Lev Vygotsky: Revolutionary Scientist

Introduction to the Classic Edition

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It's an honor and an irony to be the author of a "classic text" on Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky. Back in 1993 when our authors' copies of *Lev Vygotsky: Revolutionary Scientist* arrived in our mailboxes, Fred Newman and I handled them with wonder. Intimately connected to the process and product of our labor—not only the thousands of words that comprised the pages of the book but also the two decades of creative grassroots community building work we and our colleagues had been doing—we nevertheless marveled that the prestigious academic publisher Routledge was the vehicle for sharing "our Vygotsky" with scholars and students. Both Newman and I had left the university (he in 1968 and me in 1997) and did our intellectual work in an independent, multi-disciplinary environment that was inseparable from community organizing activity. This location, we believed, had everything to do with what we saw/heard/felt in Vygotsky's writings. We were exploring some of the same issues as other followers of Vygotsky, but we were also creating a new and different pathway as part of the exploration. We were sincerely moved that a few of our academically located colleagues believed that our reading and use of Vygotsky's ideas was important enough to be written down and that they brought the idea to Routledge. Over the years, Newman and I would go back and forth, changing our minds many times on whether this was because of, or in spite of, our unique location. We will never know, but will always be grateful to those colleagues.

I write this introduction for the classic edition of *Lev Vygotsky: Revolutionary Scientist* without my co-author Fred Newman, who passed away in July 2011. It would have been all the richer had we been able to write this together. I miss his insight, provocations and humor. And I will miss—when copies of the new classic edition arrive in our mailboxes—marveling at its existence with him, just as we did 20 years ago.

So much has changed in the world since 1993! To merely make mention of the transformations in the politics, economy, culture, social structure and psychology of the earth's seven billion people would double the pages of this book. Since I cannot and do not want to do that, I ask for your help in historically situating the pages that follow. What I can do is give a sense of Vygotsky's changing position and the role he has played and could play in the current moment of human history. I invite you to let your mind wander as you read, to bring the world in.

Unlike in 1993, it's safe to say that today Vygotsky has at least name recognition in all areas of education, in the social sciences and much of the humanities. Interest in Vygotskian ideas has dramatically increased among scholars and researchers in areas of psychology where he was previously unknown, such as psychotherapy and social psychology. Within education, we find Vygotskian-influenced philosophies, curricula and methods in technology, math, science, the arts, literacy, second languages learning, diversity and multiculturalism—and afterschool and informal learning. Among practitioners, too, there is a thirst for the reenergizing that Vygotsky's approach brings to mental health workers, social work practitioners, physicians and nurses, youth workers, arts-based community organizations, and organizational psychology consultants. The interest is international; the Vygotskian tradition of the English-speaking countries,

countries in Europe, Brazil, Japan, and Russia is augmented by emerging Vygotskians in other countries, including China, India and countries in Africa and Latin America. Increasingly, international conferences devoted in whole or in part to Vygotsky and Vygotsky-influenced work bring these diverse elements together.

The amount of published works by Vygotsky has more than doubled, with six volumes of his collected works now available in English, several other edited volumes of collected papers, translations into dozens of languages, and projects underway to release all of his unpublished manuscripts and lecture notes. The number of books about Vygotsky has also greatly increased. I couldn't find an exhaustive database search for all languages and have not created one myself, but even a limited Amazon search was impressive. Since 1993, forty-two English-language books with Vygotsky *in the title* are available from Amazon.[1]

As a player in this global swirl of activity, I am grateful to have the opportunity to examine anew Newman's and my book, the ideas it presents, the practices that inspired it, and speculate on its current relevance in the very changed political landscape of the second decade of the 21st century.

When first published, *Lev Vygotsky: Revolutionary Scientist* (*LVRS*) had some features unique to discussions of Vygotsky at the time. For one thing, the book presented Vygotsky as a Marxist methodologist, both locating him in his historical period of the early years of the Soviet Union and delineating how his life and writings were contributing to new psychologies in our historical period. In doing so, Newman and I were not joining into debates about whether Vygotsky was or was not a Marxist; we were convinced that he was, and that separating his science from his revolutionariness

distorted both. We wanted to show a Vygotsky closely aligned methodologically with the historical-materialist Marx, struggling to *create* method as dialectical activity (what Vygotsky referred to as his "search for method...simultaneously the tool and the result of study", (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 65). We coined the term "tool-and-result" methodology to emphasize the radical break Vygotsky was trying to make with the conventional conception of method as applied and instrumental, which we dubbed "tool for result."

