

A Break and Two Crisis: Mazes of Vygotsky's Pedology and Psychology

Gisele Toassa¹

¹Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, GO, Brasil

Eduardo Moura da Costa²

²Universidade Estadual Paulista, Assis, SP, Brasil

Izabel Augusta Hazin³

³Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, RN, Brasil

Abstract: This historical and theoretical article undertakes a bibliographic review of materials in Brazilian Portuguese, English, and Russian, focusing on the relation between the First Soviet Five-Year Plan (1929-1932), also known as the Stalinist Great Break, with Vygotsky's reflections on the 'crisis in psychology,' and the (lesser known) 'crisis in pedology,' in the context of the author's network of initiatives. The conclusions discuss the effects of Stalinist promotion of practical disciplines (e.g., pedology) in the field of psychology and applied sciences. Our analysis shows that, given the reduced importance of psychology in the Great Break, one cannot clearly determine whether pedology or psychology was the more general science for Vygotsky. He hesitantly attempted to distance himself from the assumptions of his psychology while transposing them to pedology. Among other changes in his ontoepistemological ideas in the text "The historical significance of the crisis in psychology", Vygotsky considers the possibility of pedology and psychology sharing a scientific object provided they develop different perspectives on it. There are, however, signs of overlap between the two sciences. Our analysis results clarify the maze of statements by the author that have both ontoepistemological potential for psychology and related sciences and the potential to confuse contemporary readers, mediating a dialectical materialist reading of Vygotsky in his historical genesis that seeks to grasp the totality of his work in its diverse and complex network of initiatives.

Keywords: Vygotsky, Pedology, Educational Psychology, History of Psychology.

Uma Quebra e Duas Crises: Labirintos da Pedologia e Psicologia de Vigotski

Resumo: Este artigo de teor histórico e teórico fundamentou-se em uma pesquisa bibliográfica de materiais em português, inglês e russo, focando a relação entre o período do Primeiro Plano Quinquenal soviético (1929-1932), também conhecido como a Grande Quebra stalinista, e sua relação com as reflexões de Vigotski sobre a "crise na psicologia" e a (menos conhecida) "crise na pedologia", no contexto da rede de iniciativas do autor. As conclusões debatem os efeitos da promoção stalinista das disciplinas práticas, como a pedologia, no campo da psicologia e das ciências aplicadas. Nossa análise mostra que, diante da redução de importância da psicologia na Grande Quebra, não é possível definir claramente se a pedologia ou a psicologia seria a ciência mais geral para Vigotski, que, de forma vacilante, ensaiava um distanciamento em relação a pressupostos de sua psicologia, enquanto os transpunha à pedologia. Entre outras mudanças de suas ideias ontoepistemológicas em relação ao texto "O significado histórico da crise na psicologia", Vigotski reflete sobre a possibilidade de compartilhamento do objeto científico entre pedologia e psicologia, desde que essas desenvolvessem, sobre ele, diferentes perspectivas. Há, contudo, sinais de sobreposição entre as duas ciências. O resultado de nossa análise esclarece o labirinto de afirmações do autor dotadas tanto de potencial ontoepistemológico para a

psicología e as ciências afins, quanto para a confusão dos leitores contemporâneos, mediando uma leitura materialista dialética do autor em sua gênese histórica que procura apreender a totalidade da obra do autor em sua diversificada e complexa rede de iniciativas.

Palavras-chave: Vigotski, Pedologia, Psicologia da Educação, História da Psicologia.

Una Ruptura y Dos Crisis: los Laberintos de la Pedología y la Psicología de Vygotsky

Resumen: Este artículo histórico y teórico se basa en una investigación bibliográfica de materiales en portugués, inglés y ruso para centrarse en la relación entre el período del Primer Plan Quinquenal Soviético (1929-1932), también conocido como la Gran Ruptura, y su relación con las reflexiones de Vygotsky sobre la “crisis de la psicología” y la (menos conocida) “crisis de la pedología” en el contexto de las iniciativas del autor. Las conclusiones analizan los efectos de la promoción por parte de Stalin de disciplinas prácticas, como la pedología, en el campo de la psicología y las ciencias aplicadas. Nuestro análisis muestra que, dada la decreciente importancia de la psicología durante la Gran Ruptura, no es posible definir con claridad si la pedología o la psicología era la ciencia más general para Vygotsky, quien intentó distanciarse de los supuestos de su psicología, mientras los transponía a la pedología. Entre otros cambios en sus ideas ontoepistemológicas respecto al texto “El significado histórico de la crisis en psicología”, Vygotsky reflexiona sobre la posibilidad de compartir el objeto científico entre la pedología y la psicología, siempre que desarrollen perspectivas diferentes al respecto. Sin embargo, existen indicios de superposición entre ambas ciencias. El resultado de nuestro análisis aclara el laberinto de las afirmaciones del autor, que tienen potencial ontoepistemológico para la psicología y ciencias afines. En última instancia, proponemos una lectura materialista dialéctica del autor en su génesis histórica, con el fin de comprender la totalidad de su obra dentro de su compleja y diversa red de iniciativas.

Palabras clave: Vygotsky, Pedología, Psicología de la Educación, Historia de la Psicología.

Introduction: Vygotsky and the Great Break¹

Introduced to the West in 1962 by psychologists aligned with the so-called ‘cognitivist revolution,’ Belarusian Lev Semionovitch Vygotsky (1896-1934) is now considered a classic thinker in the history of psychology as the leading proponent of the concept that Talankin (1931/2000), one of his critics, dubbed “historical-cultural.” Resumption of many previously unknown writings has impacted all those interested in his work. A seismic movement is sweeping through different strata of historical-cultural psychology, along with the publishing of new (and old) originals

in Russian, and new translations of these originals. Although, to date, the scientific community lacks full access to the archives that would provide a more satisfactory historical portrait of the author (van der Veer, 2024; van der Veer & Yasnitsky, 2011).

These new publications reveal a dialectical materialist work of rare complexity that emerged from the rubble of the Russian Empire on the path to socialist Revolution. In the span of 10 years, Vygotsky conceived at least four large-scale projects (in some cases, concurrently): the psychology of art, general psychology articulated in a triadic manner², pedology, and defectology.

¹ Translated by Gisele Toassa.

² Broadly speaking, we can name Vygotsky’s (1927/1996) psychology structure as ‘triadic’ because it articulates three levels of generalization: one general referring to all human beings; one particular referring to particular social environments and modes of production; and one singular referring to singular subjects (focusing the immediate social environment) (Toassa & Moraes, 2024). His ‘Psychology of Art’ could be considered a particular psychology, but its conception precedes the attempt at articulation exposed in Vygotsky (1927/1996).

Dafermos rightly observes that “Many contemporary scholars tend to focus only on fragmented aspects or ideas of Vygotsky’s theory and ignore others that are outside the scope of their research interests” (Dafermos, 2018, p. 55, our translation). He opportunely follows Gruber and Bödeker in using the idea of *a network of enterprise* to represent the multiplicity of Vygotskian projects. A science that has died out globally, pedology was the sole field in which Vygotsky achieved effective recognition in the Soviet Union until its banishment by decree in 1936 (Yasnitsky, 2018)³.

