotsky, 1997)

<sup>19</sup> Psychomotility is “the general movement-tempo (mobile or comfortable) as well as on the specific character of [psychic-] activity (lame, stiff, hasty, vigorous, smooth, rounded, etc.)”, (Vygotsky, 1997).

in constructing meaningful links between their inclinations and backgrounds and new academic and psychological content.

Apart from understanding individual characteristics of learners and promoting their academic curiosity, the educator has to be aware of the special features of the community and/or given professional or developmental environment dynamics to be able to channel this knowledge into an activity which is pedagogically viable for the learner. Determination of the environment native to the learner should assist an educator to delicately take an advantage of the potentials of the social environment in which the learner lives and acts, and rationally and purposefully organize *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* through the student's personal experience. Such approach to learners' education and development will not suppress the existing inclinations and views of this learner but rather guide and supervise the development of the characteristics which are in the germ.

Moreover, for the ZPD to take a maximum effect in the future, an educational process is supposed to be organized in such a way that the student is not being educated but rather educates him/herself which limits educator's key function to facilitation, regulation, governing, and controlling of the environment in which *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* take place. To ensure student's construction of social, behavioral, humanistic, intellectual identity, and willingness to progress further autonomously, an educator has to center his/her mastery and craftsmanship around the personality of a learner. Capitalizing on learner's inclinations and goals and transferring them into learner's own learning and *vospitanie* psychical fixation, was Vygotsky's (1997) approach to liberating and intensifying strivings of a learner for the independent and creative activity. Only this way, as Vygotsky (1997) stated, the process of *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* focusing on tomorrow or ZPD, and targeted at empowering and strengthening individual potencies of the

student, will be able to promote learner's independent evolving.

Yet, when focusing on the aspect of *vospitanie* in the educational process, Vygotsky (1997) advised approaching it from a moral stand point and accentuated the essence of communication of social/community morals through *vospitanie*. In accordance with Vygotsky (1997) intellectual development can go hand in hand with dishonorableness resulting in immoral, unethical, and even unprofessional behavior of a matured individual. Being left completely unguided by a knowledgeable and open-minded instructor proclaiming humanistic values and appreciated behavioral models, a content learner is risking to shape into a prejudiced, hypocritical, cynical, disrespectful, and even violent person. Moreover, the ZPD of this learner will be focusing on the content of education rather than on the humanistic aspect of it which is why Vygotsky (1997) highlighted the necessity of an involuntary impact of *vospitanie* on a learner throughout the development. Vygotsky (1997) advocated for the educational process in which the educator would systematically rationalize, and evaluate the mastered occurrences through moral lens. Yet, the realization of complex educational and fostering goal, the scholar saw through the unity of both *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* in the learning process. Only this unity comprehensively delivered by an educator, could develop social or specific domain appreciated characteristics in learners whose new language or specialty identity will be void of indifference and contempt to values of humanity, society, and heritage. As a result, the students by then sophisticated intellectuals with high morals who have a matured internal psychology will be more concerned with what is happening around them and be contributing to the society on a more profound level.

At the same time, as Vygotsky (1997) believed, a teacher can purposefully foster a child and guide the process of his/her intricate development only through the continuous collaboration

with them and their environment, enhancing learner's readiness and eagerness to act together with the teacher. Hence, it would be erroneous to view *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* as one-sided process with null students' and teachers' contribution. Both students and teachers exist in a three-sided dynamic environment consolidating active student, active teacher, and active environment between the two (Vygotsky, 1997) in the process of *obuchenie* and *vospitanie*. Yet, in the psychological law of education, Vygotsky (1997) specifically emphasized that collaborative approach to the pedagogy of cooperation should always place personal experience of a learner at the very basis of the pedagogic work.

As it has been demonstrated above, Vygotsky propagated for holistic approach to education in which an educator has to perceive multimodality of learner's ZAD with a further intent to determine possibilities and approaches to this learner's ZPD. As ZAD was shaped by biological, psychological, and historic powers it is impossible to neglect that both *obuchenie* (content oriented training) and *vospitanie* (fostering of the moral and socially appreciated principles) affected the formation of this individual. Consequently, the forces that impacted ZAD will transfer into ZPD, as ZPD is not happening in isolation neither from ZAD nor from biological, psychological, and historic powers. Moreover, a learner does not exist in a vacuum-like subject content of *obuchenie* but rather consciously or unconsciously seeks for *vospitanie* from the side of an educator or a more experienced peer. This *vospitanie* is critical to conscious mastering of certain conduct principles, appreciated conversation practices, and values of either academic or community domain. Thus, believing that ZPD is affecting only one content component of education - *obuchenie* is wrong as it contradicts the very principle of educational and developmental processes complexity and neglects holism of the input of all environments in which the learner exists and attempts to prosper.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

The main purpose of this work was to reinvent and explain the essence of only one educational concept which was actively employed in both theories and practice of Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky. Even though the concept of *vospitanie* is not among the most recognized principles of Vygotskian theory, it was this constituent of the educational process actively utilized by Vygotsky in his educational psychology that emphasized the quintessence of this process. Vygotsky (1997) acknowledged that through *vospitanie*, an educator promoted social skills, solidarity, collaboration, respect for the community and its heritage, as well as the value of self-education and self-development all of which are aimed at social good. Yet, this process with all its beneficial outcomes, as Vygotsky (1997) highlighted, presupposed fosterer's interference with the natural course of the learner's development which without external impact would either underdevelop or remain undeveloped completely.

