

Freedom as a Pursuit in Human Development: P.Y. Galperin on the Historical Psychology of L. S. Vygotsky

Introduction

In this article, we present and discuss Piotr Galperin's speech, *The System of Historical Psychology of L. S. Vygotsky: Analytical Considerations* (1935). This document was stored in the archives for many years. In 2009, it was published for the first time in the Russian language in the *Journal of Cultural-Historical Psychology* (Stepanova, 2009). In a period when Vygotsky's legacy was neglected, Galperin discussed the significance of his theory and outlined perspectives on its further development. At the risk of being superficial in the attempt to convey Galperin's meaning, this article presents the first English translation of Galperin's speech, followed by a discussion of the continuity of the contributions of these scholars and of Galperin's profound understanding of Vygotsky's theory. However, to provide a background of the discussion that follows, we present the historical context of Soviet cultural-historical psychology in the 1930s.

Historical Context

At the beginning of the 1930s, Vygotsky made a thorough revision of his theory of sign mediation, suggesting a new direction for his research, which he defined as the theory of a dynamic system of significance (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018) and the psychology of experience (*perezhivanie*) (Clarà, 2016; Roth & Jornet, 2016). Research groups in Moscow, Leningrad and Kharkov kept in contact to exchange ideas and identify directions in further research. Until May 1934, Vygotsky often commuted between Leningrad, Kharkov and Moscow, and he remained the main connecting link between these research groups (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991; Vygodskaya & Lifanova, 1996; Zinchenko, 2013). He not only gave lectures and participated in scientific conferences and seminars, but also studied at the Medical Faculty of the Kharkov Psychoneurological Academy and

organised “internal conferences” for his closest colleagues. At these conferences, new scientific ideas were discussed. However, the transcripts were not publicly available. Only recently have researchers accessed them in private family archives.

Piotr Galperin joined Leontiev and Luria’s group when the latter moved to Kharkov in 1932, in an attempt to escape the difficult political atmosphere in Moscow. At that time, Kharkov was the capital of Ukraine, a recognised scientific centre. The newly founded All-Ukrainian Psychoneurological Academy (UPNA) seemed to be a safe harbour for researchers to continue their work (Yasnitsky & Ferrari, 2008). Galperin obtained a position at UPNA, in 1928, and upon the arrival of the Moscow group, he was actively engaged in research and teaching (Stepanova, 2017). In an interview with Haenen (1996), Galperin revealed that he took an active part in organising the move of Leontiev, Luria and Vygotsky to Kharkov, which marked a shift in his career from being a physician to becoming a psychologist (Haenen, 1996). At UPNA, Galperin was Head of the Department of General Psychological Theory, a cross-sectional unit that included scholars from different fields (Yasnitsky & Ferrari, 2008). The main research direction of the department was to examine the development of human thinking and speech through engagement in practical activities and their effects on other psychological functions as well as the deterioration of these psychological functions caused by the dysfunction of the human brain. In one report about the contribution of his department, Galperin offered an impressive list of the currently pursued research directions that were related to numerous areas in psychology (Yasnitsky & Ferrari, 2008).

The outburst of scientific activity by the Kharkov Group occurred during a short period of favourable relationships between the Soviet government and the science of psychology (Bogdanchikov, 2008). During this period, Vygotsky’s most influential works were published, such as *Thinking and Speech* (1934), *The Dynamics of the Schoolchild’s Mental Development in Relation to Teaching and Learning* (1935), and *Foundations of Pedology* (1934). His publications included collections of the works of his colleagues on child development, such as *Mentally Retarded Child* (Vygotsky & Danyushevskiy, 1935), *Pedology* (Blonsky, 1934), *The Foundations of Psychology* (Rubinshteyn, 1935), the biodynamic works of N. A. Bernshteyn, (1935), and a collection of works by the Kharkov Group (Galperin, 1934). However, the odious decree on 4 July 1936 against pedology (Yasnitsky & Ferrari, 2008) thwarted all future plans. It not only banned some areas of pedology and psychotechnique, but also jeopardised the existence of soviet psychology as a science. The name Vygotsky was removed from scientific research for decades, and his followers were forced to work under the pressure of harsh censorship (Caroli, 2014). The research directions of the consciousness, freedom of will, affect, and personality, which are central in the cultural-historical approach, were deemed ideologically inconvenient, and all scientific discussion and research connected with these themes were either completely banned or modified to the extent that their origins could not be recognised.

Galperin presented his speech a year and a half before the decree against pedology was announced at an internal conference. Mourners gathered on 6 January 1935, in Moscow, in the House of Science, which was dedicated to Vygotsky, who

died at the age of 37 years six months prior to this event (Luria, 2003). In the Luria archive, a so-called “blue notebook” was discovered, which contained a list of conferences held in the period from 1930–1935, including the theses presented at some conferences. In this notebook, Galperin’s speech was listed under the title *On Our Psychological System*, which might indicate that Galperin considered himself a proponent of Vygotsky’s system. The central ideas of Vygotsky’s theory were partially reconstructed (Zavershneva, 2014) and fragmentally reflected in the two final chapters of *Thinking and Speech*, in some late publications of Vygotsky, and in the theses presented at an internal conference on 5 December 1932, which appeared to be a turning point in the development of his theory. The theses presented at this conference were published in Leontiev and Zaporozhet’s *The Problem of Consciousness* (Vygotsky, 1997, pp. 129–138), in a publication by Luria (2014), and finally in a publication by Vygotsky (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018, pp. 274–278). Based on the content of the speech presented in this article, we suggest that Galperin was familiar with the earlier version of Vygotsky’s theory. Only after the recent discovery of valuable archive materials can we bring together the ideas of Vygotsky and Galperin to retrospectively reconstruct a dialogue between these outstanding scholars. However, first, we present Galperin’s speech he made on 6 January 1935.

L. S. Vygotsky’s System of Historical Psychology: Analytical Considerations (Theses)

4 January 1935, Moscow

I. L. S. Vygotsky’s System of Historical Psychology

Understanding the unique process of human development and the structure of human consciousness is the core of Vygotsky’s historical psychology. In fact, every word in this statement requires emphasis and attention. However, I would like to outline the three central aspects of the system.

First is the idea of the development of human consciousness. This idea is central to conducting psychological investigations, and it is of primary importance in understanding the genesis, structure, and purposes of human psychological functions.

Second is the idea that there are two types of psychological development in humans and animals. Correspondingly, we should distinguish two types of psychological processes: lower- natural and higher-cultural and, therefore, two types of consciousness: instinctive and intelligent.

Third is the characteristic feature of human consciousness is its systemic and meaningful organisation.

To examine Vygotsky's historical system, we may proceed from the last item by identifying the systemic organisation of human consciousness, followed by examining its meaningful organisation and, finally, by considering the development of human consciousness by transferring from the outline to a comprehensive understanding of human consciousness.

A. The Systemic Organisation of Human Consciousness

Understanding the systemic organisation of human consciousness requires two main considerations. The first consideration is that *human consciousness undergoes a process of development*.³ How does this process happen? Vygotsky identified three ways in which the process of the development of human consciousness may happen: (i) metamorphoses, (ii) consistency (cyclic), and (iii) inconsistency. However, metamorphoses and consistent (cyclic) development reflect the general process in humans. Therefore, the process of inconsistent development is of particular importance in understanding the development of a child's consciousness.

Inconsistency in the development of a child's consciousness is characterised by the presence of one *dominating* psychological function in the child's consciousness. Other psychological functions are manifest through this dominating function. Inconsistency in the development of a child's consciousness is reflected in the different psychological functions that are predominant at different periods in his or her development. The sequential order of these functions is the *following*: perception, memory, and thinking. The predominance of different psychological functions manifests the first differentiation and the first independent activity in a child's consciousness, which may affect the development and the organisation of human consciousness.