In making this radical break with the psychology of his time, Vygotsky brought Marx's insights to bear on the practical question of how human beings learn and develop.[2] We saw in Vygotsky's psychology that the unique feature of human individual, cultural and species development is human activity, which is qualitative and transformative (unlike behavior change, which is particularistic and cumulative). Human beings do not merely respond to stimuli, acquire societally determined and useful skills, and adapt to the determining environment. The uniqueness of human social life is that we ourselves transform the determining circumstances. Human development is not an individual accomplishment but a *socio-cultural activity*. *LVRS* presents Vygotsky as a forerunner to what we later dubbed "a new psychology of becoming," in which people experience the social nature of their existence and the power of collective creative activity in the process of making new tools for growth (Holzman, 2009).

Our understanding of Vygotsky's conception of method as dialectical tool-and-result led us to three of Vygotsky's insights that had received little attention.

First was his unconventional view of how development and learning are related. Rejecting the view that learning depends on and follows development, Vygotsky conceptualized learning and development as a dialectical unity in which learning is ahead

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of or leads development: "Instruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or wakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage or maturation lying in the zone of proximal development" (1987, p. 212). Newman and I came to understand "learning-leading-development" (or "learning-and-development"— both being shorthands for Vygotsky's conception) as an important advance in bringing Marx's dialectical conception of activity to psychology. As we understood it, Vygotsky was not saying that learning literally comes first, or that it leads development in a linear or temporal fashion. He was saying that as social-cultural, relational activities, learning and development are inseparable; they are a unity in which learning is connected to and leads —dialectically, not linearly—development. Learning and development co-generate each other. To us, this meant that attention must be paid to understanding the kinds of environments that create and support this co-generation, and how such environments differ from those that do not—including environments that divorce development from learning and have acquisitional learning as their goal, i.e., most schools (Holzman, 1997).

We saw such a developmental environment in Vygotsky's descriptions of how very young children become speakers of a language, where babies and their caretakers are engaged in the tool-and-result activity of creating the environment and the learning-and-development at the same time through their language play. We saw a glimpse of what the dialectical process of being/becoming looks like—how very young children are related to simultaneously as who they are (babies who babble) and who they are not/who they are becoming (speakers), and that this is how they develop as speakers/learn language. Newman and I believed this was a revolutionary discovery that, if embraced, could transform how psychologists understand the process of human development and

how they and educators relate to the learning lives not just of children, but of adults as well. In this way, *LVRS* presented Vygotsky as a developmentalist, in contrast to the nearly universal emphasis on learning (specifically, school learning) of Vygotskian research and commentary at the time.

Thinking and speaking was another area we mined for Vygotskian insight. Both Newman and I were deeply interested in language and meaning (he from studying the philosophy of language and I from studying linguistics). We found Vygotsky's challenge to the received wisdom that language expresses thought brilliant and remarkably contemporary: "Speech does not merely serve as the expression of developed thought. Thought is restructured as it transformed into speech. Thought is not expressed but completed in the word" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 251). For us, this was another instance of Vygotsky's dialectical understanding of human activity. We synthesized this understanding with that of the philosopher Wittgenstein, whom Newman had studied extensively. Vygotsky's "speaking completing thinking" was, to us, a Wittgensteinian "form of life" (Wittgenstein, 1958, pp. 11, para. 23). We expanded the concept of "completion" to other people; others could "complete" for you. Looping back to how very young children become speakers of a language with and through others, we posited that caretakers "complete" babbling babies, and that the babies creatively imitate their completers. We drew out the implications of this Vygotskian insight for how to create learning-and-development opportunities throughout the life span, including for settings that Vygotskians had not taken his ideas, such as the therapy room and the boardroom.

LVRS also drew attention to Vygotsky's understanding of the role of play in child development and expanded on the significance of play for development in adolescence

and adulthood. That Vygotsky wrote little about play didn't matter to Newman and me, for what he wrote seemed to us extraordinarily important, whether about young children's free play of fantasy and pretense, or the more structured and rule-governed playing of games that becomes frequent in later childhood. Of special significance to us was the following: "In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102). We grappled with what "a head taller" could mean. Where we landed was that it was a metaphor for the being/becoming dialectic of human development. Arriving there involved us in examining theatrical performance as having a similar dialectical quality: actors are simultaneously who they are and other than who they are. Newman and I came to understand performance (a form of "our Vygotsky's" play) as a new ontology: that human beings perform—and perform our development—was what, in our view, psychologists needed to embrace.[3] This became not only the topic of our subsequent investigations and writings but simultaneously the direction our practices and those of our colleagues took in therapeutic, educational and cultural projects (Holzman, 1997, 2009; Holzman & Newman, 2012; Newman, 2008; Newman & Holzman, 1997, 2006/1996).