We find it particularly challenging to understand the seemingly parallel and uncoordinated development of these projects and their connections to Vygotsky’s work in the Bolshevik revolutionary process which, according to some historians, lasted until 1928 (Reis Filho, 2003), followed by a period of drastic changes during the first two Five-Year Plans (1929-1937) that ushered in the Stalinist order, which ended with Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin’s crimes at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party.

Changes during the First Five-Year Plan (1929-1932) were drastic enough to be named the Great Break (*velikii perelom*), marking the transition from Leninist to Stalinist partisanship (Toassa, 2024). Scientists experienced drama marked by fear and confusion due to Stalin’s vague and contradictory demands. Directly or via the Party, the General Secretary demanded more cooperation from scientists in building socialism without specifying by what means this end should be achieved (Toassa, 2016). A campaign for the practicality of science gained momentum. In each discipline, scholars began advocating the search for practical significance.

Hesitant attitudes from State officials toward disciplines related to the application of psychology, not to mention the skeptical perspective on experimental psychology research itself, were common in different countries. Joravsky (1989) notes, however, that Stalin’s Soviet Union was peculiar in its violent fluctuations in scientific policies. Briefly, creativity was demanded while, paradoxically, creative freedom was undermined by changes in the orientation

of experimental projects already underway, or even by administration of threats or punishments to intellectuals for adopting paths considered undesirable by the Party—even if *a posteriori*⁴.

How did Vygotsky adapt to the demands and rearrangements of this political context? Recent publications of his works, including the conference translated in this Dossier, allow us to understand his network of initiatives as an open, developing whole subject to sudden and unpredictable changes. Seeking to do justice to the historical Vygotsky, we imbue ourselves with a historicist presentism (Teo, 2006) that refuses to distort facts from the past to satisfy contemporary scientific standards (even if such facts contradict current expectations) while admitting to being guided by the present interest in continuing the constitution of a Marxist-based Vygotskian psychology. To this end, advancing the debate on the author’s pedology and understanding its relationship with psychology is unavoidable. We adopt the perspective that pedology is a relatively independent project of Vygotsky, which nevertheless interacts with his psychology in a manner that is decisive for his Marxist conception of human nature. Unfortunately, the nature of these interactions and their historical determinants are unclear, and both projects may even overlap: for van der Veer & Valsiner (2001), Vygotsky’s pedology would, in fact, be a child psychology.

Our studies show that an approach focused solely on the intellectual history of the lecture “Pedology and Psychotechnics” would be insufficient to explain the author’s ontoepistemological crossroads which, quite particularly, faces challenges imposed by its object, although the author presents an ontological attitude toward it. The logic of reality investigated captures Vygotsky; he does not superimpose himself on it (Costa, 2020). We will undertake a social and political history of Vygotsky’s psychology reflections by focusing on the lecture ‘Pedology and Psychotechnics’ (1930/2025) as it relates to another pedological article of strong ontoepistemological content: ‘On the Question of Pedology and Psychology’ [*K voprosu o*

³ With many doctors in its ranks, pedology was one of the means by which Vygotsky became more closely involved with clinical practice and medicine. In the company of Luria, Lev Semionovitch began to study medicine in Kharkov (Yasnitsky, 2018), but did not complete the course.

⁴ The case of Luria and his team’s expeditions to Uzbekistan was, in this regard, the most serious clash between Vygotsky’s Circle and the Party while the Belarusian was still alive: seeking to understand the impacts of the socialist ‘social experiment’ on the higher mental functions of the remote populations of the Uzbek republic, the authors sought to move from experimental psychology laboratories to real life. The initiative, however, backfired on the researchers and displeased the Party by producing results that portrayed these populations differently from official propaganda. Toassa (2016) and the bibliographies presented therein analyzes this complex case.

psikhologii i pedologii], from 1931 (Vygotsky, 2007b). These texts are of great historical interest in a science that gave rise to reflections relevant to contemporary psychology despite its early disappearance.

But the situation in the field of pedology was at least as uncomfortable as in psychology—each was undergoing its own crisis according to Lev Semionovitch (the crisis in psychology being extensively evaluated in ‘The Historical Significance of the Crisis in Psychology,’ from 1927, hereinafter referred to as HMCP, see Vigotski, 1927/1996), with significant conflicts between groups of scientists, whether in the same field or between related fields. The possible interplay of both crises within the Great Breakdown along with their relation with the object of both sciences, their boundaries, and their practices, will be the focus of this reflection. We chose to employ the dialectical distinction between research and exposition methods in the course of its elaboration (Netto, 2011), directly presenting the results of the discussions and readings undertaken together⁵.

Regarding the selection of references, we highlight the significant scarcity of bibliography on the psychological disciplines applied in the Soviet Union and their connection with scientific policies during the Great Break. For this reason, we opted for a rigorous, albeit restricted, selection of commentators on the subject who stand out for their expertise and wide recognition in the history of Russian psychology and/or extensive knowledge of the recent “archival revolution,” always mediated by reading the originals in Russian⁶. We will structure our text around a brief description and historical contextualization of pedology and psychotechnics, following the labyrinthine ontoepistemological path of the relations between the object and degree of generality of pedology in relation to psychology, which informs our interpretation of its practical relevance in Soviet Union for Vygotsky. Concluding our reflections, the final considerations will synthesize an analysis of the path and contributions—beyond the understandable inconsistencies—of Vygotsky’s ontoepistemology in the context of Stalin’s Great Break.

Contextualization and definition: pedology and psychotechnics

A notable fact in Lev Semionovitch’s career: his engagement in the field of pedology occurred before the formidable impulse given by Stalinism to disciplines that were closely related to psychology (a predominantly theoretical and experimental field). Even before moving to Moscow in 1924, Vygotsky was already studying pedology, education, and psychology (van der Veer & Valsiner, 2001).

In his day, psychotechnics and pedology were classified as applied disciplines (although Vygotsky saw pedology as a specific science, not contained within the field of applied psychology), for which three journals were created in 1928: ‘Psychology,’ ‘Pedology,’ and ‘Psychotechnics’ (Bauer, 1952). Joravsky (1989) notes that in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Soviet government invested heavily in these disciplines followed by their extinction a few years later, marked by a sharp drop in the number of books published from 1932 onwards (Minkova, 2012). Notably, this fluctuation in the volume of publications in Vygotsky’s primary field of study at this time affects the author’s own work which, in addition to the unfavorable context, was undergoing an intense period of self-criticism (Fraser & Yasnitsky, 2015), although the very extinction of journals restricted publication opportunities.

