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Teaching culture and emotions. The function of art in Vygotsky's theory of child development (1920-1934)

Hofstetter, Rita; Schneuwly, Bernard

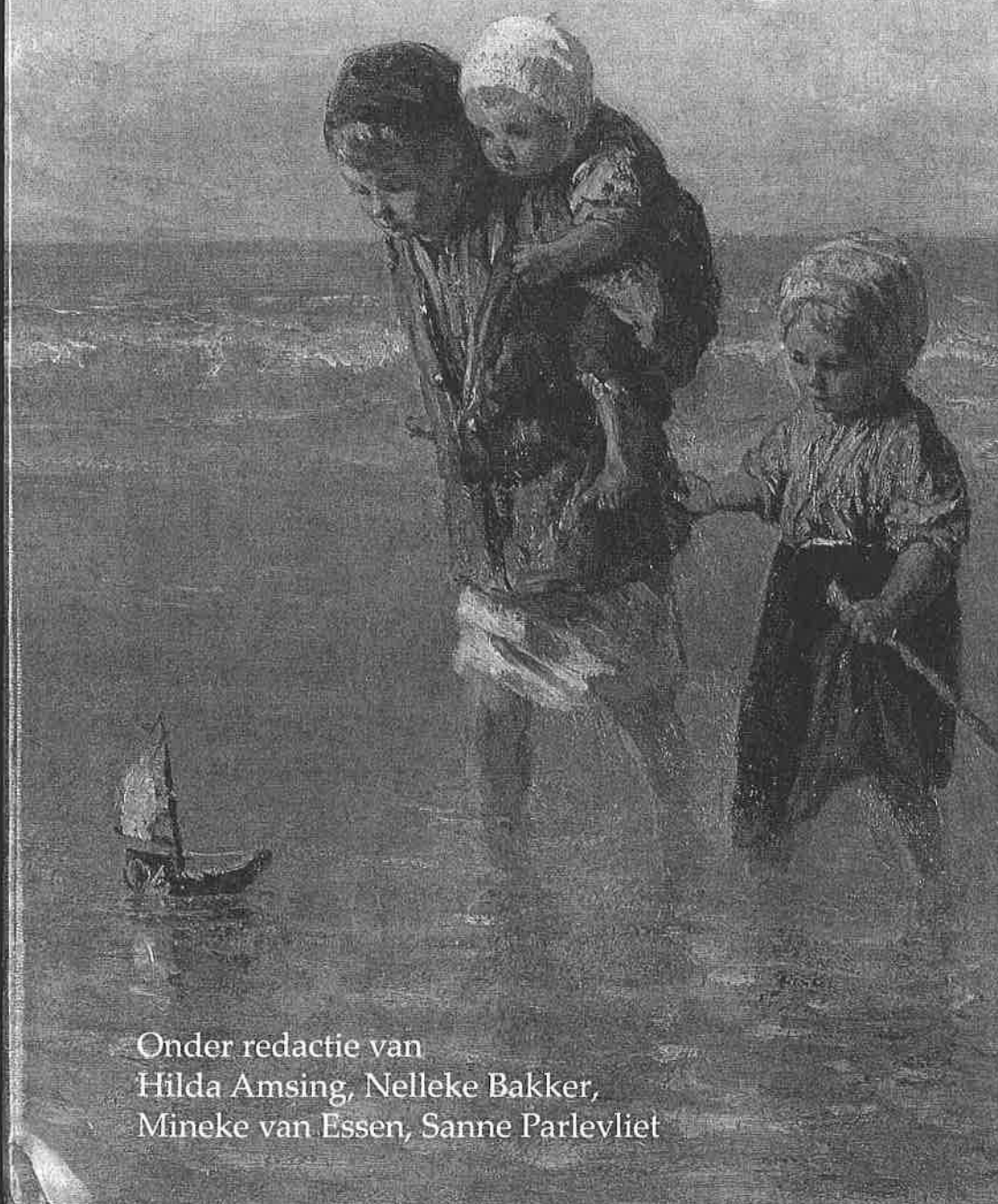
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Images of education