However, relationships among the functions occur in the development of several psychological functions. The appearance of one dominating function in the hierarchy of existing psychological functions reorganises the existing psychological functions. It should be pointed out that the changes in the relationships among the existing psychological functions and the establishment of one dominant function reflect the process of reorganising human consciousness. In other words, the establishment of a dominant psychological function causes the *reorganising and restructuring* of the existing psychological functions, establishing *their dependency* on the new dominant function. This reflects the second principle of the differentiation and reorganisation of human psychological functions and indicates an approach to developing the systemic and hierarchical organisation of human consciousness.

The second consideration is that *human consciousness as a hierarchical organisation of psychological functions can be developed only in humans and is inherently connected with the human use of cultural means*. These cultural means are operations mediated by signs. Therefore, to trace and understand the process of the development of the systemic structure of human consciousness, we must

³The original emphasis in italics throughout the speech is maintained here.

develop our understanding of the (i) origin, (ii) development, and (iii) functional meanings of signs.

Regarding the origin of signs, they first appear in the process of communication among people; the established norms of communication eventually “grow inside” and become psychological functions of a person, which is described and reflected in the processes of mediation, sociogenesis, and the internalisation of higher psychological functions.

The development of mediated actions in *children* happens through the following phases: the natural phase, the naïve-psychological phase, the external phase, and the internal mediation phase. Vygotsky presents this process in his “law of the parallelogram”, which includes the four phases in the development of mediated psychological functions in children. These four phases are important because they reflect the considerably late development of mediated psychological functions in older children.

The functional meaning of sign mediation presupposes the existence and the interplay of simple psychological functions. The sign:

- establishes new and changes old connections and relationships among the existing psychological functions.
- becomes a structural and functional centre of newly developed psychological functions.
- establishes new and identifies higher and lower psychological functions.

Thus, a sign becomes a tool for creating the structural and systemic organisation of human consciousness. This understanding allows us *to conclude* that higher psychological functions are nothing else but internal operations that are mediated by forms of communication. The development of higher psychological functions occurs in the process of mediated social communication during the external activities of humans.

The sequential appearance of the predominant psychological functions—perception, memory, and thinking—reflects not only different types of activities that a child can engage in but also the gradual transformation from actual external physical interactions with material artefacts to internal mental activities. This transformation is characterised by distancing from observable situations, and it requires qualitative changes in the existing psychological functions. Therefore, the development of new psychological functions and the sequential appearance of one predominant function occurs through social interactions.

In summary, human consciousness is a hierarchical system of psychological functions. Higher psychological functions as activities of human consciousness comprise a historic phenomenon that can be developed specifically in humans.

B. The Meaningful Organisation of Human Consciousness

So far, we have presented a brief explanation of Vygotsky’s system. However, we cannot understand the internal structure of the system without examining its true content. To do so, we must develop our understanding of the reasons that human consciousness develops in the ways described in the previous subsection.

In order to reveal the internal mechanisms of the development of higher psychological functions, we must turn our attention to (i) the tools that are used in the process of the development of human psychological functions and (ii) the internal structure of the mediated action that employs these tools.

The internal structure of the mediated action is determined by two aspects: a task to solve and the tools available to solve it. Previously, we focused our attention on the selection and use of appropriate tools that mediate the action. We believed that the process of the mediation of the action was determined by the selected tools. However, at present, we need to undertake a more thorough analysis of a mediated action as such.

What is a task? This is a problem that should be solved and if something must be solved, therefore, there should be a reason to do so. This means that a task encapsulates a motive as a driving force to solve this task. Therefore, there is a *task and a motive*; however, is there a relationship between them?

A *motive* is usually in the background, hidden inside us, and the task is at the forefront and needs to be solved. A motive is subjective and internal, and the task is something that confronts us and is therefore external and objective. The task is objective simply because it is located in its specific circumstances. The motive is an expression of a need, and the task is something that may satisfy this need. Hence, a task can be seen as the objective expression of a motive. However, a motive can be expressed in several ways. For example, a motive is a child's willingness to play, and the task is the game that the child wants to play.

On the one hand, the motive and the task are interconnected; on the other hand, they are independent of each other, and quite often they oppose each other.

A *mean* is a sign with the help of which a person can "transmit a message" to another person or a group of people. In doing so, first, a sign has the potential to reflect reality; second, it is a unit of reality. The activity, in turn, can have a double role: (i) as an activity of interaction and communication and (ii) as a part of a broader activity that has the unique function of transferring the meaning of the sign.

In other words, a sign has a double meaning: (i) its original meaning and (ii) the acquired meaning, which depends on the reality in which it is used. The original meaning of the sign can be understood as a generalisation of the reality in the process of communication; therefore, it is a set of internal operations aimed at generalising a reality. The second meaning of the sign is acquired in the process of communication during human social and practical activity.

The relationship between the sign and its meaning can be identified as a complex relationship between the speech (in its individual psychological meaning of ideal form) and the real objective meaning that is being transferred. Similarly, the relationship between the task and the motive and the relationship between the sign and its meaning can vary, so in the process of mastering the ideal form, several transition (ideal) forms may appear.

What we have here is an unstable relationship between the motive and the task and the changing relationships between the sign and its meaning. Finally, the relationship between the task and the mediated action that is aimed at solving the task can also change: the same task can be solved by using different approaches and by applying different mediational tools. Therefore, the characteristics of the signs

used in the activity determine the characteristics of the mediated action in which they are employed.

Therefore, we have four aspects: sign, meaning, task, and motive. These aspects are relatively freely joined links in one chain. However, this freedom remains when these aspects are presented outside the context of a practical activity. When they are employed in the activity, the situation radically changes, and these aspects appear to be integrated into the meaningful activity that is aimed to solve a particular task by the use of consciously selected mediational tools.

A meaningful activity using mediational tools consists of two sides: internal (with the motive and the meaning) and external (with the task and the tools). Moreover, this process happens in time and through several phases. It is important that each sequential phase encapsulates the previous phases in the process.

The unity of the motive, task, signs, and tools constitutes the meaningful activity, *and the enacted unity of these four aspects comprise sense*. Separating one aspect from another may cause the activity to lose its sense. For example, when for various reasons, the child is not able to engage in the activity, the task loses its appeal, and the motive loses its driving force. Therefore, the presence of all four aspects is required for the activity to become meaningful and acquire sense.

To conclude, higher psychological functions are nothing else but the mediated and meaningful actions of a person. The ability of a person to engage in meaningful actions reflects the advanced organisation of his or her inner world and attitude to the external world.

Human consciousness is not an advanced combination of mechanical⁴ functions, but a meaningful activity. The systemic organisation of human consciousness has implications for a person's ability to engage in a meaningful activity, and the predominant psychological function reflects the meaningful activity in which the person is able to engage.

Based on these premises, a person's attitude toward the external world appears to us in a new light. The external world, represented in the motive, sign, task, and tools, becomes an integral part of the person's internal world.

Therefore, a mediated action reflects the degree of awareness of the surrounding world and oneself in this world.

Human consciousness differs from animal consciousness not in its individual elements and not in its composition but in its organisation, which presents itself in relation to the external world and to reality.

C. The Development of Human Consciousness

Human consciousness, as a system of meaningful activities, is developed through engagement in meaningful actions. The meaningfulness of an action is expressed in the nature of the task this action is employed to solve, and the tools used in this action. The development of meaningfulness happens by altering the tasks and the tools. However, when we alter the task, we alter the motive and the mediational tools, which affects the meaning of the action.

⁴That is, the psychological meaning of mechanical.

Therefore, the central aspect of the development of meaningfulness of the action are the changes in the motive and the sign.

A motive can be affected by biological factors. However, when the biological aspect is insignificant, a motive can be affected by the meaning of the sign, which reflects the essence of human development. Therefore, meaningful actions are developed through the development of meanings. In doing so, humans develop their understanding of the surrounding world.