The initial enthusiasm for applied disciplines went so far as to believe that every effort at psychological science “was about to be liquidated. Certainly, there were signs pointing in that direction” (Joravsky, 1989, p. 358, our translation)⁷. We see evidence of this belief in Vygotsky’s own observations (Vigotski, 1931/2007b) about the existence of a pedological school of thought that advocated the absorption of child psychology by pedology. The ‘Pedology’ journal had been integrated into the psychologists’ five-year plan, defining their short-term goals, according to Aquino and Toassa (2019). Vygotsky’s first preface to Leontiev’s book “The Development of Memory”

⁵ Classic references will be identified by date of writing or, in the absence of this information, by date of first publication during Vygotsky’s lifetime.

⁶ Van der Veer, Dafermos, and Yasnitsky are knowledgeable about the bibliography of the archival revolution. Bauer and Joravsky are among the classic historians of Soviet psychology.

⁷ Importantly, Vygotsky’s students came from courses in pedology, philosophy, and pedagogy, developing research in psychology with him since the first undergraduate courses in psychology were created in the 1950s (Yasnitsky & van der Veer, 2016).

(1931) highlights the problematic situation of psychology in scientific terms, without mention to political challenges⁸.

At the prestigious State Institute of Experimental Psychology (SIEP), an important institutional base for Vygotsky's Circle since 1924, the situation had become discouraging, as the author recounts to Luria in a letter dated June 1, 1931:

The institute, it seems, will break apart into its component parts. The disarray there is awful. At the clinic, 98 poor G.V.99—things are in such a sheer and utter mess that there is just no word for it. We need to stay far away from such institutes⁹. (Vygotsky, 2007a, p. 33).

Other psychology journals also disappeared between 1932 and 1934. In 1930, SIEP was renamed as *the State Institute of Psychology, Pedagogy, and Psychotechnics of the Russian Association of Scientific Institutes of Marxist Pedagogy*, with Kornilov being replaced by Zalkind as director. Zalkind lost his position the following year, after the first wave of criticism by the great pedagogues and the cascade of Stalinist attacks following the fall of Deborin and all those who followed him (van der Veer, 2020). These changes weakened Vygotsky's position at the SIEP which ceased to be his main institutional base: in the 1930s, he took on various jobs in Moscow, Leningrad, and, to a lesser extent, Kharkov. Tuberculosis crises also contributed to intermittent interruptions in his work (Yasnitsky, 2018).

Although the campaign for the 'practicality of science' generally had the source and format in force until the end of the Stalin era, making use of violent rhetoric that combined public criticism followed by self-criticism from those affected, in which little or no adequate academic reflection took shape (Toassa, 2016), political forces still clashed over the role of pedology. High-ranking Bolsheviks like Lunacharskiy

and Krupskaya believed that pedology would provide scientific answers to educational problems and that pedologists should have a strong presence in schools and other institutions. The many pedological institutions throughout the 1920s provided information for policy formulation and decision-making by higher levels of government (van der Veer, 2020). Three ministries—Health, Education, and Railways—endorsed the proliferation of pedological institutes (Fraser & Yasnitsky, 2015).

Nevertheless, enthusiasm for the above-mentioned disciplines was short-lived. Their collapse led to the relocation of SIEP within the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and with it psychologists predominantly moved into the field of education, where they played a strong role until the collapse of the Soviet Union (Shuare, 2016).

Van der Veer (2020) recalls that some Russian educational reformers and researchers closely followed the international debates on pedology (also known as *experimental pedagogy*) since its inception, developing their own contributions since the dawn of the 20th century despite the funding irregularities that plagued the Psychopedagogical Institute, founded by V.M. Biékhterelev in 1907. Pedology congresses and departments in different institutions thrived (Martins & Souza, 2019). Vygotsky joined the Moscow Institute of Pedology and Defectology in 1925 (later renamed Institute of Defectology) and began teaching in the field from 1927 onwards (van der Veer, 2020). He lectured on pedology and published the inaugural text of his new psychology in the journal *Pedologiya*, whose Editorial Committee he joined in 1929.

Stalinist criticism methodology permeated intellectual work (Krementsov, 1997), affecting Vygotsky for the first time via the pedological front in 1932¹⁰ (van der Veer, 2020). In January 1931, the Central Committee condemned the (formerly influential) philosopher Abram Deborin for 'Menshevik idealism.' It did not spare his philosophical opponents

⁸ "Nowadays, it is common to complain about the imperfections and dire state of psychology. Many people think that psychology as a science has not yet begun and will only begin in the more or less distant future. The prefaces to psychological studies are written in a minor key, and 'Priam over the ruins of Troy' (as N. N. Lange lightly puts it, finding no better analogy for modern psychology) wanders through the pages of psychology books" (Vigotski, 1931/2005, p. 31, our translation).

⁹ According to Puzirei's note, the 'clinic' was the Clinic for Neurological Diseases under the direction of E.K. Sepp. G. V. would be Gita Vasil'evna Birnbaum (Birenbaum) (1903-1952), a Russian psychologist who worked in Berlin under Lewin's guidance before moving to Moscow and, with Vygotsky, organizing experiments on the forgetting of intentions (Vygotsky, 1931/2007b).

¹⁰ The first public criticism to focus on Vygotsky's pedology was Feofanov's 1932 work, "The theory of cultural development in pedology as an eclectic conception with basically idealist roots" (Toassa, 2016).

(such as Bukharin) either, not to mention Trotsky, who was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1928 (Toassa, 2016). A cascade of attacks by young Stalinists against the leading figures in pedology, with publications in the same field, led to public suspicion, loss of positions, and demands for retractions from those who had cited works by Basov, Blonskiy, Molozhavy, and Vygotsky.

These setbacks brought chaos and unpredictability to researchers' work, resulting in material difficulties for them. Yasnitsky (2011) describes, for example, the financial setback Vygotsky experienced in the 1930s due to severance of some of his employment ties after the institutions in which he worked were shut down, as a result of the continuous remodeling of policies and institutional arrangements during the Great Depression¹¹.

Vygotsky wrote his first contribution to pedology, the book *Pedology of School Age* (Vygotsky, 2020), in 1928, intended for students of a correspondence course. Considered one of the most extensive texts on this science written and published by Vygotsky, the work, despite not exceeding the modest objective of constituting itself as an instruction manual and bringing extensive annotated summaries of other authors (he relied heavily on the works by Blonski), presents for the first time many of Vygotsky's revolutionary ideas about the relation between thought and language. Next, he engages in another ambitious project: a four-volume publication on adolescent pedology (published in two volumes from 1930 to 1931, according to Veresov & Kellogg, 2022). At this time, he assumed leading positions in pedology, becoming a professor at the prestigious Second Moscow Medical Institute, where he also headed the Faculty of General and Age Pedology. Simultaneously, he became director and professor of the Faculty of Pedology of Difficult Childhood at the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute. In 1931, he also became professor of pedology at the Herzen Pedological Institute in Leningrad (van der Veer & Valsiner, 2001).