I hope that this brief summary and the expansions and updates to follow might guide readers through the terminology and sometimes dense prose Newman and I created in *LVRS*. The English language is quite static, spatio-temporal and "thingified"—offering great challenges to those committed to process, movement, monism, unity, simultaneity and dialectical relationship. We took the liberty to play with the written word and create

new phraseology. If it's not always understandable, perhaps it at least draws attention to how language can limit —or expand—what we can see and how we think.

Vygotsky's Expanding Influence

Over the past two decades psychology has struggled to re-create itself in a rapidly and unpredictably changing world. It has carved out two, often competing, pathways to keep itself relevant. One pathway continues an alignment with the natural and physical sciences, evidenced by psychology's partnering with brain research, cognitive science and behavioral health, and by its adoration and promotion of quantitative, "evidence-based" methodologies. The other pathway takes psychology in a cultural direction, evidenced by collaborations and research with artists, the advent of creativity studies, and the development of new qualitative methodologies, some designed as direct challenges to psychology's insistence on objectivity. Among those taking this direction are psychologists and educators who have developed a keen interest in play, performance and group or ensemble process, and the role these human activities play in human development, learning and quality of life. Concepts and methods originating in Vygotsky and emanating from contemporary socio-cultural (and/or cultural historical) psychology have influenced both pathways.

Other developments in psychology have opened up space for Vygotskian ideas. By the 1990s, the "linguistic turn" in philosophy had come to psychology and the other social sciences. This movement made language the central focus of philosophical investigations, because language was now seen as constituting or constructing what is

taken to be real, rather than mirroring or corresponding to reality. These ideas reinvigorated many psychologists critical of mainstream psychology, and gave them a way of understanding and talking about their discomforts: through its language, discourse and narrative, psychology actually constructs the psychological objects it studies and then proclaims to be "real." The linguistic turn generated the approach we now know as social constructionism as a major epistemological critique of mainstream psychology. Knowledge, cognition, emotions—all located inside individuals according to mainstream psychology—are now seen as socially constructed, and studiable only as social practices. As for objectivity, it is no longer something to strive for because it is impossible. The claim that human beings (including researchers) make meaning (including scientific meaning), "means" that human subjectivity is ever-present and, therefore, there can be no objective science (K. J. Gergen, 1991, 1994).

Social constructionists did not come to Vygotsky immediately nor did they universally embrace him once they were introduced. Most likely they saw no reason to read him, given Vygotsky's reputation through the 1970s-90s as a child and educational psychologist. But Wittgenstein was an important player in psychology's recognition and further exploration of the linguistic turn, and Newman's and my synthesis of Vygotsky and Wittgenstein drew attention. *LVRS* introduced social constructionists to Vygotsky's critique of dualism, his dialectical methodology, his social-cultural ontology of human thought and action, and his unique concept of completion as a rejection of the view that language mirrors reality (both external and internal reality).[4]

Another area of psychology in which Vygotsky is beginning to make his mark is the study of the lives of young people and of outside of school interventions designed to

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promote youth development. As a field of inquiry and practice, youth development (sometimes called positive youth development) is a rapidly growing, interdisciplinary and global phenomenon that engages young people in productive and constructive activities through programs and organizations that provide opportunities for creativity and leadership. It can be seen as a socially organized response to both the failure of schooling to provide these opportunities and the singular focus on problems, such as teen pregnancy and drug use, that characterize prevention models of intervention and research. Vygotsky's major contribution to this field is his understanding of the socialness of learning-and-development, and the critical importance of relationships with caring adults and with peers in effective programming. For some youth development practitioners, the Vygotsky of *LVRS* has led them to see and further organize their work so as to support young people to perform ahead of themselves, as who they are and other than who they are simultaneously. Leaders in this effort are my colleagues at the All Stars Project, whose work I will discuss later (pp. XX). Others include Sabo-Flores, who is noteworthy for bringing Vygotsky's views on development and play (and Newman's and mine on performance) to an emerging new field— youth participatory evaluation (Sabo-Flores, 2007).