The development of meanings in children happens through *the interaction of the ideal form of speech⁵ with its actual psychological content*. A child interacts with the environment through the accumulation of the meanings possessed by him or her, which *is crucial for the mechanisms and the speed of the child's development*. The development of meanings is crucially important for the child's development. The ideal form of understanding reality should be achieved in the process of this development. Therefore, *the meaning of a sign is simultaneously a generalised reality and a set of internal operations that constitute the meaningful activity*. This approach reflects a pathway of making sense of the surrounding reality and how well the person can master the activities in which he or she is engaged.

The development of meanings is nothing else but the process of the development of meaningful activities. This is the pathway of the development of freedom of human consciousness.

II. Critical Reflections

In outlining my critical reflections, I would like to pursue the following approach. I will distance myself from the system developed by Vygotsky and present it as it might be presented by a very clever and strong opponent.⁶ This approach is important in understanding the weaknesses of Vygotsky's system and its potentially unfortunate effects.

What is the central idea of Vygotsky's system? It is the study of a mediated action that creates the foundation of the entire system and separates lower and higher psychological functions. The connection with real life through social communication is revealed in the genesis of a mediated action. Understanding the functional meaning of a mediated action presents the pathway to studying the systemic organisation of human consciousness. Finally, by examining the organisation of a mediated action, we develop our understanding of the meaningful organisation of human consciousness.

What is the role of a mediated action in Vygotsky's system? First, this role can be examined externally when a mediated action starts to play a significant role in the psychological development of a child. At this point, the following duality might be encountered. On one hand, communication is a source of operations with signs

⁵Ideal form of speech in the meaning of inner speech with the self.

⁶Enemy in the original.

and a way to mediate psychological processes. On the other hand, communication is not a psychological process; it is a social phenomenon that may not always be mediated. Therefore, communication cannot be considered a process of mediation of psychological operations. This statement is central in Vygotsky's system.

In the study of the four phases in the development of mediation presented in the law of the parallelogram, true psychological mediation happens in older children. Therefore, the major part of the process of the development of a child does not involve mediated actions, such as the functions of perception, memory, and thinking in the process of maturation. Thus, these functions are developed naturally and not socio-historically. In doing so, the development of higher and lower psychological functions and the distinction between animal and human consciousness lose historical-evolutionary aspects. However, without considering the historical circumstances that explain origin and existence, the distinction between human and animal consciousness might be considered a supernatural and even idealistic phenomenon.

Furthermore, the development of psychological mediation is connected with the intellectual development of a child: first, the psychological functions develop in the process of maturation, and then they become mediated based on the mature intellect. The development of humans is therefore understood as the result of the convergence of two factors: the initial biological factor and subsequently the social factor, which builds on the biological factor and is presented itself in the ideal form. This approach coincides with the biosocial concept of the French sociological school; hence, Vygotsky's system might lose its novelty. Although this approach can be traced in Vygotsky's theory, we do not necessarily have to follow this approach.

To overcome this approach, we must do the following:

- (i) Consider that mediation happens in the process of human communication, including the first scream of a child. We have to reemphasise the significance of this phenomenon, which until now has remained underestimated and under-researched. In other words, we have to examine the significance of the role of human speech from the moment of its appearance in the development of human consciousness.
- (ii) Re-evaluate the significance of the development of mediation in children and the law of the parallelogram. We have to limit the significance of this law, and in doing so, examine the role of mediated psychological processes *in personal needs* and the significance of individual speech as an important example of mediation.

Next, we have to consider the structure of the mediated action. Communication is a non-psychological social reservoir of mediated operations with signs, from which the latter are derived as external tools to transfer internal meanings.

Vygotsky's system places particular emphasis on the meanings of signs. The meanings may change in the process of a child's development, whereas the signs remain unchanged. However, the link between the sign and its meaning becomes psychologically significant when this link connects the sign with its meaning, thus

making the sign available for use. The link between the sign and its meaning develops over time in a historical process. From the psychological perspective, this link is purely external (as a conditional reflex) and unstructured; therefore, it is constant. Although the meaning of a sign can change, the link between the sign and its meanings is constant and external. Based on these premises, we conclude the following:

1. A meaning is of primary importance, and a sign only symbolises this meaning. Therefore, signs do not take us beyond our consciousness. Mediated actions *do not overcome the subjectivity* of the old psychology; however, they do overcome behaviourism only to return to subjectivity. As a form of meaningful activity, a mediated action is an activity inside human consciousness. Therefore, although a mediated action can be considered a psychological process, it is a purely theoretical activity.

A meaning is a generalised reflection of reality. However, the process of generalisation as a reflection of reality occurs in the process of communication with people. Therefore, human consciousness is shaped not by the surrounding reality but by societal consciousness—the consciousness of other humans. In Vygotsky’s system, it is postulated that education is a driving force in human development. Therefore, societal consciousness influences individual consciousness, and individual consciousness influences societal consciousness. This reciprocal influence is the circle of French materialism: the society influences the individual, and the individual influences the society.

2. The sign as an external object is originally disconnected from its meaning. As an external object, the sign can mediate internal psychological operations and reconstruct them into higher psychological functions. However, as external meaning, the sign does not differ from any other external meaning or tool that does not possess the characteristics of a sign. This naturalistic approach to understanding the mechanisms of the development of higher psychological functions does not provide an explanation of the origin and structure of such functions. Therefore, it is impossible to explain the role of signs in the development of higher psychological functions. At the core of this naturalistic approach is a simplified and erroneous understanding of the structure of higher psychological functions as developed by reorganising and establishing new relationships between the lower psychological functions. This explanation is abstract because it does not account for the characteristic features of the higher psychological functions or the relationships between the higher and the lower psychological (i.e. physiological) functions. The relationship between higher and lower psychological functions is not equivalent to the relationship between psychological and physiological functions. Therefore, it might be concluded that the constant, external, unstructured, and non-psychological relationship between the sign and its meaning, as an essential link in a mediated action, positions Vygotsky’s system as being similar to the approach of the French school of sociology. Hence, the system remains unfinished on the “top” and at the “bottom”.

The system remains unfinished on top because it presents human consciousness as a hierarchical structure of meaningful activities. However, as the driving force of a meaningful activity, the motive remains disconnected in Vygotsky's system. Moreover, the system is unfinished at the bottom because the sign with its double function of (i) communicating and (ii) transferring its meaning is presented as an independent, autonomous, and external derivative. However, the sign itself cannot explain its functions or origin. Each function presupposes the existence of "something external"; the sign develops as a part of a reality and the sign and its meaning are equally important and interconnected parts of this reality.

Therefore, Vygotsky's system does not include any real actors that are driven by motives and that act in the surrounding reality. In other words, no *personalities with their relationships* act in real space and time. Does this mean that we have to join French sociology? The answer is "absolutely not" because our system is well-developed and viable. *None* of the statements about this system *should be rejected; however, they should be understood differently* and in a broader context.

However, we should not underestimate possible dangers. For example, the significance of the reality that is so well-presented in the system is very much one-sided. Based on the existing statements about the system (which at the moment coincide with the system of French sociological positivism), an extended system should be developed. We must further develop Vygotsky's system. We might do so by following these further steps:

1. We have to consider the study of human consciousness as an approach to developing the study of human personality. The key to this approach is *to further examine meaningful activities*, particularly the process of the development of tasks and motives. We have already mentioned that tasks and meanings (signs) determine the structure of the mediated action. However, until now, the entire system has been directed toward studying signs and their meanings. The examination of tasks and motives has not been considered although the former are connected to motives and personalities.
2. *We must examine "the natural origin of signs"*. We should not consider their historical origin but their social origin in practical activities in which humans and material objects interact to create a stable, viable, and necessary structure.
3. Methodologically, the most important contribution to the further development of the system is that we have *to make a transfer from the cross-sectional examination of the activities to study the causality of the activities in which humans engage*.