Vygotsky's comments (Vigotski, 1927/1996) indirectly reveal that the relation between psychology and related sciences was constructed solely by other philosophical, non-materialistic perspectives

on the subject and psychology tasks. As in his assessment for the future development of psychology in 1927, he also exposed, in 1931, the need for future historical research, methodological, and more meticulous criticism in pedology (Vigotski, 1931/2007a). In our perspective, the author shows trust in praxis, suggesting that psychology will not find a ready-made solution but will achieve it by its growth and methodological development. Notably, Vygotsky's response to the crisis in pedology relied upon philosophy and practice, a crisis recognized by both its defenders and detractors (Sá, 2020). Only a Darwin or a Galileo would overcome it (Vigotski, 1931/1997a).

The object and degree of generality in pedology and psychology

In this political landscape, similar to a dangerous cross-over between a construction site and a minefield in which the Party guided Soviet sciences and scientists, Vygotsky arrived in 1930 having already accumulated an extensive list of readings in pedology and some practical experience—important aspects for his diagnosis, now, of a crisis in this science (Vigotski, 1931/2007b; 1930/2025). In addressing this topic, he also comments on the crisis in psychology, indicating that the two crises shared common aspects (as far as we can compare passages from SHCP, a complex, extensive, and rich manuscript, with the brief and somewhat disorganized texts under analysis here). One concern is that both are methodological crises, that is, profound crises that have affected the philosophical foundations of both sciences.

Regarding the structure of human sciences, initially organized into four layers—from philosophy to social practices—in the 1920s, Vygotsky (1930/2025) stated that pedology was facing mortal danger in the West and the Soviet Union, and only a dialectical materialist approach could save it. He recognizes that a new ordering of the sciences would be necessary in the future (Vigotski, 2007b). However, how would both sciences be arranged? The table below summarizes the information about the prevailing conception in scientific circles during Vygotsky's time.

¹¹ We refer to the first 'wave' of public criticism, which created an environment conducive to the social advancement of youth from the proletarian class. Students would investigate and harshly criticize professors from their own institution (as with Razmyslov, a PhD student linked to the Party who became responsible for the official critical report on Vygotsky, according to Toassa, 2016).

Table 1.

Humanities in the USSR in the 1920s USSR.

Philosophy	General theory	Applied sciences	Social practice
<p>Marxism: Dialectical materialism Historical materialism</p>	<p>Psychology Psychoanalysis Reflexology/theory of higher nervous activity Reactology</p>	<p>Pedology Defectology Pathopsychology and psychotherapy (clinical or medical psychology) Psychotechnics (industrial psychology and occupational psychology) Psychohygiene (mental health) Pedagogy</p>	<p>Medicine Education Industry Armed Forces</p>

Yasnitsky (2009, p. 39)

Comparing Vygotsky's ideas (1931/2007b; 1930/2025) to the table above, we see that the author explicitly advocates reversing the two sciences' position by promoting pedology as a more generalist science than psychology, even though this thesis is not consistent throughout these two texts. A closer examination of the degree of generality (or abstraction) in these different sciences, however, demonstrates that it is not possible to clearly define which science is more general for Vygotsky, even in these ontoepistemological texts on pedology—and even less so if we take the author's work as a whole. This is due both to the lack of a clear definition of psychology' object of study and to the considerable disorderly state of the sciences, which are undergoing reconstruction from a Marxist perspective—a problem identified by the author himself.

The issue of the object and methods was central; Minkova (2012) observes that the object of pedology was one of the most heated debates in this field. Vygotsky seeks a synthetic science of development in line with the striking synthetic and systemic concerns of the 1930s, the final era of his work. The problem of studying totalities, of mental synthesis—generally conspicuous in his reflections on personality and consciousness, two of the leading candidates for the object of Vygotsky's psychology—also permeated his historical-cultural psychology, appearing in several texts (Vygotski, 1931/1995; Vigotski, 1934/2001; 2022; Kellogg & Veresov, 2019).

Did pedology address an object that existed independently of scientists' consciousness (desirable situation) or did it consist of a synthesis, an

epistemological abstraction (undesirable situation), based on data from objective reality? This question is one of the first that Vygotsky(1931/2007b) asks himself, leaning towards the second alternative which he explains at the end of the text. To be science, pedology must have an object that exists in objective reality rather than a simple ideal object “constructed from scientific information in the researcher's mind and related to a single empirical object (*predmiét*)” (Vigotski, 1931/2007b, p. 104, our translation). In other words, its object could not be merely a sum of data, selected randomly and subjectively. One should rely on objective reality to properly synthesize the object and its interconnections. Besides, without defining the object of pedology it was also impossible to define the relation between its object and that of other sciences, which is consistent with its materialism of interconnections (Toassa & Moraes, 2024). The ontoepistemological content of this scientific debate is affirmed in the very selection of Russian terms, since Vygotsky refers to *predmiét*, generally used in reference to objects of scientific knowledge, and not *obíekt* (also synonymous with object), as analyzed by Bakhurst, which connotes “ob”ekt—the term typically counterposed to subject, with connotations of brute objectivity and otherness, and “*predmíet*,” with connotations of a conceptualized object—an object of inquiry, situated in a space of intention and purpose” (Toassa, Kunzler, & Marques, 2020, p. 16).

By the end of his reasoning, we understand that psychology and pedology can share their object

and study it from different perspectives¹²—constituting an alternative to arbitrary synthesis, as a mere operation occurring in the researcher’s mind. Consequently, “the problem of the relationship between pedological research and other sciences is a problem concerning the relationship between different points of view, different approaches; it is mainly a problem of the subjective logic of scientific thought” (Vygotski, 1931/2007b, p. 105, our translation), but only if it occurs in objective reality does “pedology have the methodological right to exist as a separate science.” This lack of a clearly defined object and eclecticism were flaws that fueled many of pedology critics, as Sá (2020) observes.

Vygotsky asserts that it was precisely in their perspectives that pedology and child psychology differed, despite sharing a certain *predmìet* (such as the language of a three-year-old child). However, particularly intriguing is his argument that child psychology also needs to consider the object in its connections. If it did so, what would then be the place of pedology as a synthetic science and its difference from psychology? To borrow from Kellogg & Veresov (2019): “What does it mean to study child development holistically from a psychological perspective and to study the child holistically from a pedological perspective?” (p. xvi).

It can be said that, in attempting to reposition pedology in terms of generality vis-à-vis psychology, Vygotski embraces pedology as a more general science of the child, a science of “concrete totalities” and synthetic in its rich complexity, in a perspective similar to that of Ivanovsky (1923), a philosopher who labeled pedology as a science that involves the whole of anatomy, physiology, and psychology of children, among other aspects, and whose lectures he had attended during his undergraduate studies. (Dafermos, 2018).

Vygotsky (2025) elaborates two basic positions on the relation between pedology and psychology as autonomous sciences. First, he states that *child psychology feeds on pedology as a more general science* (at a level of generality analogous to that of zoology in relation to biology), affirming that pedology would have a corrective function with respect to developmental

psychology (apparently taken here only from the notion of ontogenesis), offering “a broader point of view than psychology itself” (Vigotski, 1930/2025, p. 3). Second, and in the opposite direction, psychology, by developing its fields based on other more general sciences beyond pedology (for example, ethnic psychology based on Marxist sociology or the theory of historical materialism), can therefore lend much to pedology.