Cultuuroverdracht in
historisch perspectief



Onder redactie van
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Voorwoord

Dit boek verschijnt bij het afscheid van de historische en theoretische pedagogie van de laatste collega's uit binnen- en buitenland. Het is een beeld van waar zij bij de historisch-pedagogische beweging de historische afbeeldingen van en verleggenheid als pedagogisch project hebben gemaakt. In de 20e eeuw, de aanhoudende vernieuwing, de verwaarloosde of ontheerde pedagogie, zijn *Images of education*, in letterlijk en figuurlijk opzicht.

Het boek is meer dan een literair document. Het is een woord. Dekker beweegt zich in de geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs, van de internationale organisatie van de pedagogie, het daarmee verbonden, voorafgaand aan deze bijdragen bieden een interdisciplinair perspectief op de geschiedenis die op dit moment in de pedagogie de toon aangeven. En zoals refereert de bijdragen over het verleden.

Bedoeld als eerbetoon aan de pedagogie, geeft dit boek een schets van de pedagogie, de gebruikte bronnen voor historische en vragen, verrassende theorieën, voeding, onderwijs en hulpverlening, volop de gelegenheid de eigen

Hilda Amsing, Nelleke Bakker, M...

* Met dank aan Herman van der N...

Teaching culture and emotions. The function of art in Vygotsky's theory of child development (1920-1934)*

Rita Hofstetter & Bernard Schneuwly

Reflecting Jeroen Dekker's studies on the history of teaching emotions

To educate means to transmit culture¹ and, without this transmission, there can be no education, much less educational research. Jeroen Dekker disagrees with the conception which casts doubt on this fundamental axiom of the intergenerational transmission of culture. Proponents of this conception claim that there is in fact symmetry and reciprocity among generations, even an independence of the persons to be educated. They echo *progressive education*, referring to such illustrious theoreticians as Dewey, Mead and Habermas, and postmodernists Lyotard, Rorty and Derrida, and do not refrain, as Dekker laments, from passing judgement on other periods and other places: "It is an anachronism, a mortal sin for the historian, to impose his or her ideas of reciprocity and child autonomy, whether they be traditional or modern, 'rightist' or 'leftist', progressive or post-modern, on generations of the past, in order to judge their pedagogical behavior."² Taking an opposing stance to these conceptions, Dekker illustrates his point using a proverb regularly used in Dutch pictorial art, notably by the famous Jan Steen: "As the old sing, so pipe the young".³

Meticulously analysing a vast literature and numerous visual representations, Dekker shows the extent to which art was used in the service of moral education in an immense social enterprise in the Netherlands of the 17th and 18th century, daringly titled "Moral Literacy: The Pleasure of Learning How to Become Decent Adults and Good Parents in the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century."⁴ The historian also examines how emotions as defined by the great 17th century philosophers – Spinoza, among others – become a systematic subject of education, with artistic presentation also playing an essential role here, as Dekker and Wichgers show through a semiotic analysis of the emblems in Jacob Cats' *Mirror of Ancient and Modern Times*, one of the most popular books of the time.⁵

Reading these texts inspired us to re-read the writings of L.S. Vygotsky, currently one of the most quoted authors in educational sciences,⁶ as some of the questions raised by Dekker as a historian were also considered by this pedologist and psychologist in the 1920s and 1930s. In the present contribution, echoing Dekker's enquiries, we will examine the Vygotskian theoretical proposals in their evolution: we will limit ourselves to the question of the intergenerational

transmission of culture, and focus on the reception of art and the role that teaching plays in it. To do so, we will take account of the entirety of the available texts by Vygotsky in which he addresses this issue,⁷ while of course referring to the immense secondary literature.