These steps are the directions in which Vygotsky's system should be further developed. The cross-sectional examination of activities informs us about the person's behaviour and the structure of the meaningful activity in which he or she is engaged. By following this approach, the target phenomenon is studied from the inside, surrounded by the borders of the internal world of participating humans. By observing human activities, we might obtain pure facts about what happens in the situation. However, the more important question of "why this happens" remains unanswered.

To identify the reasons and answer the above “why” question, we have to overcome the subjective understanding of reality. We have to examine not the person’s subjective understanding of the world but the world that surrounds the person and influences him or her although it may not be fully reflected in the person’s consciousness and activities. This approach examines *not the individual* subjective understanding of the world but how *the world* influences the individual.

According to Vygotsky, an ideal form is significant for the child only to a limited extent. Such positioning is pragmatically convenient; however, it is incorrect from the theoretical perspective. The need that makes the person engage in an activity does not present itself in the ideal form. It is never a part of human consciousness or of the activities in which humans engage. When the need is realised by the person, it is not acquired by the consciousness, but it is transformed in the consciousness.

The urge to study the need can be compared with the transition to studying the qualitative properties of chemical elements and their interdependence with their atomic mass (i.e., the contribution of Lavoisier). This contribution led to the discovery of the periodic law of the elements. Mendeleev was not a philosopher; however, he based his law on understanding and explaining the qualitative properties of the elements based on the periodically changing atomic mass of the elements. Therefore, he organised the elements in periods not according to their chemical properties but according to their atomic mass. Only by following this approach could he manage to systematise the periodic changes in the chemical properties of the arranged elements. The atomic mass is not a chemical but a physical property of an element; however, by employing this property (which in fact belongs to the science of physics), the periodic changes in the chemical properties of the elements could be explained.

Similar to this example, in psychology, we have to transfer studying psychological phenomena not only according to their internal psychological grounds but also according to the external need that influences these psychological phenomena.

The main contribution of Vygotsky is the idea of the meaningfulness and freedom of human consciousness. If we accept the contribution of Vygotsky and develop it further, we have to find the need that would ensure the implementation of his theory.

I would like to reemphasise that Vygotsky’s system is not complete. Moreover, it is at risk of being subsumed in French positivism. To prevent this eventuality, *we have to transfer from studying human consciousness to studying real people and their relationships from the perspective of the actual needs* that influence and affect them. As Marx reminded us, a person is a conglomerate of social relationships. Therefore, our main task today is to make a breakthrough to Marxism. By considering both the benefits and the limitations of Vygotsky’s system, I attempt to outline the ways to accomplish this task.

Discussion: Galperin’s analysis of Vygotsky’s System of Historical Psychology

Our discussion is structured as follows: *first*, we present Vygotsky’s understanding of human consciousness as reflected in his works from 1932 to 1934; *second*, we

direct our attention to Galperin's thorough analyses of Vygotsky's system; *third*, we discuss Galperin's critical reflections on Vygotsky's theory and his suggestions for directions in its further development. In doing so, we attempt to trace and analyse the continuity of the contributions of Vygotsky and Galperin to the cultural-historical psychology to educate conscious, agentic and free citizens of the world.

Vygotsky's understanding of human consciousness as a meaningful relationship to the world (1932–1934)

As rightfully pointed out by Galperin, cultural-historical psychology originated in the principle of the *sign mediation of higher psychological functions*, which was first reflected in 1926 in Vygotsky's personal notes and then in his publications in 1927 and 1928. During that period, a tool-mediated act or an external sign operation were central in examining higher psychological functions, and they were employed as a unit of analysis in scientific investigations. When the *principle of the systemic organisation of human consciousness* was introduced in 1930 in Vygotsky's presentation, *On Psychological Systems* (1930), human consciousness appeared to be a unit of scientific investigation, and the concept of psychological function began to lose ground. By introducing the principle of the systemic organisation of human consciousness, Vygotsky rejected the simplified understanding of a mediated act. He pointed out that a sign was not integrated in human psychological functions, but it changed the relationships between and among human psychological functions and affected the entire system of these functions. During the cultural development, the primary, natural connections between the functions that were established at the beginning of ontogenesis as an undifferentiated unity, break, and under the influence of a sign, a new artificial, flexible, and controlled system of functions appears with one dominating and other subordinate functions. The dominating function is not only positioned at the top of the entire system of human psychological functions, but it is also considered to control and determine how other functions are manifested. Primary connections between and among functions are substituted by secondary mediated. The combination of secondary mediated connections constitutes human consciousness and determines voluntary human behaviour. Secondary connections are eventually substituted by tertiary connections that characterise a person who is able to voluntarily manage interactions with the world and therefore change these connections. Therefore, the appearance of tertiary connections evidences not only a person's voluntary behaviour but self-consciousness, freedom of behaviour, and self-determination:

We always covertly assumed the person in the mediated processes. Systems are the key to the person. In any case, the person does not consist of functions but of systems: The person has no organic but a supra-organic structure. The organic forces are combined in a synagogical⁷ unity of a new sort and a higher order. (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018, p. 141)

⁷Synagogical is defined as developing together and in connection with each other.

At the beginning of the 1930s, Vygotsky concluded that a word is not only a sign among others, and it is not an individual case of mediation related to one psychological function. In his *Pedology of the Adolescent* (1931), he offered a new and redefined understanding of the law of sociogenesis:

[S]peech, being initially the means of communication, the means of association, the means of organization of group behaviour, later becomes the basic means of thinking and of all higher mental functions, the basic means of personality formation. (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 169)

However, the most fundamental and revolutionary changes in his theory began to appear in 1932 when Vygotsky, in his own words, transferred “from outside inward, from behaviour to consciousness” (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018, p. 275) by introducing the principle of the meaningful organisation of human consciousness:

[The] systemic construction of consciousness might arbitrarily be called external construction of consciousness, whereas meaningful construction, the character of generalization, is its internal structure.... [G]eneralization acts as a function of consciousness as a whole and not only of thinking alone. All the acts of consciousness are generalizations. (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 278)

According to Vygotsky, the development of the meaningful organisation of human consciousness happens early in children one to three years old. He considered it of primary significance in the early development of a child (Vygotsky, 1998, pp. 261–282). However, Vygotsky did not explicate this understanding in his theory of human consciousness or in his theory of affect. However, he introduced this approach at internal conferences and in lectures he gave in 1933 and 1934.

In 1932, Vygotsky identified meaning as being of primary significance in operations with signs and their internal structure (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 133). This definition was employed by Galperin in his speech exactly as it was introduced by Vygotsky. Meaning reflects the system of higher psychological functions. It is located on the boundary between the external and internal planes and mediates our interactions with the world. On one hand, this location is the pathway from a thought to a word, and it helps to transfer disorganised thoughts into speech. On the other hand, meaning helps to generalise experience and communication with other people; meaning is a unity of communication and generalisation (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 48). However, as a unit of analysis, meaning reflects only communicative (i.e., speech) thinking. Subsequently, Vygotsky concluded that only sense could be employed as a unit of the analysis of human consciousness.