The "new idea" that creativity is integral to human development and learning has spread from business (where it was recognized as important to success in the marketplace) to education and psychology. As Ken Robinson succinctly put it, "Schools kill creativity" (this 2006 TED Talk, with nearly 15 million views, is the most watched Talk as of 2012, http://blog.ted.com/2012/08/21/the-20-most-watched-ted-talks-to-date/). This gave those who knew Vygotsky's writings on play and development in early

childhood, imagination, and the psychology of art an opening to promote a more

multidimensional Vygotsky. Since the beginning of the last decade, Vygotskian-

influenced discussions of creativity, development and learning have taken their place

alongside the usual cognitive development discussions, bringing to educational

psychology new topics and new paradigms that draw on the performing and fine arts.[5]

Deepening "Our Vygotsky"

Throughout the 1990s and up to the present, Newman and I and the community of

Vygotskian-inspired organizations and projects continued to grow and expand their

reach. Learning greatly from these practices, at the same time we continued to challenge

ourselves to articulate what we were doing and how we understood it—which, in turn,

greatly influenced these practices. We wrote several books and dozens of articles that

stretched out the key characteristics of "our Vygotsky" discussed above. We began to see

the direct influence of our ideas in work others were doing in the US and around the

globe. We joined the conversations in critical psychology, postmodern psychology,

educational reform, relational and discursive therapies, and applied theatre. We saw

glimpses of a performance ontology and the being/becoming dialectic in all of these, and

organized the varied voices into an international, interdisciplinary conversation we

dubbed "Performing the World" with seven conferences held 2001-2012

(http://www.performingtheworld.org).

The features of Vygotsky's work discussed earlier as unique to *LVRS* have been

put into practice and been more substantively articulated. I turn now to showing some of

what has been created "on the ground" over the past two decades, weaving in the ways that "our Vygotsky" has been utilized and, in the process, continues to learn-and-develop. Like Vygotsky, we too are searching for method. We have been fortunate to have his direction—to search for it in tool-and-result fashion—to guide us.[6]

In bringing Wittgenstein into our exploration of Vygotsky's work, Newman and I did more than (more accurately, other than) show how the ideas of these two great thinkers were alike. We brought them together. Each of them had given us so much on their own, and we wanted to see what they might do together. So we synthesized them to deepen their influence on us and, we hoped, ours and theirs on each other. We were coming in contact with social constructionist psychologists and postmodern ideas at the time, in particular the fine work of social psychologist Ken Gergen, who had come to an appreciation of performance and play at around the same time as we did. In being synthesized, Vygotsky and Wittgenstein appeared to us as pre-postmodernists. Their revolutionary science-and-philosophy spoke to us about the limitations of modernism, in both its Western science and Marxist manifestations. We believed that Marxism needed to be postmodernized and we took Vygotsky's search for method as a step in this direction. We began to understand our own practices in therapy, education, youth development and culture as the emergence of such a practical-critical activity.

Newman and I devoted much of our subsequent writing to advancing this thesis and showing it in practice in our community-building and therapeutic work. In addition to The *End of Knowing* and *Unscientific Psychology*, we addressed several journal articles and book chapters to specific audiences: for example, "All Power to the Developing" to Marxist psychologists; "Activating Postmodernism" to both CHAT and postmodernists;

"Power, Authority and Pointless Activity (The Developmental Discourse of Social Therapy)" to postmodern therapists; and *Schools for Growth* to educators, educational psychologists and learning theorists. Rather than summarizing the arguments from these academic writings, I've chosen to share a theatrical, conversational rendition of Newman's and my postmodern Marxism.

In a delightful play written by Newman for the American Psychological Association and performed at its 1999 convention, Vygotsky and Wittgenstein initially come to see a therapist because they are upset that they weren't asked if they wanted to be brought together. They get help with this and return some unspecified time later for a second session. They tell the therapist why they came: They have gotten very close since being synthesized and are delighted to like each other so much. But they are perplexed by how alike they are, given that they are so different in one way—Vygotsky is a Marxist and a revolutionary and Wittgenstein is not.