Following Dekker's consideration of cultural transmission as constitutive of human development, and the reception of art as one of the modes of transmission, we will test the following hypothesis: Vygotsky addresses the issue of the reception and function of art from his earliest publications in the 1920s, notably from the point of view of education and teaching. However, the theme disappears almost entirely after 1928.⁸ We will attempt to outline an explanation for this surprising silence, which will bring us back to our starting point: Dekker's "teaching the regulation of emotions"; we will suggest considering this as a possible extension of Vygotsky's work, the principle which he evoked when defining his method: "The historical study of behavior is not an auxiliary aspect of theoretical study, but rather forms the very base."⁹

*The origins of Vygotsky's educative thought: The practice of teaching and training; and of his reflection on art: The practice of critiquing literature and art*¹⁰

To accentuate the paradox that we have just evoked, let us attempt to grasp what led Vygotsky to write his early books, which form the embryonic beginnings of the theory that he would go on to develop throughout his scientific activity.

Lev Semionovitch Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Soviet scholar who led the grounds for a conception of the human person as the result of education as artificial development of human beings and of self-construction, on the basis of socio-historically elaborated "instruments" (language, technical and artistic "œuvres", other signs systems). His main influences were the works of Marx and Engels and of Spinoza. As a new regime was coming into power in the USSR in 1917, Vygotsky completed his studies in both law and literature and the arts, and returned to his hometown of Gomel. The German occupation there continued until January 1919, and the town government was not formed until April. One of its principal tasks: build a new school system, with the local teachers refusing to cooperate with them. Vygotsky played an active role, teaching in several schools. When the "pedagogical tekhnikum" – a sort of teacher training institute – was founded, he almost immediately began contributing to the education collective that ran it. Vygotsky gave classes in general child psychology, experimental psychology, and educational psychology. He also contributed to the continuing education of teachers, in particular in rural schools, by giving educational psychology classes. He proposed setting up a school bureau of experimental psychology, the goal of which would be to show future teachers psychological experiments, to drive practical work and research, and to analyse teaching activity. Vygotsky carried out numerous experiments.

Simultaneously, he undertook significant cultural activities: he wrote dozens

* We wish to thank Michel Brossard, Irina Leopoldoff and Daniele Nune Silva for their comments on a previous version of our article and Béibhinn Regli for her high-quality translation.

of books, theatre and ballet reviews, and even published a short book on the artist Bykhovsky; he edited a literature review and founded a publishing house for literary works; he gave dozens of conferences on classic and contemporary authors as well as on the theory of relativity, and psychoanalysis. Vygotsky distinguished himself as an organiser of theatre productions, inviting the most innovative theatre companies in the USSR to Gomel, companies inspired by the directing theories of Stanislavski, Meyerhold and Tairov. Moreover, Vygotsky participated in the management of the local press museum, which made available to the public dozens of daily newspapers, and organised literary soirées with contemporary writers.

This intense activity dedicated to the construction of the school and cultural institutions, coupled with the publication of literary and theatre reviews, culminated in two major books: *The Psychology of Art* (1925/2005) and *Educational Psychology* (1926/2006). These constitute the early drafts of his future conception of education, notably the role of education in the area of imagination and emotion. The first is centered on the exploration of the function of art; the second on education and teaching. We would note here that most of Vygotsky's biographers of this period especially insist on his knowledge of and involvement in artistic – particularly literary – circles, and underline his philosophical affiliations, notably evoking the importance of Hegel, Spinoza, and, occasionally, Marx. For our part, we believe that Vygotsky's professional activity as a teacher and teacher trainer was just as decisive in the orientation of his work. We will gladly defend the theory that psychology was a means for him to understand the role that education plays in development, and what mechanisms exist to allow us to understand the effect of human works on the constitution of the personality. Psychology might have proven to be a sort of detour on the path to achieving other goals. Kozulin says so, in a certain manner: "Vygotsky was primarily a thinker, psychology being just the most appropriate stage on which the drama of ideas could be played."¹¹

The Psychology of Art: Art as a social technique of feelings demands an education in the perception of art