In the last chapter of *Thinking and Speech*, by employing Paulhan’s understanding of sense (Paulhan, 1928), Vygotsky specified the following:

A word’s sense is the aggregate of all the psychological facts that arise in our consciousness as a result of the word. Sense is a dynamic, fluid and complex formation that has several zones that vary in their stability. Meaning is only one of these zones of the sense that the word acquires in the context of speech. It is the most stable, unified, and precise of these zones. In different contexts, a word’s sense changes. In contrast, meaning is a

comparatively fixed and stable point, one that remains constant with all the changes of the word's sense that are associated with its use in various contexts. (Vygotsky, 1987, pp. 275–276)

In this understanding, the core of the concept of sense is identified, which reflects the wholeness and integrity of human consciousness. Vygotsky showed that the relationship between the word and its sense is flexible and fluid. Moreover, it is varied, and it always bears the imprint of the speaker's personality. Sense is broader than meaning, and it does not coincide with it:

Meaning is inherent in the sign. Sense is what enters into meaning (the result of the meaning) but is not consolidated behind the sign. The formation of sense is the result, the product of meaning. (Vygotsky, 1997, pp. 136–137)

Sense comprises several meanings, and a meaning is a stable form of sense that is reduced to the norms and common rules of word use in communication, which enables people to understand each other. Sense is more hermetic, idiomatic, and individual than meaning is, and it is more closely connected to motives and the core of the personality:

The sense of the words is changed by the motive. Therefore, the ultimate explanation lies in motivation. (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 136)

Sense reflects the dynamics of the development and transformation of thoughts, feelings, and motives, which cannot be reflected in a “frozen” meaning. Sense develops in the process of ontogenetic and micro genetic transformations through the primary affect in the undifferentiated psychological system to initiate the process of development. Hence, the sign ruptures the initial undifferentiated psychological system, and by creating the differentiation of psychological functions, it develops a new complex and hierarchical system of psychological functions with secondary connections. Most importantly, a sign initiates the differentiation of the primary affect into motive, thought, and feeling. Vygotsky elaborates this differentiation in the metaphor of a chain in the last chapter of *Thinking and Speech*: affect (motive)—sense—meaning—utterance (action). The development of these processes in adults happens primarily in inner speech. Based on these premises, Vygotsky introduced the definition of sense as a unit of the analysis of human consciousness.

The meaningfulness of the consciousness is characterised by a person's attitude and his or her relationship to the world (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 137). The world, both internal and external, becomes accessible by the consciousness as a system of interconnected events. As a system of meanings, speech is used to conceptualise and structure the internal and external worlds and helps to explore them. According to Vygotsky, the interconnectedness of our ideas about the world and the ability to act in it are determined by the level of the development of speech and thinking. Moreover, the complex system of meanings comprises the entire diversity of world phenomena and the human ability to act in the world not only reasonably but also freely.

In discussing the development of humans, Vygotsky indicated that freedom was both a necessary condition and the outcome of the process of development:

Freedom: the affect in the concept.... The grandiose picture of personality development: the path to freedom. (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018, p. 209)

Freedom is a distinctive characteristic of humans: its increase is associated with development, and its loss is associated with the decay of human consciousness. Drawing on the ideas of Marx and Spinoza, Vygotsky presented a similar position in his model of a free and meaningful action, in which he attempted to relate affect, intellect, and practical action (Vygotsky, 1993, pp. 220–240).

According to Vygotsky, consciousness does not exist in isolation from the world, and it does not possess inherent and immanent laws of development. Therefore, in his lectures on developmental psychology, Vygotsky suggested the new unit of experience (*perezhivanie*) as a unit of the analysis of the relationship between the person and the world:

On one hand, in experience, environment is given in its relation to me, how I experience this environment; on the other hand, features of the development of my personality have an effect.... [T]he forces of the environment acquire a controlling significance because the child experiences them. This mandates a penetrating internal analysis of the experiences of the child, that is, a study of the environment, which has to a significant degree been absorbed by the child himself and is not reduced to a study of the external circumstances of his life. (Vygotsky, 1998, pp. 294–295).

However, Vygotsky's works on experience are largely fragmented. Therefore, developing this concept remains one of the challenges in contemporary psychology.

In summary, in 1932 and 1934, Vygotsky outlined the principles of the systemic and meaningful organisation of human consciousness and its developmental nature. He introduced the following units of analysis: (i) meaning—to examine verbal thinking; (ii) sense—to examine human consciousness; (iii) experience (*perezhivanie*)—to examine human personality and its interactions with the world. He concluded that *freedom* was a distinctive characteristic of human consciousness and *the summit of human development*.

We will now highlight the central ideas of Vygotsky's approach as identified by Galperin to reconstruct his theory of human consciousness. In the discussion that follows, we support our analyses by providing extracts from the *Lectures in Psychology* included in this volume to exemplify how the ideas of Vygotsky have been addressed and further developed by Galperin.

Reconstruction of ideas of Vygotsky in Galperin's speech

In the first part of his speech, Galperin reflects on Vygotsky's understanding of *the systemic organisation of human consciousness*, emphasising the developmental nature of human consciousness and pointing out that the process of inconsistent development is of primary significance in understanding the development of the child's consciousness. Inconsistency in the development of the child's consciousness is explained as the appearance of one predominant psychological function in the periods of a child's development. These functions are in the sequential order of perception, memory, and thinking. These predominant functions affect the

development and organisation of human consciousness and cause the reorganisation and restructuring of the existing psychological functions, thereby establishing the dependency of all existing functions on the new dominant function. Such an organisation reflects the systemic and hierarchical organisation of human consciousness. In Lecture 4, Galperin emphasises the following:

A phenomenon is a special form of very economical work because you are not dealing with the parts of the process; instead, it is presented to you as a sum of the parts and as a phenomenon as a whole. If the phenomenon appears to sit at the top of a pyramid of well-established and thought-through connections, its positive value is the greatest. (Lecture 4)

He continues this argument by indicating that the hierarchical organisation of psychological functions can be developed only in humans, and it is inherently connected to the human use of cultural means. Cultural means are defined as operations that are mediated by signs. Therefore, the systemic structure of human consciousness is connected to the origin, development, and functional meanings of signs. Importantly, signs first appear in the process of communication among people, and operations with signs are internalised to become the psychological functions of a person. This pathway reflects the processes of mediation, socio-genesis, and the internalisation of higher psychological functions.

In describing the process of mediation, Galperin refers to Vygotsky's law of the parallelogram, which includes the four phases in the development of mediated psychological functions in children. Galperin comments that these four phases are important because they reflect the considerably late development of mediated psychological functions in children. In his research, he returned to this statement. By applying the phases of the development of mental actions, Galperin showed that the development of conceptual understanding could be achieved in much younger children than suggested by Vygotsky:

It turned out that the school concepts that were intended to be developed in 11 and 12-year-old students could be developed in children 7 and even 6 years old. (Lecture 5)

Galperin summarises the functional significance of the sign mediation by (i) establishing new psychological functions and reorganising existing psychological functions; (ii) placing it at the structural and functional centre of newly developed psychological functions; (iii) separating lower from higher psychological functions. Thus, a sign becomes *a tool* for creating the structural and systemic organisation of human consciousness. Galperin concludes that the higher psychological functions are nothing else but internal operations mediated by forms of communication, and higher psychological functions are developed in the process of mediated social communication during the external activities of humans. In Lecture 4, Galperin explicates the following:

[T]he initial appearance of a thought is nothing else but a transfer of the action with objects to the human mind and its being processed there.... Mental activity is a type of work, like any other work performed by people. This work has to be mastered and resourced by proper tools. (Lecture 4)

Although Vygotsky shared these ideas, this clear conceptualising is missing in his works. Therefore, the precise definition offered by Galperin contributes to extending Vygotsky's legacy.

Galperin draws on Vygotsky's law of the parallelogram to emphasise that the sequential appearance of the dominant psychological functions of perception, memory, and thinking reflects the gradual transformation from actual external psychical interactions with material artefacts to internal mental activities. Therefore, the development of new psychological functions and the sequential appearance of a predominant function occurs through social interactions. This profound understanding of Vygotsky's legacy was taken further by Galperin in considering his phases of the development of mental actions (Lectures 1–5) as the gradual transformation of an external activity with material or materialised tools (materialised action) through social communication (communicated thinking) and individual speech (dialogical thinking) to a mental activity (acting mentally). The transformation from materialised action to communicated thinking happens during learners' interactions with material or materialised objects and in making sense of these objects in speech. The activity is directed outside, and it connects the learner with external objects and the outside world. The transformation from communicated thinking to dialogical thinking happens by substituting the externally oriented speech by its image. In dialogical thinking, the activity is directed inside the learner in establishing communication with himself or herself (as another person). The learner's ability to perform an activity in the form of dialogical thinking reflects the pathway the activity has undergone from its materialised form to its dialogical form (Engeness & Lund, 2018).