In his response to Netskii during the lecture discussion (Vigotski, 1930/2025), it is clear that, although Lev Semionovitch considered child psychology a “pedological discipline,” it would not therefore become part of pedology. Interdisciplinarity between fields is thus an idea tacitly presented in his exposition. However, for the contemporary reader, the question remains: why could not pedology answer directly to Marxist sociology or the theory of historical materialism instead of taking a shortcut to it via psychology, since psychology, in Vygotsky’s view, seems to have lost—at least in pedological texts—its stance as a synthetic science about human beings?

Our impression of this delicate situation of Vygotskian psychology becomes increasingly dramatic when the author concludes that there is no such thing as autonomous mental development (Vigotski, 1930/2025, p. 18), opposing the predominant ideas in *Vygotsky’s Notebooks* (Vigotski, 2022) and other works. Psychology would need to accommodate itself to more general sciences—zoological psychology to biology; psychology of peoples to sociology, because “the psyche does not present itself autonomously from the beginning; it does not develop in absolute independence from the materials of its bearer, as realists represent for themselves” (Vigotski, 1930/2025, p. 9). This assumption seemingly mitigates the assertion about the non-existence of autonomous development, thereby rescuing the epistemologically reasonable defense, which is more frequent in Vygotsky’s work, that we must research the subject in its concrete relations.

Original in its time, and still vigorous in our era, this premise, however, does not resolve the understanding of how the study of this concrete development would affect the constitution of a general psychology. It also makes us wonder whether Vygotsky

¹² This is evident in the problematization conducted on the study of the practical intellect of children of a certain age, to be further explored in section 3 of this text.

ever considered, in the adverse years of the First Five-Year Plan, discarding his own psychology of higher mental functions (greatly based on a genetic-experimental method that did not prioritize specific social and historical domains) or—more likely—reform it in more concrete terms, following the clearly outlined self-critical movement, for example, concerning the excessive abstraction in Leontiev's (a collaborator of his Circle) research on memory (Vygotski & Leontiev, 1931/2020). Years after he analyzed the crisis in psychology, Vygotsky believed that it needed to find a path between the general laws dictating a “given development as a whole” (Vygotski, 1930/2025, p. 19) and the different types and concrete processes of development in specific social and historical domains, including particular forms of psychology—such as psychotechnics, comparative psychology, etc.

This delicate question involving general and particular psychologies certainly goes beyond the specific domain of relations with pedology: Vygotsky does not further discuss the dialectic between the two levels of scientific abstraction; but he did not seem to have abandoned his idea of creating a “general psychology,” to which he continues to refer in these ontoepistemological texts (Vygotski, 2007b; 2025). Nevertheless, how would pedology relate to particular psychologies and general psychology?

In these texts, Vygotsky often attributes to pedology a concern with *the concept of childhood, the problem of age, children and adolescents in their entirety*; and to psychology (taken here, in our view, in its experimental work, not contemplating his clinical initiatives), the *study of behavior and higher mental functions*. Since pedology is based on the object (behavior, the development of the psyche) and on the psychological method, its dialogue is not with child psychology but rather with *general* psychology—as occurs with anatomy and general physiology, if the pedologist is interested in brain activity in its specific laws (Vygotski, 2025, p. 11).

Vygotsky demonstrates how precarious his stance on the object of psychology was in relation to pedology by qualifying the concept of the psyche as a

Spinozian attribute, much broader than its particular forms, its manifestations being “real, constituting part of objective reality, but not as substance” (Vygotski, 2007b, p. 107)¹³. However, this rather general observation about the nature of the psyche proves anomalous on the basis of ontoepistemological texts on pedology, in which several passages undermine the autonomy of the object of psychology or reduce it to behavior, higher functions, practical intellect, etc. In contrast, the psyche, as a Spinozian attribute, could acquire a rich and diverse space beyond the reductionisms sometimes presented.

In another excerpt from “Pedology and Psychotechnics,” Vygotsky (1930/2025) attempts to establish the idea of development as a watershed between psychology and pedology. In his response to Smirnov, he observes that supporters of the genetic perspective of psychology would hardly admit its status as a science of development, although the developmental point of view is a mandatory principle for psychology to address, for example, the genesis “of higher forms from lower ones” (1930/2025, p. 18)—this development appears, therefore, as a precept that intersects different sciences, including anatomy and general physiology.

It is as if pedology, having as its object the development of the higher mental functions of children and adolescents, resorted to psychology to seek general laws of development—when such laws are, in fact, within the purview of pedology since it is at these ages that the ontogenesis of partial mental functions occurs, including personality and consciousness, as we do not see Vygotsky address human development after adolescence (Dafermos, 2018). His reasoning ultimately becomes circular, confirming he possibly transposed concepts from his psychology to pedology.

Notably, in his psychology of higher mental functions, the idea of behavioral development relies on two genetic planes beyond ontogenesis: phylogenesis and the social history of behavior, in which various general laws are distributed such as the *general genetic law of cultural development*¹⁴ (Vygotski, 1931/1995). However, Vygotsky does not describe these levels in

¹³ Spinoza's monism (1967/2008) understands the whole of nature as substance (which Marxists usually interpret as equivalent to matter), which consists of two attributes identifiable by human beings: thought and extension. For the philosopher, we would be finite modes of substance, composed of these attributes. Other animals share this composition, but differ from humans in their essence and types of knowledge. In general, however, finite and infinite modes are composed only of extension, not thought.

¹⁴ In the author's words: “We can formulate the general genetic law of the child's cultural development as follows: each function in the child's cultural development appears twice, on two planes: first on the social plane and then on the psychological plane, initially between people

his answers, nor how psychology would be necessary to address them, which ends up confusing Smirnov with a simplified reading of the nature of human development—and also intrigues us, his contemporary readers, because Vygotsky appears to sacrifice essential aspects of his psychology as developed up to that point, not to mention the psychological contributions he would write in the 1930s (for example, in the sixth and seventh chapters of the book *Michliènie i riètch [Thought and Language]*, Vygotski, 1934/2001).

The issue of practice and the need for pedology (object approach)

Psychology and pedology faced similar situations in terms of their historical meaning as a science, especially regarding the role of practice. Based on this, Vygotsky (1930/2025) discusses the relationship between pedology and psychotechnics (psychology) throughout his lecture. His concern with attesting to the importance and necessity of pedology, an aspect inseparable from the dramatic situation of children and adolescents in Soviet Russia, is palpable: according to the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, about seven million street children roamed Soviet cities in 1927 (cited by van der Veer, 2020). How to care for and educate them while transitioning into a socialism whose future form and content were still hotly disputed? It seems logical to believe that pedology would contribute to addressing these serious social issues, a hegemonic position within the Party in the late 1920s with the full support of none other than Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya (Minkova, 2012), among other important names high on the Party hierarchy (Sá, 2020).