This intense activity in artistic circles, coupled with his observations, analyses, classes, and reviews,¹² led Vygotsky to more systematically address the question to which *The Psychology of Art* responds: "Thus the question arises whether or not it is possible to determine some psychological laws of the effect of art on man?"¹³

Rejecting at once the methods which seek answers in the psychology of the artist, the reader or the receiver, Vygotsky suggests an indirect approach, resembling that of the historians who must construct their knowledge of the past using multiple sources, none of which truly corresponds with the past, or that

of a few bones: starting with the specificity of works of art.¹⁴ In *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky claims that one of the central dimensions is the essentially ambivalent mode of the aesthetic experience, which may at once contain, to take that example, the horror of an event described, as well as a sense of liberation produced by the work itself. The reaction of the reader resides in this contradictory experience. This dialectic manifests itself in a catharsis, presupposing the active participation of the reader, which allows the discharging of affect, which restructures the internal experience, thanks to the imagination. Transposing this function of art and its laws of functioning at the level of society, Vygotsky can thus affirm: "We realize that science does not simply infect one person or a whole society with thoughts and ideas, any more than technology helps man to be handy. We can also recognize that art is an expanded 'social feeling' or technique of feelings."¹⁵

Two essential elements appear in this conception of art. Firstly, art is a technique, a tool, or an instrument that affects the emotions or feelings. This idea of an instrument would later be systematized by Vygotsky, who would apply it to other dimensions of psychological life. But the significance of this phrase is also another one, as evidenced by: "Art is the organization of our future behavior. It is a requirement that may never be fulfilled but that forces us to strive beyond our life toward all that lies beyond it." It is a specific way of acting: "Art performs with our bodies and through our bodies." And more generally: "The whole practical scope of art ultimately comes down to its educational action."¹⁶

This educational action, however, is itself mediated; its path must be cleared: *via* the social discourse on the subject, and notably the critique of works of art, *via* education itself. Education, notably teaching, facilitates the educational action of art. Against the positions taken by those aiming to extract art from the school environment by virtue of the so-called exceptionality of art as a human practice, Vygotsky defends the absolute necessity of school mediation in two stages: the construction of knowledge of the work from a historical and social point of view, and the analysis and knowledge of its aesthetic function in order to avoid the reduction of the work to its contents. This explanation allows a form of reflective consciousness which, far from impeding emotion, orients the effect of the work, fortifies it, preserves it, and confers a direction on the deployment of the "unconscious" processes that it awakens.

Here we find one of our central themes, i.e. education as cultural transmission; in this case split in two: the educational action of art presupposes an education in art. But the few elements provided in *The Psychology of Art*, a book which aims, as we have seen, to respond to the question of how art affects human beings, are only briefly outlined. In this book, it is above all Vygotsky the art critic who speaks, notably reflecting on his own practice as a critic, and on the social function of his activity in the area of the diffusion of art in all its forms.

Vygotsky briefly returns to the question in a short text that appears at once to be a summary of the main themes of *The Psychology of Art*, and an outline of a

The infectious nature of art is not based on a simple transmission of feelings from one to another – in this sense, the speech of the speaker, the cry of pain, the loud hurrah are no less infectious. Verses on sadness lift us above the sadness, they defeat it, overcome it, solve it. How they achieve this, *by what psychological means* – that is the X, the proper name of art, the unknown quantity from which any investigation should start.¹⁷

As we will see, this research on X would never materialise.

Aesthetic education: A first systematic theory – An outline of a psychology of reception and catharsis

Vygotsky explores the question of mediation through art, and above all the mediation of art through education and teaching, in greater depth in the book that was written in the context of his training activity. *Educational Psychology* (1926) is a teacher training manual, no doubt a result of the classes Vygotsky gave to teachers. The chapter on aesthetic education offers elements of an educational theory. Vygotsky begins with an in-depth analysis of the place generally attributed to aesthetics at school: it is in the service of teaching; it does not have an educational function in itself and through itself. In this critical perspective, Vygotsky distinguishes three external pedagogical functions. The first is moral education: in this field, aesthetics should have an immediate effect, resulting in the analysis of the work from this point of view. Suppressed, the aesthetic dimension of the work disappears. Considering, secondly, a book as a reflection of reality is just as problematic: the characters would then represent a sort of group photograph of their time; this would not only give a false notion of reality, but would also erase the aesthetic elements of the book, thereby reducing it to its contents. And thirdly, the work of art is approached as an end in itself; the sense of the aesthetic experience is limited to the perception of pleasure that the child experiences, quite apart from the specificity of the work of art.