To master a new mental action means to ensure the formation of this action in its highest mental form. In order to do so, we need to trace the path of its development from the beginning. (Lecture 3)

Galperin concludes that human consciousness is a hierarchical system of psychological functions and that higher psychological functions are activities of human consciousness, which are a historical phenomenon that can be developed specifically in humans.

In the second part of the discussion on the *Meaningful Organisation of Human Consciousness*, Galperin attempts to analyse Vygotsky's explanation of the mechanisms of the development of higher psychological functions in humans. To do so, Galperin turns his attention to (i) the tools and (ii) the internal structure of mediated actions that employ these tools.

Galperin notes Vygotsky's particular attention to the selection and use of appropriate mediational tools, indicating the need to extend this focus by undertaking a thorough analysis of a mediated action. He defines a mediated action as consisting of a task and a motive that is a driving force in solving this task. In doing so, he defines a task as the objective expression of a motive and discusses the connection between the task and the motive. These ideas were developed in detail in the works of Leontiev (1978). By engaging in this discussion, Galperin might have identified the directions of further development of Vygotsky's legacy.

Galperin employs the terms activity, action, and operation to convey the meanings that were developed and explored in the works of Leontiev (1978). Galperin defines the double role of an activity (i) to interact and communicate and (ii) to transfer the meaning of the sign. Based on these premises, a sign has a double meaning: (i) its original meaning and (ii) its acquired meaning, which depends on the activity in which it is employed (sense). Galperin's explanation of the original meaning of a sign is in line with Vygotsky's understanding; that is, the sign can be understood as the generalisation of the reality in the process of communication. A sign acquires its second meaning (sense) in the context of a specific practical human social activity.

The relationship between a sign and its meaning is compared with the relationship between speech (individual psychological meaning) and the objective meaning that is being transferred. This relationship is unstable and variable, and it is similar to the relationship between a motive and a task. Galperin makes a connection between the characteristics of signs and the characteristics of the mediated activities in which they are employed. In discussing the interrelationships among sign, meaning, task, and motive, Galperin enters an important discussion about *meaning and sense* (Cole, 1998; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995; Wertsch, 1997). A meaningful activity that is conducted with mediational tools is not presented as consisting of an internal part (motive and meaning) and an external part (task and tools). Instead, it is a process that happens over time in several phases, where each sequential phase encapsulates the previous phases of the process. This understanding is further developed in Galperin's phases of the development of mental actions (Lectures 1–5):

To master a new mental action means to ensure the formation of this action in its highest mental form. In order to do so, we need to trace the path of its development from the beginning. We can do it through six consecutive phases. (Lecture 3)

Sense is conceptualised as the enacted unity of the motive, task, signs and tools in a meaningful activity. Galperin emphasises that separating one aspect from another may lead to the activity losing its sense; moreover, the presence of all four aspects is required for the activity to become meaningful and acquire its sense. In accepting Vygotskian understanding of sense as comprising the relationship between a motive, a sign, and its meaning, Galperin extends it by introducing the concept of a task. However, this addition does not contradict Vygotsky's approach, and it even resonates with a remark he made at the conference on 5 December 1932:

The thought strives, fulfils some function and work. This work of the thought is the transition from the feeling of the task—via the formation of meaning—to the unfolding of the thought itself. (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 134).

On one hand, this approach allows Galperin to conclude that higher psychological functions are mediated and the meaningful actions of a person reflect his or her attitude to the external world, the degree of awareness of the surrounding world, and the self in the world:

Some important aspects of the formation of individual actions, the success of their application and generally their significance in the life of an individual depends on the quality

of the orienting part of the action. It is the orienting part and not the action itself constitutes the focus of psychology. (Lecture 1)

This understanding is of primary significance in clarifying Vygotskian ideas about higher psychological functions, and it connects the legacy of Vygotsky with the later contributions of Galperin and his followers (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005; Arievitch & Stetsenko, 2000; Stetsenko, 2017; Stetsenko & Arievitch, 2002). Galperin not only summarises but also engages in a thorough analysis of Vygotsky's system, extending it without changing its essence. This analysis may be considered an attempt to bridge the cultural-historical legacy of Vygotsky with activity theory although it was not fully developed at that time and existed as a polemical debate between Vygotsky and Leontiev (Leontiev & Luria, 1999; Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018).

On the other hand, according to Galperin's approach, sense may be a general characteristic of human activity, not consciousness. This understanding may not fully reflect the dynamics and unstable nature of sense, and it may not account for the possible variety of senses, which are termed a "field of significance" (Vassilieva & Zavershneva, 2020). However, Galperin's understanding of sense as the flexible unity of the four components (i.e., motive, sign, meaning and task) coincides with Vygotsky's line of reasoning. In *The Problem of Mental Retardation*, Vygotsky described a series of experiments in which sense was used as the main controlled variable (Zavershneva, 2014). All four components introduced by Galperin were clearly present in the work of Vygotsky, where similar to *Thinking and Speech*, sense was introduced as an integral characteristic of human consciousness and as a person's relationship to the world. To conclude, the unity of a motive, sign, meaning and task is essential in Galperin's understanding of sense, which is a logical continuation of Vygotsky's ideas.

Galperin's elaborations of (i) human consciousness as a meaningful activity and (ii) a systemic organisation of human consciousness have implications for a person's ability to engage in a meaningful activity. Moreover, they are of primary significance in moving beyond the legacy of Vygotsky to connect the individual with the external world and the reality:

[T]he ideal in nothing else but the material transferred to the human head and transformed in it. Let us consider this statement as a starting point. (Lecture 1)

Galperin's legacy may therefore exemplify the attempt to operationalise Vygotsky's ideas and extend them by (i) emphasising the need to develop meaningful actions with the desired properties and (ii) conceptualising his ideas in a study on the development of human mental activities (Lectures 1–8).

The third part, The Development of Human Consciousness, discusses the approaches to developing meaningful actions. Galperin indicates that the meaningfulness of an action is expressed in the nature of the task that this action is employed to solve as well as the tools used in this action. Therefore, the development of meaningful actions happens through the development of meanings. In doing so, humans develop their understanding of the surrounding world.

The discussion of the development of meaning resonates with Vygotsky's ideas about the development of concepts (Vygotsky, 1987) which were extended and elaborated in the contributions of his followers (Galperin, 1976; Leontiev, 2000) and presented in detail in Lectures 1–5 in this book. Vygotsky emphasised that the development of meaning is crucial in a child's development. Galperin defines the meaning of a sign as a simultaneously generalised reality and a set of internal operations that constitute a meaningful activity. The pathway of the development of meaning reflects the pathway of understanding of the reality that surrounds the child. The elaboration of these thoughts is visible in Galperin's conceptualising of the creation of meaningful activities. He argues that efforts should be directed at developing activities that have the desired properties:

[W]e need to define in advance the properties we would like an ideal action to have. We should also choose the system of conditions that will ensure the formation of these desired properties. (*Lecture 2*)

Galperin concludes that the development of meanings is the process of the development of meaningful activities and is a pathway to develop freedom of human consciousness. This elegant conclusion reveals the essence of Vygotsky's legacy for educating independent and conscious learners who possess a profound understanding of the process of learning and the agentic capacity to learn. These learners are able to engage in interactions with the constantly changing world, develop their understanding of this world, and make meaningful contributions to it. Such learners are conscious, independent, and free citizens of the world in which they live.