In the session, they and their therapist share understandings of what it means to be a revolutionary and of Marx/ism. In the course of the conversation, the therapist (speaking for Newman and me) says: "For me, the most critical Marxian concept is not class struggle and Marx is not, so far as I can tell, an objectivist who insists on the laws of history as governing. For me, Marx must be understood from the vantage point of his earliest writings on alienation." Vygotsky responds by asking the therapist to say more about what she means by class struggle, commenting, "Revolution without class struggle seems inconceivable to me." The therapist replies: " I do not mean to deny class struggle, Lev. Rather, I would urge, following your critical distinction, that class struggle be viewed as a 'tool <u>for</u> result' but that 'revolutionary' must be understood in terms of 'tool

and result.' Revolution is an <u>activity</u> that is always becoming. Class struggle <u>describes</u> all of human history but it is not the <u>activity</u> of all human history. I do believe that understanding Marx's work is as much a function of the historical times as understanding anything else. Marx must be <u>postmodernized</u> if he is to be understood in postmodern times" (Newman, 1999).

The therapeutic, educational and youth development projects Newman and I and our colleagues have created, as well as the trainings and partnerships we have worldwide, are designed for continuous socially organized developmental activity as a minimizer of profound and pervasive alienation. We have come to believe that de-commodifying and de-alienating human life will not come about through Revolution (modernist Marxism) but might come about through revolutionary activity (postmodern Marxism), that is, through the positive and constructive process of producing sociality and what Marx called "all-round human development" (Marx & Engels, 1973, p. 117). If there were a slogan for Newman's and my practice/theory of therapeutics, education and community organizing it would be "All Power to the Developing."

Since *LVRS* Newman and I deepened and broadened our understanding of the importance of play in human life, so much so that we have all but adopted Vygotsky's "being a head taller in play" as our mantra. It guides our practitioner colleagues in their work to reinitiate development by designing activities and projects that give people of all ages opportunities to play and perform their lives on stage and off stage.

Social Therapy as an Emotional ZPD

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Psychotherapy might seem an odd setting for play, given that people come to therapy for relief from their emotional pain. But play, as we know from Vygotsky, is not the same as fun. Play is developmental because and when it is an imaginative exploring of new territory or of old territory in a new way. Psychotherapy, when it's effective, is such an exploration.

Social therapy, originally developed by Newman in the 1970s, is a group therapy approach that focuses on emotional development and group creativity. It was already a thriving practice and exciting laboratory for Newman's and my Vygotsky in the 1990's, but we barely mentioned it in *LVRS*. In the years since then, social therapy had taken its place among the postmodern, collaborative and discursive therapies and psychologies. It has sustained and expanded as a practice, currently in social therapy centers in five US cities. In addition, many hundreds of mental health professionals who have received training in social therapy have private practices or work in clinics, hospitals, schools and community organizations. In the past ten years, social therapy has begun to be practiced in other countries, including Brazil, Mexico, India and South Africa.

Social therapists work with the capacity that groups of people have to transform how they feel and relate to themselves and others, an application of the Vygotskian "principle" that (in simple language) "You can't develop on your own." Groups at the centers for social therapy in the US are typically comprised of 10-25 people, a mix of women and men of varying "presenting problems," ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, class backgrounds and economic status, and professions. The heterogeneity of the groups is deliberate, in order to challenge people's notion of a fixed identity (based, for example, on gender, ethnicity, diagnostic label, or "That's the kind of person I am"). Additionally,

the varieties of diversity among its members give the group rich material to create emotional growth. To do this, they are given the task to create their group as an environment in which they can get help, because it is in this process that they are helped (creating the tool and the result simultaneously).

This brings us to what Vygotsky is best known for—the zone of proximal development (zpd). The most familiar description of the zpd is the following: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and later, on the individual level; first *between* people *(interpsychological)*, and then *inside* the child *(intrapsychological).*"(Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). But there are other descriptions of the zpd in Vygotsky's writings, some of which lead away from the "expert-novice" interpretation that dominates (Holzman, 2010). Of special relevance to social therapy is when Vygotsky notes the social collectivity of the zpd. In the essay, "The Collective as a Factor in the Development of the Abnormal Child," he characterized the social level of development as "a function of collective behavior, as a form of cooperation or cooperative activity" (1993, p. 202). Building on this, we take the zpd to be a collective activity whereby the creating of the "zone" simultaneously produces the learning-and-development of the collective. Seen through this lens, people in social therapy groups are working together and creating a *zone of emotional development* that *is* their new emotionality (their learning-and-development) (Newman & Holzman, 2004).

People come to social therapy, as they do to any therapy or any group setting, individuated. They say things like, "I had this awful fight with my mother last night. I was furious…. and I'm really upset right now;" "I feel really crazy, like I'm not here, and it scares me." They look to the therapist for some advice, solution, interpretation or

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explanation. They want to feel better and have more control over their lives. This individuated way of relating to emotionality gets challenged through the work/play/struggle to create a new socialized helping environment. The privatized and commodified way of speaking about emotions is equally challenged through the work/play/struggle to create new ways of speaking. The group members play with emotion talk and (with varying success on any given day) perform as speakers of a new, less alienated language of sociality of their own making.