The dominant trends of educational aesthetics criticised by Vygotsky are notably the result of a psychological conception that considers aesthetic perception to be a passive experience. Vygotsky postulates that emotional aesthetics, on the contrary, are the result of an active aesthetic reaction. In theorising this reaction, he is again in disagreement with the classic conceptions which were particularly widespread in the movements of new education.¹⁸ Aesthetic emotions do not consist of an intensification of life, a pooling of feeling felt by an author, an “infection” through the emotion of the artist, as Tolstoy puts it. It is catharsis, the resolution of contradictions experienced in the perception of a work, which creates the effect. To achieve this, each person must, to some extent, recreate the work, or at least recapitulate in part the creative process forming the basis of the work. “This dialectical, reconstitutive behavior of the

most complex of all activities of internal struggle, which is resolved in catharsis.” In other words: the aesthetic reaction implies an active participation, a work of the imagination. Its points of reference are the aesthetic dimensions that give shape to the material. It is in this type of reception of aesthetic work that people should be educated, Vygotsky believes: not art as narrowly moral education, nor as a representation of the real, nor art for art’s sake, but art as the possibility of transformation of the person through catharsis. More generally still: the aesthetic reactions provoked by the reception of the art aim “not to reproduce any genuine reaction, but to transcend it and to triumph over it. [...] Thus art is not a means of making up for a lack in life, but issues from what it is in man that exceeds life.”¹⁹

This is an extremely strong demand which implies a sophisticated and multi-dimensional conception of aesthetic education. Vygotsky theorises it by distinguishing three separate but interrelated dimensions which this education must confront: a) developing the creativity of the student; b) developing the technical abilities and knowledge related to works of art and aesthetic practice; c) training in aesthetic judgement, teaching the ability to comprehend works of art.²⁰

The development of students’ abilities of aesthetic creation transforms the profound link between lived experience and emotion, and allows its exteriorisation by giving it a semiotic material form. Art and the writing of literary texts in particular allow the child to develop their creative abilities while transforming their relationship to their experience and their emotions.

Aesthetic education then comprises the teaching of technical abilities. This training must be broad, relate to all forms of art, and refer at once to the productions of the students themselves and the reception of works of art: only instruction which goes beyond the techniques in and of themselves makes sense in the context of general aesthetic education.

It is the last – and most complex – form of education, the comprehension of works of art, that is by far the least developed, Vygotsky laments. It is, however, the most important:

We must always bear in mind, basically, such an orientation of the child towards the aesthetic experience of mankind as a means of bringing the child face to face with real art and, through this experience, to include the child’s psyche in that general labor mankind throughout the world has engaged in for thousands of years, sublimating the child’s own psyche in art – here is a fundamental task and the fundamental goal.²¹

Vygotsky ends his remarks on aesthetic education by adopting a strong stance in favour of the need to provide access to art to all. The widespread idea that the gifted should be given a different education from other children must be combatted, he says. Talent is not the starting point, but a goal of education. “For each of us our creative potentiality becomes the accomplice of Shakespeare when we

phonies, and it is this which is the most striking indicator that in each of us there is concealed a potential Shakespeare and a potential Beethoven."²²

Concentration on the development of psychological functions - disappearance of the reflections on art and art education