However, several contradictions emerged as the applied sciences gained strength. As Joravsky (1989) observes, the Western instruments and measurements used by Soviet pedologists and psychotechnicians, who classified individuals and assigned them to the social position most appropriate to their abilities, reproduced the meritocracy inherent to them. Disciplines of European or North American origin considered practical, such as pedology and psychotechnics, collided with the egalitarian principles of the Revolution during their implementation, segregating and excluding rather than mediating individual participation in collective transformation. The

Stalinist choice of such disciplines without the corresponding definition of a clear socialist agenda ended up undermining its ontoepistemological reconstruction based on both praxis and Marxist principles, constituting a violent and authoritarian approach which, despite addressing urgent social problems, ignored broad debates concerning the representation of the various political segments involved in the health, education, and well-being of children and adolescents.

In our view, a participatory and egalitarian socialism must solve social problems via mediation of a unifying praxis of reflection and collaborative decision-making by various social actors. The alternatives for creating a critical psychology committed to the emancipation of the proletariat have changed over time; however, critical theorization essentially involves three criteria: a focus on the historical-cultural and sociopolitical dimensions of a problem, the possibility of change to transcend the *status quo*, and, finally, reflexivity (Teo, 2023). Following Freire (2018), Teo observes that praxis is the critical activity of theorization which can be performed not only from the 'top down' (i.e., from abstractions to the empirical world, from academia to everyday life) but also from the bottom up (i.e., scientific institutions/scientists, parties, committees focused on specific social problems and the organized proletariat in general).

In line with this idea, Vygotsky observed the need to "create our own theory and, while we create it, we advance in practice" (Vygotsky, 2018, p. 484, our translation). Nonetheless, the entire design of the First Five-Year Plan tramples on this process, interfering in the work of scientists—and its ramifications in social and political practices—without effectively understanding it. Consequences of these macro-political tensions unfold in micro-political tensions between groups of scientists, exploding in comic relief by the audience in response to Vygotsky's answer about the possibility of pedagogy "being swallowed up by pedology" (1930/2025, p. 23, our translation). Arousing laughter from the audience, he notes how often the question of "who could swallow whom" was repeated as an obvious consequence of the unpredictable redesign of the scientific field.

Attempting to adapt to the new times, Vygotsky himself sought a conciliatory solution by

as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This applies equally to voluntary attention, logical memory, concept formation, and the development of will" (Vygotski, 1931/1995, p. 150, our translation).

accommodating the different sciences (and, consequently, scientists) in his own constellation of sciences—as we have seen, not without incurring in inconsistencies and even readjustments in which psychology lost ground during this transition. Vygotsky (1930/2025) appears hesitant in his presentation before an unfamiliar audience. Confirming the existence of reasons for his cautious speech, the audience questions express the skepticism of psychotechnicians regarding the content of the lecture whose meaning, in addition to being ontoepistemological, was permeated by political consequences (staff preparation, design of scientific policies, etc., on which Vygotsky sought to have a say at the dawn of the First Five-Year Plan, as per his recurring proposal to create pedological study centers in the Soviet Union, see Vygotsky, 1931/1997b; Vygotski, 1929/2023). Interestingly, in contrast to the pedologist Vygotsky, none of those present defended the end of pedology or its irrelevance to psychotechnical work, however justified those doubts may have been in the context of the exhibition as a whole.

Final considerations

Our text shows that Vygotsky describes several elements common to the crises of psychology and pedology, particularly that both crises were methodological—profound crises whose resolution would depend on practice and philosophical reflections. In his considerable inconsistencies we see that the search for understanding the human being as a multidetermined synthesis, in accordance with Marxist assumptions, was a high priority in his network of initiatives during the last years of his life. In its dilemmas, Vygotsky's thinking is one of many examples of how the history of real science, as Sacks (1995) observes, is far from a continuous linear evolution toward higher knowledge. In the case of Psychology, it rather resembles a fragmented field which Danziger (1990) compares to a set of unfinished buildings.

Ontologically, the “Vygotsky case” is a most complex and multidetermined case in the history of psychology. His creative genius, enormous capacity for work, and development of his own socialist research agenda, adapting to frankly hostile political conditions during the Stalinist Great Break—not to mention his own increasingly poor health—set him on the path of doubt and self-criticism (Fraser & Yasnitsky, 2015), overlapping scientific projects that, due to his

early death, failed to reach resolution and creative synthesis. Difficulties in explaining his thought is also noted by Kellogg and Veresov (2019), specifically in the emergence of seemingly unrelated theoretical configurations since “the semantic, systemic approach to consciousness that he introduces in the next book of this series [Seven Lectures on Pedology] is not obviously connected to any of the lectures in this one, and still less to his earlier work, and even less so to his earlier works” (Kellogg & Veresov, 2019, p. XV). Notably, the search for a representative synthesis of individual development via the “pedological route” raised objections even among his circle of researchers. For example, member of the Kharkov Circle and Ukrainian psychiatrist Galperin (according to van der Veer & Valsiner, 2001) argued that pedology faced a risk of eclecticism. Vygotsky would have taken the wrong path in envisioning a child sciences as a synthesis of physiology, defectology, psychology, and pedagogy centered on the ideas of development and age. Galperin further argues that progress in science is achieved by specialization and not combination, thereby echoing some of the various reasons for distancing that Kharkov researchers linked to Vygotsky took concerning pedology—and Vygotsky himself, as already discussed in Toassa (2016). The theory of activity, developed to a certain extent by this collective, moved away from such a project.

Vygotsky began his studies in pedology before the Great Break gave impetus to the applied disciplines. We have reason to believe, however, that this impetus was decisive for advancing his own pedology (and the concomitant dehydration of his psychology) in the context of his network of initiatives, since the ontoepistemological texts discussed here (Vygotsky, 1931/2007b; 1930/2025) date from 1930-1931. Within pedology, he discovers a path for studying child and adolescent development in its entirety, moving beyond the monodisciplinary content of his psychology. This aspect neither devalue his commitment to pedology, nor does it mean that he had effectively given up on seeking a synthetic path for psychology, as evinced by one of the last texts he produced, the final chapter of *Thought and Language* (1934), in which we see traces of consciousness defined as an object—or “central” issue (Vygotsky, 2001, p. XIX)—of psychology; a systemic totality and not just psychology as the study of higher mental functions and behavior, as he states in his pedological texts. By hastily reforming

his ideas about the object and method of pedology and psychology, and the relations between these and other sciences, Vygotsky annexes the latter to the former, but also shows significant progress regarding the architecture of a human development sciences, whatever name he gives it.