The emotional zpd is a kind of re-learning of how to learn developmentally, meaning collectively and non-cognitively overdetermined. Vygotsky showed that young children learn collectively through their relationships with others at varying levels of skill, knowledge, expertise, ability and personality. They learn by doing with others what they do not know how to do because the group (usually the family) supports such active, creative risk taking and plays and performs with them. Most people have not done this since they were very young and have to relearn how to do it in ways appropriate to being adults. Social therapy is one such way, sharing important similarities with the active, ensemble, performatory, noncognitive and nondidactic zpd of early childhood.

Performance and Development

Unlike psychotherapy, the theatrical stage is a setting people do think of as playful; theatre, dance and music are all about imaginative exploration. Youth development, the other area of our work greatly enriched by "our Vygotsky," began with these kinds of activities through the All Stars Project (http://www.allstars.org). Ten years old at the time

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we wrote *LVRS*, the All Stars has become a leading innovative learning-and-development organization. Its varied outside-of-school programs are based in Newman's and my performance ontology, that is, they relate to people as performers of their learning-and-development through supporting them to play/perform new roles with others.

The All Stars was founded thirty years ago by Newman and our colleague, the developmental psychologist, grassroots educator and political activist Lenora Fulani. Its first initiative was a network of very modest talent shows in New York City's poorest neighborhoods, designed to give kids who had nothing to do an alternative to the drugs, gangs and violence pervading their communities. The All Stars' invited everyone to build the network—kids by performing on stage, producing the shows and recruiting other kids to perform and produce; their families by coming out and supporting them; professional performing arts adults to work alongside the kids and teach them their skills; other adults by talking to strangers on the streets and asking them for their financial support. The network grew, and the people of all ages and circumstances who built it grew as well. It was a developmental activity, Newman and I and leaders of the program believed, because it gave everyone the chance to create new performances of themselves, both as individuals and as an ensemble—including new performances as learners. In this inclusive and very diverse performatory environment, learning was—unlike in schools—united with development as it is, Vygotsky told us, in the zpd of early childhood.

Over the years the All Stars expanded, and today reaches upward of 10,000 young people a year in Chicago, Newark, New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area. At a time when afterschool programs are being pressured to become more and more school-like and remedial, the All Stars took the lead in doing what afterschool can do so well—

giving youth (and adults who work with them) more opportunities to perform outside and beyond the expected, to break with their confining roles and identities and do what they do not yet know how to do—not just on stage, but as builders of the programs themselves. Young people need opportunities to play with identity so as to break with the belief that they are "done becoming who they are." This is particularly the case for poor, Black, Latino and immigrant youth, many of whose lives are made narrow by racism, classism, segregation and poverty. There are hundreds of ordinary ways of relating in the world that most children and adolescents who come from very poor communities are not exposed to; they feel uncomfortable outside their neighborhoods because they don't know the social conventions of how to participate. They feel unwelcome and they are, because those who are strangers to them are equally uncomfortable.

To the Talent Show Network, the All Stars added the Development School for Youth, a year-long training and enrichment program in partnership with corporate executives to provide business and cultural experiences, leadership training and paid internships to young people; and Youth Onstage! a performance school and youth theatre providing young people with the tools of the theatre, including improvisation and ensemble building, to make use of in their daily lives. These additions to All Stars' programming are a response to the learning-and-development crisis of poor and minority urban youth and their communities. They encourage and allow young people to become more worldly and culturally cosmopolitan, and loosen the fixed identity that they and others have been socialized to. Through learning the worlds of work and theatre through performing as members of these institutions' ensembles, they can repeatedly experience their "becoming."

In addition, for people of all ages the All Stars has UX, a university-style free school of continuing development, and the Castillo Theatre, an experimental community-based political theatre. The Performing the World conferences, mentioned earlier, are hosted bi-annually by the All Stars Project and the East Side Institute, the non-profit educational, research and training center Newman and I established in the mid1980s (www.eastsideinstitute.org).