As we have seen, art thus appears to be a technique, a psychological instrument to operate on mental processes, specifically the emotions. Vygotsky extrapolates the idea that semiotic means are instruments to be used on the mental processes: memory, attention, perception, even language itself. He systematises the analogy, which we have already encountered, between tools which allow us to affect the material world in the broad sense of the term and, through their appropriation, those who use them, and the tools which affect mental functions, those of others and their own: the semiotic means at large, the signs. As psychological instruments, signs fundamentally transform these processes: writing, the means of producing language; concepts, the means of thinking; maps, the means of perceiving space. The appropriation of these semiotic instruments developed throughout history, and their interiorisation, at once reorganises mental functions, articulates them with others, and simultaneously constitutes the basis for building new functions, in fact new mental systems. Included in the list of the semiotic instruments enumerated by Vygotsky are "works of art".²³ And yet, contrary to the numerous other psychological instruments he would later study (for example, in Chapter 6 of *Thought and Language*), works of art were no longer the subject of in-depth analysis, except, marginally, in his short book on *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood* published in 1930 and, indirectly, in his draft of a psychology of the actor.²⁴

In Chapter 2 of the short book mentioned, which is dedicated to "imagination and reality", Vygotsky returns briefly to the function of art. He explicitly returns to the distinction between technical and psychological tools: "Indeed, why do we need works of art? Do they not influence our internal world, our thoughts and feelings just as much as technical equipment influences the external world, the world of nature?"²⁵ Without explicitly referring to *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky nevertheless evokes its essence: works of art have an internal logic that results from the complex combination of the internal elements of the author, in particular thoughts and emotions, and the external world. The work constitutes exteriorisation, the external incarnation of this creative transformation of the material, and forms to some extent the closing of a loop that goes from the exterior, from events, from multiform reality, and returns to them. This brief reminder of the instrumental function of art (Vygotsky mentions prose, poetry and music), the only one in the book, leads us to deduce that his fundamental conception of art has not changed. But nor has it been further developed in the light of the systematisation of his theoretical approach, nota-

of human works of art as means of transforming their own mental functioning over the course of history.

This brief reminder essentially serves to contrast the function of works of art with productions of the child's imagination and creative activity, the analysis of which is at the heart of the book. Vygotsky explicitly brings into opposition the two types of creation, and thereby contradicts the interpretation agreed upon in the Rousseauist fold of ideas of the child and education previously mentioned.

In Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of the book, Vygotsky analyses the creative activities in writing, theatre and drawing, and their function in development. But he clearly insists on the fact that these activities are far from producing works of art. On the one hand, because they consist of productions characterised by a certain syncretism: these kinds of activities are not distinguished or mastered as such by children; and more generally even, children express in an immediate manner their experiences, actions, and thoughts, for example when they draw or perform. On the other hand, children have not severed the link with personal interests and experiences. At once original, precisely by virtue of their origin, and stereotypical, through a lack of mastery of artistic means, children in fact use blueprints. Childish productions of a moment, they have no claim or comparable function to works of art. Their function and effect are precisely to develop the imagination, influence the emotions, come into contact with and master rudimentary forms of artistic languages – where we find, once again, very briefly, the question of reception of art.

This conception of the results of children's creative activity is fundamentally different from the theories propagated at the time, notably by Tolstoy. Certainly, if we sometimes find surprising treasures in children's texts, which Tolstoy does not hesitate to compare to the most beautiful pages of Goethe himself, they are always situated within a narrow context, realising limited, even primitive, forms. The consequence of this way of seeing is not to view educational intervention as harmful to the natural spontaneity of the child, killing their creativity, as in the Rousseauist aim defended by Tolstoy, but, on the contrary, as a necessary condition of this creativity.²⁶ The action of the educator, for example that of Tolstoy, is in fact massive, and Vygotsky analyses it admiringly, showing its inner workings and influence. In the "dogmatic-religious" ideology of a Tolstoy, and other people who adhere to that ideology, Vygotsky claims, this educational action is a blindspot. It is however the very condition for the possibility of developing the imagination and creative activity. Technical mastery – to which teaching can contribute – plays an essential part in the appropriation and development of the capacities for writing and drawing. "All art, by cultivating special methods for embodying its images, has its own special technology and this merger of technical disciplines and exercise of creativity is, undoubtedly, the most valuable method in the educator's repertoire for students of this age."²⁷