Ultimately, the idea of sharing the *obiékt* (the child) and differentiating the *predmiét* (child development as a scientific object in its interconnections) between psychology and pedology unintentionally highlights the difficulties of pedology becoming a feasible science. Vygotsky's reflections (1930/2025) are too confusing even for his audience. Alone in the difficult discussion about the ordering of the young sciences that were forming in an increasingly monitored intellectual and practical space, and under the influence of Ivanovsky's (1923) defense of the constitution of the sciences of 'concrete totalities' (*predmiéti*), Vygotsky could hardly establish boundaries that would, in our view, delineate both the training and scope of the professional activities of pedologists, who were ultimately accused, in the banning decree of 1936, of undermining the autonomy of educators (Central Committee of the Communist Party of the

USSR, 2010). Under Stalinist rule, the path to broad public debate on how the sciences could be organized and contribute to designing policies to solve serious social problems was closed (especially when their educational objectives and social control were at stake).

Vygotsky's texts analyzed here reveal additional difficulties, particularly in the relation between pedology and psychology. We are tempted to consider his dedication to pedology, partly at the expense of the brilliant and detailed reflections on the future of psychology in the SCHP elaborated in 1927, as a somewhat incoherent movement in which his psychology continues to address, as before, developmental problems—and to consider them according to age, even though this is the *primary focus* of pedology. This relation is all the more confusing because the Stalinist state's push toward applied disciplines was short-lived, and researchers may have considered it prudent, at that time, to put forward different options for survival in the early days of the Stalin era (Luria, 1988). Vygotsky and Luria's approach to clinical practice and medical sciences is considered an option by sciences farther away from controversial topics.

References

- Aquino, P. M., & Toassa, G. (2019). Apontamentos sobre a pedologia de Vigotski: Alguns conceitos importantes em seu contexto histórico [Notes on Vigotski's pedology: Some important concepts in their historical context]. *Obutchénie: Revista de Didática e Psicologia Pedagógica*, 3(2), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.14393/OBv3n2.a2019-51559>
- Bauer, R. A. (1952). *The new man in soviet psychology*. Harvard University Press.
- Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR (2010). Resolução do CC do PCR (b), de 4 de julho de 1936. Sobre as deturpações pedológicas no sistema do Narkompros [On pedological distortions in the Narkompros system]. In Z. R. Prestes. *Quando não é quase a mesma coisa: Análise de traduções de Lev Semionovitch Vigotski no Brasil-repercussões no campo educacional* [Tese de doutorado, Universidade de Brasília] (pp. 205-208). <http://repositorio.unb.br/handle/10482/9123>
- Costa, E. M. (2020). *O método na obra Vigotski e a abordagem ontológica do desenvolvimento humano: Uma análise histórica* [Tese de doutorado, Universidade Estadual Paulista]. <http://hdl.handle.net/11449/194309>
- Dafermos, M. (2018). *Rethinking Cultural-Historical Theory* (Vol. 4). Springer Singapore. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0191-9>
- Danziger, K. (1990). *Constructing the subject: Historical origins of psychological research*. Cambridge University Press.
- Espinosa, B. (2008). *Ética* (2nd ed.). Autêntica (Original work published 1977).
- Fraser, J., & Yasnitsky, A. (2015). Deconstructing Vygotsky's victimization narrative: A re-examination of the 'Stalinist suppression' of Vygotskian theory. *History of the Human Sciences*, 28(2), 128-153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695114560200>
- Freire, P. (2018). *Pedagogia do oprimido* (66th ed.). Paz e Terra.
- Ivanovsky, V. N. (1923). *Metodologicheskoye vvedeniye v nauku i filosofiyyu (Methodological Introduction to Science and Philosophy)*. Beltrestpechat.


- Joravsky, D. (1989). *Russian psychology: A critical history*. Basil Blackwell.
- Kellogg, D., & Veresov, N. (2019). Setting the stage. In L. S. Vygotsky's, *Vygotsky's Pedological Works: Foundations of Pedology* (Vol. 1, pp. v-xx). Springer. <https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/setting-the-stage>
- Krementsov, N. (1997). *Stalinist science*. Princeton University Press.
- Luria, A. R. (1988). Vigotski. In L. S. Vygotski, A. R. Luria, & A. N. Leontiev, *Linguagem, desenvolvimento e aprendizagem* (5th ed, pp. 21-37). Ícone/Edusp.
- Martins, J. B., & Souza, M. P. R. (2019). Pedologia de Vigotski e a abordagem multirreferencial: Aproximações. *Revista Interamericana de Psicologia/Interamerican Journal of Psychology*, 52(3), 295-305. [https://doi.org/10.30849/ripijp.v52\(2018\).295-305](https://doi.org/10.30849/ripijp.v52(2018).295-305)
- Minkova, E. (2012). Pedology as a complex science devoted to the study of children in Russia: The history of its origin and elimination. *Psychological Thought*, 5(2). <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=f6cec8f3a1a1cbd83437a891319ebc89fc3c9cd6>
- Netto, J. P. (2011). *Introdução ao estudo do método de Marx*. Expressão Popular.
- Reis Filho, D. A. (2003). *As revoluções russas e o socialismo soviético*. Unesp.
- Sá, C. F. (2020). *O conceito de mediação em Vigotski no debate crítico à pedologia na URSS nos anos de 1930* [Tese de doutorado, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco]. <https://repositorio.ufpe.br/handle/123456789/38572>
- Sacks, O. (1995). Forgetting and neglect in science. In R. B. Silvers (Ed.), *Hidden Histories of Science* (pp. 141-179). New York Review of Books.
- Shuare, M. (2016). *A psicologia soviética: Meu olhar*. Terracota.
- Talankin, A. A. (2000). On the Vigotski and Luria group. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, 38(6), 10-11. (Original work published 1931)
- Teo, T. (2006). *The critique of psychology: From Kant to postcolonial theory*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Teo, T. (2023). *Ensaio de psicologia crítica* (G. Toassa, Org.). CRV.
- Toassa, G. (2016). Not all that glitters is Marx: Analysis of Stalinist critiques of Vigotski within the Soviet science. *Psicologia USP*, 27, 553-563. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-656420140138>
- Toassa, G. (2024). Um instantâneo do marxismo soviético na história da Revolução de Outubro de 1917: Ideias, lutas e contradições fundamentais. In G. Toassa & P. N. Marques (Orgs.), *Novas perspectivas em Vigotski: História, filosofia, arte e ciência* (pp. 15-50). Mireveja.
- Toassa, G., Kunzler, A. P., & Marques, P. N. (2020). Consciência e afins: Analisando a tradução do “Ensaio sobre o desenvolvimento do psiquismo”, de Leontiev. *Profissão Docente*, 20(43), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.31496/rpd.v20i43.1335>
- Toassa, G., & Moraes, E. C. (2024). Do baixo aos cumes: Fundamentos filosóficos do materialismo psicológico de Vigotski no processo de constituição da nova pessoa socialista. In G. Toassa & P. N. Marques (Orgs.), *Novas perspectivas em Vigotski: História, filosofia, arte e ciência* (pp. 121-170). Mireveja.
- van der Veer, R. (2020). Editor's Introduction. In *Vygotsky's pedology of the school age* (p. i-xxvii). Information Age Publishing.
- van der Veer, R. (2024). Exploring Vygotsky's Archives. *Human Arenas*, 8(894-902). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-024-00457-8>
- van der Veer, R., & Valsiner, J. (2001). *Vygotsky: Uma Síntese* (4th ed). Loyola/Unimarco.
- van der Veer, R., & Yasnitsky, A. (2011). Vygotsky in English: What still needs to be done. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 45(4), 475-493. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-011-9172-9>
- Veresov, N., & Kellogg, D. (2022). Taking Some Distance. In L. S. Vygotsky, *L.S. Vygotsky's pedological works, Volume 3: Pedology of the adolescent i: pedology in the transitional age* (Vol. 11, pp. v-xx). Springer Nature. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-19-2972-4>
- Vigotski, L. S. (1996). O significado histórico da crise na psicologia. In *Teoria e método em psicologia* (pp. 203-417). Martins Fontes. (Original work published 1927)