In Newman's and my expanded and collectivized understanding of the zpd, two other features of the All Stars Project contribute to its zpd quality. One is the funding model, which allows the organization to remain independent and its young people and donors to build new kinds of relationships. The funding comes entirely from the private sector—from thousands of working class, middle class and affluent individuals reached personally on street corners or by phone, to many others in the business community and forward looking foundations. Additionally, the All Stars functions with a volunteer base of hundreds of adults. Some are financial donors who want to do more and have regular contact with the young people; others are corporate executives and performing artists who teach and train in the programs; and others are a mix of city dwellers who join the Talented Volunteer program as a way to be involved. Seen through a Vygotskian lens, the participation of so many adults on a voluntary basis and as financial donors contributes to the development of the young people as much as the substance of the programs themselves. These adults are an element of the overall socio-cultural ecology or "activity system"—a kind of intergenerational participation in the social formation of development. They immeasurably increase the possibilities for creating many and varied zpds, overlapping and interacting throughout the system.

In bringing development to the fore, the All Stars has begun to impact on how the experts, policy makers and debaters understand the educational challenges in the US and other countries, especially for those from poor families, children of color and immigrant children. Rather than speaking of the "achievement gap," All Stars' leaders believe that learning failure has to do with the lack of development in schools and communities, and that programs such as theirs that focus on developing young people through performance-based activities give those who have had limited opportunities a chance to perform/develop in new ways, including as good learners (Fulani & Kurlander, 2009; Gildin, in press; Holzman, 2009; Newman & Fulani, 2011).

Newman and I use the term social therapeutics for our overall methodology, including its applications to education and youth and community development, and social therapy for the group psychotherapy approach. We have introduced both to many thousands around the world through the teaching and training activities (in person and online) of the East Side Institute. Grass roots educators and community organizers; practicing psychologists, counselors and social workers; and psychology, education and drama professors working to empower and develop the poor in their countries have learned of Vygotsky outside of a college classroom or university seminar. When I think of all the people we have connected to Vygotsky's ideas, I'm reminded of his important writings on the way spontaneous and scientific concepts inform and influence each other in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1997). I think of Peter Nsubuga, a Ugandan who started a village school outside Kampala knowing only that the children weren't developing, and how he, his program and his community have grown into Vygotskians. I think of Ishita Sanyal and Prativa Sengupta, two Indian psychologists working in

different ways with the mentally ill, who wanted at first to only restore to them some dignity and meaningful activity, but who came to experience the far greater potential of relating "a head taller." I think of Miguel Cortes and Jorge Burciaga in Cuidad Juárez Mexico, whose initially Freirian approach to youth work in this most violent of cities has advanced so much, by virtue of being synthesized with Vygotsky's.

Vygotsky said, "A revolution solves only those tasks raised by history: this proposition holds true equally for revolution in general and for aspects of social and cultural life" (Vygotsky, quoted in frontpiece,Levitin, 1982). For him, it was the first successful communist revolution that raised the tasks, and he devoted himself to revolutionizing the psychology of his day to solve them. His failed effort (inseparable from communism's failure) notwithstanding, his methodological breakthroughs are more relevant than ever to the efforts of more and more people to revolutionize the psychology of our day in order to solve the tasks history is raising for us.

In *LVRS* Newman and I repeatedly asked, "What are revolutionary scientists to do?" By the end of the book, we had deconstructed and reconstructed "our Vygotsky" (who he was/was becoming in our community's activity) sufficiently to answer. In the last two pages, to which we gave the heading, "Not an Ending," we summarized how much we discovered about Vygotsky's life-as-lived and ours. We wrote that Vygotsky offers "something rare in this post-modern epoch—possibility." His affirmation of the philosophical and political power of the ontological socialness of human beings and radically monistic historical methodology, we continued, offers the possibility of "making history at a time when history seems not makeable, of reorganizing the determining and destructive totality of the human life space to produce…development

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that produces development, community that produces community…" (p. 199). Twenty

years later, two things seem clear to me: the need for development that produces

development and community that produces community is far greater than it was because

the world has become even more destructive; and we are not alone in thinking so or doing

something about it.

Once again, this is not an ending.