To summarise, in providing a thorough analysis of Vygotsky's system, Galperin outlines the central ideas in Vygotsky's legacy:

- (i) The idea of the developmental nature of human consciousness as of primary importance in understanding the genesis, structure, and purpose of human psychological functions, which is central in conducting psychological investigations.
- (ii) The idea of the meaningful organisation of human consciousness, which explains the difference between psychological development in humans and animals, lower- natural and higher-cultural psychological processes, and the two types of consciousness: instinct and intelligence.
- (iii) The idea of the systemic organisation of human consciousness.

Critical reflections

We begin by outlining the critical reflections presented by Galperin in his speech.

- (1) *Communication.* According to Vygotsky, communication is a process that mediates psychological development. However, Vygotsky did not present communication as a mediated process; instead, he offered a sociological

understanding of communication as a process of the development of signs. Indeed, Galperin addresses a controversial issue in Vygotsky's approach, which does not focus on examining the process of communication but emphasises the process of generalisation. Hence, Vygotsky's understanding of the development of humans as a unity of communication and generalisation remains unfinished. In Lecture 4, Galperin discusses the double role of communication as a verbal action and as a message about the performed action:

When you remove the material support, the action will not be immediately transferred to the mental plane. First, it is transferred to the plane of externalised social speech.... This speech is aloud, not only in its form, but more importantly in its function as speech directed to another person. It is important that this is both a verbal action and a message about the performed action. (Lecture 4)

- (2) *Intellect as mediation of psychological development.* Galperin criticises Vygotsky's understanding that psychological development and mediation depend on a matured intellect. Therefore, the initial phases of ontogenesis, in which the intellect is not dominant, cannot be examined either theoretically or empirically. Neither can they be explained by the cultural and historical development of humans, but only by human natural development. This understanding indicates that Vygotsky's approach was intellectual, which he acknowledged in his critical reflections in the early 1930s. Vygotsky made a considerable effort to overcome intellectualism in his theory by introducing the unity of affect and intellect although these ideas were not fully developed in his works. In Lecture 5, Galperin responds to Vygotsky's position:

For a long time, it was considered that the development of conceptual understanding is only possible with 11- and 12-year-old students. Such an understanding resulted in the idea that learning concepts before the ages of 11 and 12 was not recommended and even forbidden. It was considered that children develop so-called quasi- and pseudo- concepts, as they are unable to develop their true understanding of the target concept. Therefore, teachers must introduce incomplete concepts or the "simplified" version of a concept. (Lecture 5)

However, Vygotsky's understanding of the human ability to think through speech, which became central in his theory in the 1930s, was identified as a specifically human characteristic: moreover, this ability had practical and methodological implications. A person who is able to think conceptually and independently using language to mediate his thoughts, express emotions, and control motives was considered to reflect a target in human development. When the significance of speech mediation came to the fore (see the law of socio-genesis in the *Pedology of the Adolescent*), Vygotsky's understanding of psychological development also changed. In the 1930s, he argued that speech affects human consciousness as a whole and not its individual components (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 137). He indicated that human consciousness did not depend on the matured intellect, but the sequential replacement of one dominating psychological function starting with a diffuse affect determined the process of the development of humans. Vygotsky concluded that

non-intellectual mediation occurs before the intellect matures and becomes the leading psychological function in the psychological system of an adult. Vygotsky's position might serve as a reply to Galperin's critique.

- (3) *The idea of considering that mediation occurs at the very beginning of the process of the development of children.* This idea, which is linked to the issues of communication and intellect, was not elaborated in Vygotsky's works. The idea of considering that human development occurs through speech mediation was useful in introducing the phenomenon of communication to cultural-historical psychology. However, this potential application of communication was not revealed in Vygotsky's works. Vygotsky considered that the development of a systemic and meaningful structure of human consciousness occurred in older children. Therefore, in forming his theory, he did not include infancy as the period in which the development of meaning takes place. Galperin rightfully criticises this understanding by pointing to the importance of examining the role of speech mediation starting at the first scream of a child. However, Vygotsky's personal notes during the period 1932–1934 reflect his thoughts on “consciousness without a word”, including the initial stages of ontogenesis and micro genesis (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018, pp. 271–274). These ideas were first expressed by Vygotsky in 1930 in his description of the development of sense as an intentional act triggered by a sign (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018, pp. 119–120). Therefore, the development of an infant happens through engagement in communication with an adult. This development happens within their co-constructed field of significance (Vassilieva & Zavershneva, 2020). It does not follow a natural scenario but a socio-historical scenario, unfolding inter-psychologically and relying on their shared intentionality (Tomasello, 2008). Communication in infancy is an affect expressed by voice and intonation, which Vygotsky termed a musical component of speech (Luria, 2014, p. 83), reflecting the child's attitude toward the world and the contribution to the development of sense. However, even extended ideas about “consciousness without a word” do not close all gaps in his theory. One of these gaps is the absence of “manual thinking” in the development of the meaning of objects. This direction was developed in detail by Galperin in his lectures on the phases of the development of mental actions (Lectures 1–5).
- (4) *The shift from the theoretical emphasis on sign meaning to the emphasis on the developmental function of sign meaning.* Vygotsky suggested that a child acquires the meaning of the word from an adult. He or she “*finds it ready-made, classified by a common word or name*” (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 145). This position was not confirmed in observations of children who developed their language creatively by engaging in play or in the research of contemporary linguists who argued that a language is not a stable classification, and its structure cannot be completely explained by a set of rules (Eko, 1998). Galperin criticised Vygotsky's ideas about the natural development of language, which is

reflected in his works, such as *Studies on the History of Behaviour* (Vygotsky & Luria, 1993). In his candidate dissertation, Galperin (1936) elaborated the significance of the development of sign meaning in children.

- (5) *Theoretical and practical limitations of the concept “ideal form”*. The most detailed elaboration of the concept of the ideal form was offered by Vygotsky in *Foundations of Pedology* (1934):

The child speaks in one-word phrases, but his mother talks to him in language, which is already grammatically and syntactically formed and which has a large vocabulary, even though it is being toned down for the child’s benefit. All the same, she speaks using the fully perfected form of speech. Let us agree to call this developed form, which is supposed to make its appearance at the end of the child’s development, the final or ideal form ... ideal in the sense that it acts as a model for that which should be achieved at the end of the developmental period.... The greatest characteristic feature of child development is that is achieved under particular conditions of interaction with the environment, where this ideal and final form ... is not only already there in the environment and from the very start in contact with the child, but actually interacts and exerts a real influence on the primary form, on the first steps of the child’s development. (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994, pp. 348–349)

Vygotsky’s statement about the interaction of ideal and real forms is controversial, considering his unacceptance of dualism. We might suggest that if Vygotsky had lived longer, he would have clarified his concept of the ideal form. However, in 1934, this concept was relatively new in psychology, and it carried an important function in the development of peak psychology (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 137), which implemented the idea of a reverse method, as suggested by Marx, which offered to take the best abilities that could be developed in learners as a reference point for the target development. Galperin suggested that the limitations of Vygotsky’s ideal form could be overcome by examining not the individual’s subjective understanding of the world but how the world influences the individual:

[I]f you study the formation of actions in its final form and trace the unfolding all the way from the material to the ideal form, then you might develop an understanding of how an exquisite psychological phenomenon such as an individual thought is formed.