Among reasons why the concept of *vospitanie* deserved being rediscovered is the fact that it is overlooked by modern international community of educators who typically combine content training with mentoring practices attempting to holistically approach the learners. Mentoring in its turn more purposefully focuses on professional guidance (Jacobi, 1991, Kram, 1985, Rhodes, 2005, among others) of the mentee rather than on learner's psychological maturation through which he/she will be enjoying professional sophistication as well.

Simultaneously the very idea of *vospitanie*, manifested in the life of Vygotsky himself shaping a Jewish boy from a small town in the pale of settlements into a world-renowned genius of psychology. As it was purposefully demonstrated in Chapter I dedicated to the historical background of the scholar, individual's maturation happens on a diverse amount planes:

biological, historical, and psychological (Vygotsky and Luria, 1993). Life and work of Lev Vygotsky presents a mixture of all three components as not only did he receive diverse *obuchenie* (literature, foreign languages, philosophy, psychology, history) and *vospitanie* (values of sympathy, modesty, respect, and consideration to people around to find their reflection in holistic and ethical teaching practices and theories) at home and at the universities but as well was under the pressure of the social context in which he developed both as a citizen and a scholar. His shaped morals, intellect, and striving for enlightenment of the society facilitated his education of humanistic, cultured, and intelligent representatives of the epoch even at such challenging times as the turn of the previous century.

In his adult years, Vygotsky had to overcome numerous difficulties related to the financial hardships and deprivations which was noticed even by his students. Vygotsky was always poorly dressed in a shabby coat, poor-looking trousers, and summer shoes even in winter which was not matching neither his academic status nor his scholarly greatness. His profound humanism and willingness to put the interests of the humanity before his own manifested in numerous works, teaching, mentoring, and fostering activities that were targeted at the betterment and acculturation of his countrymen. Vygotsky was always working at the verge of human possibilities from dusk till dawn possibly afraid of a returning tuberculosis. He was busy either attending or speaking at the lectures, or supervising and conducting clinical and laboratory researches at the scientific and educational establishments: Moscow (The Institute of Experimental Psychology at Moscow State University (1924–1928, 1927–1930), The Academy of Communist Upbringing named after Krupskaya (1929–1931), Moscow State Pedagogical University named after Baunov (1930–1934), Experimental Defectological Institute (1929–1934), Second Moscow State Medical Institute (1930–1934), State Scientific Institute of



Children and Teenagers' Health Protection (1931–1934)), Leningrad- Herzen State Institute of Scientific Pedagogy University (1927–1934), Ukraine- Kharkov Institute of Psychoneurology.

Vygotsky vigorously promoted holism and multidisciplinary approach in education which found its reflection in scholar's exploration of the sciences that were directly related to his main academic focus. His early fascination with literature, foreign languages, and philosophy led to his research of the psychology of art as well as deeper understanding of the language in general later to trigger Vygotsky's enthusiasm for exploring the forces that affect this language development. Having received a clearer perspective of the early development of the language in children, the scholar attained to research development of the language and through processing (*myshlenie*) on more profound levels for which he started exploring the biological reflex, and neurophysiological powers that affect this development. To supplement his theoretical research with the implication for the educators, Vygotsky created numerous works on methodology of treating normal and 'anomalous' students of varied age groups.

Throughout his relatively short life, he managed to write about 200 works. Even though, Vygotsky might have accomplished much more had he lived for as long as Piage, his significant and diverse contribution to the domain of pedagogy can barely be underestimated. His psychological studies had a great influence on the development of all sciences which study a human ranging from various aspects of psychology and pedagogy to semiotics, linguistics and psycholinguistics, literature science, ethnography, sociology.

Vygotsky's 'unsolicited' interest in pedology (tailored multidisciplinary teaching of children) contradicted fundamental principles of authoritarian pedagogy of that time targeted at shaping homogenized people submissively serving social machine of Communism, and therefore, was harshly criticized by Stalin's pseudo-Marxism. As a result, an act of the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union signed in 1936 banned pedology as well as most of Vygotskian theories for almost 50 years. Even though, many Soviet psychologists who proved their loyalty to the orthodox understanding of Marxism through their pedagogic ideologies became successful at the Soviet times, they are no longer recognized whereas the works of Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky are still extensively scrutinized across the world. It is Vygotsky's authentic vision of the educational practices that enabled resistance to the challenge of neglect assisting several generations of educators and learners benefit from Vygotskian insights. Vygotskian pedagogy of mutual contribution of teacher and learner in complex multimodal process of *vospitanie* and *obuchenie* promoted the teacher's ability to effectively influence the student through this teacher's *obuchenie* and *vospitanie* goals stemming from capitalization on student's interests and their readiness to accomplish personal pursuits.

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky is often compared to Mozart whom Vygotsky outlived by 2 years. Similarly, to genius of Austrian composer, he was captivated by artistic activity, possessed an impeccable work capacity, unmatched feel for the new, and unstoppable need to bring his bottomless wealth of original ideas to life. Vygotsky died on June 11, 1934 because of returning tuberculosis. When he was taken to the hospital he took his favorite book - Hamlet. In one of his notes to the Shakespearian tragedy Vygotsky marked that readiness was the main state of Hamlet. On his deathbed, the scholar's final words were "I am ready" that he cited from Hamlet.

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