Lois Holzman
New York City
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Notes

[1] Despite the increasing breadth of familiarity with Vygotsky in the last two decades, most books and research articles remain focused on educational theory and the in-school learning of children. Among the books written for educators, teacher educators and/or educational psychologists are: Berk and Winsler's' *Scaffolding Children's Learning: Vygotsky and Early Childhood Education* (1995); Moll's *Vygotsky and Education* (1992); Kozulin's *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context* (2003); Robbins' Vygotsky's Psychology-Philosophy: A Metaphor for Language Theory and Learning (2001) and *Vygotsky's and A.A. Leontiev's Semiotics and Psycholinguistics:Applications for Education, Second Language Acquisition and Theories of Language* (2003); Langford's *Vygotsky's Developmental and Educational Psychology* (2005); Daniels' *Vygotsky and Pedagogy* (2001). The collections of essays in Daniels, Cole and Wertsch's *The Cambridge Companion to Vygotsky* (2007) and Daniels' *Introduction to Vygotsky*

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(2005), while somewhat broader, are still education-oriented. Even the recent collection by Connery, John-Steiner and Marjanovic-Shane, *Vygotsky and Creativity* (2010), which is one of the few texts that deals with practices inspired by Vygotsky writings on play, the arts and culture, has an educational focus. Going beyond education is Daniels' *Vygotsky and Research* (2008), which relates to the social sciences. My own *Vygotsky at Work and Play* (2008) describes the practices influenced by the ideas presented in *LVRS* in psychotherapy, schools, outside of school youth development programs, and the workplace.

[2] Decades earlier, Scriber and Cole made a similar point, noting that Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach "represents an attempt to extend to the domain of psychology Marx's thesis that man has no fixed human nature but continually makes himself and his consciousness through productive activity" (Cole & Scribner, 1974, p. 31). This was not the Vygotsky that came to be known in educational circles, however.

[3] While Vygotsky himself was intensely interested in theatre and his work *The Psychology of Art* (1971) is of great interest, he did not (as far as we can tell from his published writings) make a connections between play and plays on the stage/performance.

[4] In addition to Gergen's voluminous writings on social constructionism (most recent are (K. J. Gergen, 2009; M. M. Gergen & Gergen, 2012), Shotter has been a leading theoretical voice in exploring the relational basis of human subjectivity and the "otherness" in human relations in general and, more recently, in psychotherapy, bringing

into his work Wittgenstein, Vygotsky, Voloshinov and Bakhtin (Shotter, 1997, 2003, 2008; Shotter & Billig, 1998). Lock and Strong are also prolific writers in this regard. Notably, their *Social Constructionism: Sources and Stirrings in Theory and Practice* (2010) includes a full chapter on Vygotsky. In the years since McNamee and Gergen published the collection of essays, *Therapy as Social Construction* (1992), relational, meaning-making and non-objective counseling and therapy practices have also come to be known as collaborative (Anderson, 1997; Anderson & Gehart, 2007), discursive (Pare & Larner, 2004; Strong & Lock, 2012; Strong & Pare, 2004), and narrative (McLeod, 1997; Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997; Rosen & Kuehlwein, 1996; White, 2007; White & Epston, 1990).

[5] Vygotskian John-Steiner has been in the forefront in her own research and as co-editor of two volumes [*Creativity and Development* (2003) and *Vygotsky and Creativity: A Cultural-Historical Approach to Play, Meaning Making and the Arts* (2010)]. Sawyer, a former jazz musician, has been writing about creativity and improvisation for diverse audiences for years (R. K. Sawyer, 2003, 2007, 2012). Among the newer voices are some of Newman's and my former students who emphasize theatrical performance and improvisation as forms of play with great potential in bringing creativity back to life in schools—Martinez on teaching and learning technology (2011); Lobman and Lundquist on improv exercises for classrooms (2007); and Lobman, O'Neill's and their (Thorne, 2005)contributors on play and performance across settings (2011). Additionally, scholars are collaborating across institution and nation state in ongoing research and interventions projects that bring creativity and play to teachers, students and vulnerable populations

(for example, Playworld Projects in the US, Finland, Japan and Sweden,

http://lchc.ucsd.edu/Projects/playworlds.html; Multiple Worlds and other educational

projects across Brazil, http://digitmed.wordpress.com/universities/pucsp/fernanda-

liberali/; and the NGO Zdravo da Ste in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovia,

http://zdravodaste.org.rs and http://zdravodaste.org.rs/en/).

[6] While our conception/practice of tool-and-result methodology has by no means become

a standard part of discussions of Vygotsky in educational or human development texts, it

has made its mark among some theoreticians and researchers developing alternative

modes of teaching (for example, Askew, 2007; Iddings & McCafferty, 2005; Kinginger,

2002; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; McCafferty, 2002; Thorne, 2005) and others developing

theory at the nexus of politics and epistemology (for example, Collins, 1999; Duvall,

2007; Hinchliffe, 2000; Lisle, 2010; Ramsey, 2007; Shah-Shuja, 2008; Travers, 2002;

Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011).