- Vygotski, L. S. (2001). *A construção do pensamento e da linguagem*. Martins Fontes. (Original work published 1934)
- Vygotski, L. S. (2005). *Predisloviye k knige A.N. Leontiyeva «Razvitiye pamyati»* [Preface to A. N. Leontiev's book, *The Development of Memory*]. In A. N. Leontiev, *Stanovlenie psikhologii deiatelnosti: Rannie raboti* (pp. 28-32). (Original work published 1931)
- Vygotski, L. S. (2022). *Cuadernos de notas [Vygotsky's Notebooks]*. Libros del Zorzal. (Original work published 1912-1934)
- Vygotski, L. S. (2020). *Vygotsky's pedology of the school age*. Information Age Publishing. (Original work published 1928)
- Vygotski, L. S. (2021). O problema do desenvolvimento cultural da criança [The problem of the child's cultural development]. In Em Z. Prestes & E. Tunes (Orgs.), *Psicologia, educação e desenvolvimento: - Eescritos de L. S. Vygotski* (pp. 75-101). Expressão Popular. (Original work published 1928)
- Vygotski, L. S. (2023). Sobre o plano de trabalho de investigação científica a respeito da pedologia das minorias nacionais [On the scientific research work plan regarding the pedology of national minorities]. In G. Toassa & P. Marques (Orgs.), *Psicologia, desenvolvimento humano e marxismo* (pp. 145-160). Hogrefe. (Original work published 1929)
- Vygotski, L. S. (1930/2025). Pedologia e psicotécnica [Pedology and psychotechnics]. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão* (manuscrito em avaliação no presente Dossiê).
- Vygotski, L. S. (2007b). K voprosu o psikhologii i pedologii. *Kul'turno-istoricheskaya psikhologiya*, 3(4), 101-112. (Original work published 1931)
- Vygotski, L. S., & Leontiev, A. N. (2020). Prefácio para o livro de A. N. Leontiev "O desenvolvimento da memória". *Cadernos CEDES*, 40(111), 114-122. <https://doi.org/10.1590/cc225970>. (Original work published 1931)
- Vygotski, L. S. (1995). Historia del desarrollo de las funciones psíquicas superiores [History of the development of higher mental functions]. In *Obras escogidas* (Vol. 3, pp. 11-340). Visor Distribuciones. (Original work published 1931)
- Vygotski, L. S. (1997a). Diagnóstico del desarrollo y clínica paidológica de la infancia difícil. In *Obras Escogidas* (Vol. 5, pp. 275-338). Visor Distribuciones. (Original work published 1931)
- Vygotski, L. S. (1997b). Tesis fundamentales del plan para el trabajo paidológico de investigación en el campo de la infancia difícil [Fundamental theses of the plan for paediatric research work in the field of difficult childhood]. In *Obras Escogidas* (Vol. 5, pp. 203-211). Visor Distribuciones. (Original work published 1931)
- Vygotski, L. S. (2007a). In Memory of L.S. Vygotsky (1896-1934). *Journal of Russian & East European Psychology*, 45(2), 11-60. <https://doi.org/10.2753/RPO1061-0405450201>. (Original work published 1926-1934)
- Vygotski, L. S. (2018). The rest is silence. In E. Zavershneva & R. van der Veer (Orgs.), *Vygotsky's notebooks* (pp. 483-501). Springer Nature. (Original work published 1934)
- Yasnitsky, A. (2009). *Vygotsky circle during the decade of 1931-1941: Toward an integrative science of mind, brain, and education* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/375440329>
- Yasnitsky, A. (2011). Lev Vygotsky: Philologist and defectologist, A sociointellectual biography. In W. E. Pickrein, D. A. Dewsbury, & M. Wertheimer (Orgs.), *Portraits of pioneers in developmental psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 105-129). Taylor & Francis.
- Yasnitsky, A. (2018). *Vygotsky: An intellectual biography*. Routledge.
- Yasnitsky, A., & van der Veer, R. (2016). *Revisionist revolution in Vygotsky studies*. Routledge.

Gisele Toassa

Doutora em Psicologia Escolar e do Desenvolvimento Humano pela Universidade de São Paulo (USP), São Paulo SP, Brasil. Fez pós-doutorado em Psicologia na Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Natal RN, Brasil. Professora Associada na Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG), Goiânia GO, Brasil.


E-mail: gtoassa@ufg.br

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3166-7935>

Eduardo Moura da Costa

Doutor em Psicologia e professor assistente pela Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Unesp), Campus de Assis, Assis – SP, Brasil.


E-mail: eduardo.moura@unesp.br

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5417-6675>

Izabel Augusta Hazin

Doutora em Psicologia Cognitiva pela Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE), Recife – PE, Brasil. Professora Titular na Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Natal -RN, Brasil.

E-mail: izabel.hazin@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4045-8628>

Correspondence address:

Rua 235, Setor Universitário, Faculdade de Educação, Sala 202. CEP: 74605-050. Goiânia – GO, Brasil.

Received 11/22/2025

Approved 12/01/2025

Recebido 22/11/2025

Aceito 01/12/2025

Recibido 22/11/2025

Aceptado 01/12/2025

Data availability: the research data are available within the body of the article.

<https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-3703003303350>

Editors in charge: Miriam Cristiane Alves and Rafael Wolski de Oliveira.

How to cite: Toassa, G., Costa, E. M., & Hazin, I. A. (2026). A Break and Two Crisis: Mazes of Vygotsky's Pedology and Psychology. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*, 46, e303350. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-3703003303350>

Como citar: Toassa, G., Costa, E. M., & Hazin, I. A. (2026). Uma Quebra e duas crises: labirintos da pedologia e psicologia de Vigotski. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*, 46, e303350. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-3703003303350>

Cómo citar: Toassa, G., Costa, E. M., & Hazin, I. A. (2026). Una Ruptura y Dos Crisis: los Laberintos de la Pedología y la Psicología de Vygotsky. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*, 46, e303350. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-3703003303350>