This is very important because it opens up a new direction for the study of mental processes. (Lecture 4)

- (6) Galperin’s idea that *it is impossible to develop a theory of consciousness per se* is an important methodological point that Vygotsky made in his late works. Consciousness is essentially a boundary phenomenon, and if it exists in the form of speech in which a person expresses his or her relationships with the world, then such relationships should be examined not only as generalisation and communication but also as the unity of affect and intellect. However, even in *Thinking and Speech*, Vygotsky did not elaborate this matter, and Galperin rightfully points that out that a learner is presented as a “theorising subject” who develops consciousness but does not communicate and does not interact with the world:

[I]f we assume that any psychological process is purely subjective, then it becomes impossible to investigate the process. (Lecture 4)

- (7) The next argument put forward by Galperin is that *the system of cultural-historical psychology is not closed from above by motives*. Without including the reasons to why Vygotsky did not manage to develop the theory of affect and the steps that he pursued in that direction, we would like to mention his fruitful dialogue with Kurt Lewin. The approaches of Vygotsky and Lewin were complementary, and they were central in the development of theories of affect and intellect. By applying the foundations of dynamic psychology, Vygotsky, in collaboration with his research group, modified Lewin's experimental methodologies to apply them in clinical practice. In one of the studies published after his death, which considered the analysis of dynamic meaningful systems in Peak's disease (Samukhin et al., 1934), Vygotsky attempted to trace how individual features of character affected the trajectory of the pathological process in different patients. The findings indicated that as their consciousness deteriorated, the patients showed decreases not only in the level of generalisation, the dynamic nature of the inter-psychological system, and deterioration in the field of significance but also reduction in freedom. A similar tendency was observed concerning the affect system; the patients demonstrated increased simplicity, structural and dynamic degradation, distortion of personal boundaries, and changed interactions with the world. All these symptoms could not be justified by the diagnosis but by the personalities of the patients. The suggestion about the unity of structural-dynamic aspects and the types of activities that employed them, which were introduced in that study, strongly affected the ideas of Lewin. In addition, such results were described in the cultural-historical approach to explain the structural similarity between the cross-sectional research of the action, affect, and thought and the activity approach. However, Vygotsky was not completely satisfied with this solution, and the final lines of the speech introduce the central idea in Galperin's critical reflections: the need to shift from cross-sectional to causal investigations:

[O]ur first conclusion concerns the method of psychological research. We do not dismiss the method of self-observation; we use it and accept it. Self-observation can describe a mental phenomenon. However, this is only a description of the phenomenon and nothing else! What lies behind this phenomenon? We can only discover this when we are creating the phenomenon and shaping it in a controlled process. (Lecture 4)

This direction, which was identified by both Vygotsky and Galperin, is important in contemporary psychological research, in which cross-sectional, correlational, and often sociological investigations prevail. Instead, attention should be given to design based research aimed to examine the target phenomenon by constructing it instead of observing.

In summary, the critical reflections Galperin outlines in his speech resonate with the ideas that Vygotsky developed in 1933 and 1934, which reflect a dialogue in time between these outstanding scholars. However, Galperin went further by outlining the directions of the development of Vygotsky's theory: (i) to consider the study on human consciousness an approach to developing the study of human personality. The key to this approach is to further examine

meaningful activities, particularly the process of the development of actions and motives; (ii) to examine “the natural origin of signs” during practical social activities in which humans and material objects interact to create a stable, viable, and necessary structure; (iii) to transfer methodologically from the cross-sectional examination of activities to study the causality of the activities in which humans engage. In another study (Engeness & Lund, 2018), we found that Galperin’s contribution to cultural-historical theory was as follows: (i) specifying the unique character of the development of human consciousness emerging in social activities and cultural, tool-mediated practices; (ii) identifying the role and the function of tools as imbued with relevant social experience and mediating learning activity; (iii) conceptualising the nature and functions of human psychological processes as specific forms of activity and by outlining its structure and identifying the subject of psychology in studying the ontogenesis of object-oriented activity. It is difficult to disagree with the similarity between the steps outlined in the speech and Galperin’s scientific legacy.

Concluding Remarks

Surprisingly, many similarities may be observed in the ideas put forward by Galperin and the directions identified by Vygotsky in his works from 1932–1934 (Zavershneva & Van der Veer, 2018). Galperin’s speech exemplifies his subtle and profound understanding of Vygotsky’s theory. A similar understanding has not been achieved by any of Vygotsky’s followers. The speech is a unique historical document that makes a considerable theoretical contribution by presenting a concise and consistent summary of the theory of consciousness outlined by Vygotsky at the end of 1932. We believe that Galperin’s speech is of particular significance for contemporary research in light of the predominant trend to oversimplify, fragment and distort Vygotsky’s ideas. The speech may be considered the missing piece of a jig-saw puzzle that bridges cultural-historical and activity theories. The divisions between these theories have not been overcome in the unified version of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Nussbaumer, 2012).

Galperin did not work closely with Vygotsky. He entered the field of psychology in 1932, in the move of the Moscow group to Kharkov. However, Galperin assumed the task of providing a thorough analysis of Vygotsky’s system in his speech in 1935. By identifying the central concepts in Vygotsky’s legacy, Galperin reveals the connections and the interplay among these concepts to create a system that was not finally developed by Vygotsky. Even though in his later works, Vygotsky indicated that the ontological foundations of his theory were aimed to conceptualise human development as the gradual development of consciousness and human freedom, this emphasis was not pursued by any of Vygotsky’s followers except Galperin. Paradoxically, Galperin was not a student of Vygotsky, and very few overviews of Vygotsky’s legacy have presented Galperin as his follower (Arievitch, 2003; Haenen, 1996).

To conclude, *first*, Galperin's speech not only represents a valuable overview of Vygotsky's system and outlines his critical reflections, but also provides thorough analytical considerations of the approaches pursued by Vygotsky. Galperin offers clear descriptions of the ideas that are central in Vygotsky's legacy, many of which remained vague and underdeveloped in the works of the latter.

Second, Galperin's speech not only offers critical reflections but also demonstrates a subtle and profound understanding of Vygotsky's original ideas and outlines ways to enrich and extend these ideas to further develop the cultural-historical approach. Several of these ideas are elaborated in Galperin's lectures included in this book and which offer valuable examples of productive critical reflections. They are a rare illustration of the high standard to which researchers should strive to achieve. In his speech, Galperin is not harshly critical, nor does he attempt to attribute his own ideas to Vygotsky or make any additions that could interfere or distort Vygotsky's ideas.

Third, one of Galperin's most significant contributions was to explain internalisation as the transformation of a learning activity from the external (social) to the (individual) internal plane. This transformation was described by the measure of its acquisition by the learners engaged in the activity. It was conceptualised in outlining the dialectically developing forms of this transformation: (i) motivation, (ii) orientation, (iii) materialised action, (iv) communicated thinking, (v) dialogical thinking and (vi) acting mentally (Engeness & Edwards, 2017). These phases might be considered as Galperin's re-evaluation of Vygotsky's law of the parallelogram, which he mentioned in his speech and which was not fully developed by Vygotsky.

Finally, Galperin offers the following elegant conclusion:

The main contribution of Vygotsky is the idea of the meaningfulness and freedom of human consciousness. If we would like to accept the contribution of Vygotsky and develop it further, we have to find the need that would ensure implementing his theory.

Galperin's study of orientation, particularly the third type of orientation (Engeness, 2020; Engeness & Lund, 2018), extends Vygotsky's ideas and shows how the freedom and meaningfulness of human consciousness can be achieved in education. Galperin emphasises that the third type of orientation reveals the essence of learning, promotes abstract thinking and offers a unified approach to learning by creating links between the sciences and the approaches to studying them. By applying the third type of orientation, learners master the essence of learning through studying a phenomenon, which carries a new function not as a studied *object*, but as a *tool* for studying the *essence of the learning and how to go about it*. In so doing, learners develop their understanding about the nature of learning across contexts and subject areas, thus enhancing their agentic capacity as independent and conscientious learners. This approach is incredibly useful now in the age of fast-developing technology and advances in knowledge, "fake" news, and unstructured streams of information. Galperin argued for the need to make a transfer from studying human consciousness to studying real individuals and their

relationships with the surrounding world. His scientific legacy is an extraordinary example of this pursuit, in which Galperin transferred the legacy of Vygotsky from the ideal plane to the real world.

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