A surprising silence – An attempt at an explanation

The book on imagination and creativity aims to comprehend the construction of human ability, in particular through education and teaching in the area of various artistic activities.²⁸ It is therefore unsurprising that the question of reception is not addressed therein. But neither is it found in other contexts which would, however, lend themselves perfectly to it. Most notably in the famous Chapter 6 of *Thought and Language*, which systematically addresses the question of the transformation of mental processes through the teaching of content related to school disciplines: foreign languages, grammar, writing, scientific concepts. Let us recall the main theory: the systematic transmission of knowledge and know-how in school disciplines is the condition of the transformation of the relationship to everyday, spontaneous knowledge and know-how. The awareness of the functions through their clarification in verbal thought fundamentally transforms the functions, which reorganise themselves with other functions (which in no way means that everything becomes conscious), forming new mental systems. We easily recognise the few elements developed by Vygotsky, both with regard to aesthetic education in *Educational Psychology* and, more subtly and more in depth, in *The Psychology of Art*. Which, without doubt, is closer to his heart: the "educational" effect of art, its function as a "social technique of feelings", which presupposes mediation, does not appear even disjointedly in his later work, in which Vygotsky introduces the heuristic concept of a psychological tool or instrument and further develops his now well-known theory of the relationship between teaching and development. How can this be explained?

Let us recall that art is defined as a social technique of feelings. Let us also remember that Vygotsky, on several occasions, tackles the construction of a theory of emotions: he mentions it in the text on mental systems, and he produces a long, unfinished manuscript entitled *The Teaching about Emotions: Historical-Psychological Studies*²⁹ in which he prepares the material to produce a theory.³⁰ Two main theories are discussed and demonstrated.

1. Vygotsky maintains that all the existing theories on emotions are profoundly dualist. Either they seek a bodily foundation of emotion and must have recourse to metaphysical explanations to address more complex emotions, or they define emotions as spiritual phenomena without the possibility of attaching them to physical manifestations. Contrary to what the proponents of the first position (notably James and Lange) might claim, their theory is not a result of Spinoza's monist philosophy, but reproduces in fact the Cartesian explanation of emotions, with, notably, the possible domination of the emotions by the will.

2. The only possible issue outlined by Vygotsky in the book, is to analyse the emotions as a product of development reorganising the relationships between the various mental functions, in the tradition of what he meticulously described in his pedagogical work.³¹ Mental and physical processes are deeply interwoven,

The socio-historically constituted tools are the conditions that make such transformations possible.

Such tools must be produced to allow the transformation of emotions. Cultures – in history and through history – endlessly construct, transform and create particular emotions thanks to social techniques. And Vygotsky states that art plays the role of the revealer of emotions, and is an instrument for their transformation:

The difference between the mystical devotion sworn by the knight to his lady and the gallantry of 17th century nobles remains unexplained [...] In fact, we can only admit that the mere glimpse of a feminine silhouette automatically provokes an infinite number of organic reactions from which may spring a love like that of Dante for Beatrice, if we do not presuppose the entirety of the theological, political, aesthetic, and scientific ideas which compose the consciousness of the wonderful Alighieri.³²

The Teaching about Emotions: Historical-Psychological Studies essentially limits itself to critiquing existing theories; Vygotsky situates the problem, then produces material to construct a theory of emotions which responds to the requirements which emerge from his harsh critique of the existing proposals. It is without doubt precisely the impossibility of formulating a theory of the emotions that prevents him from articulating his intuition about the function of art as a social technique of feelings, with his analyses of the development of higher mental functions and the creation and transformation of new mental systems. The "X" shall remain "X".

Contributions to a history of emotions through their education through art

Through certain themes addressed by Dekker, we have defined two central threads with which to explore certain aspects of Vygotsky's work: a) art is a means of educating; it notably allows the teaching of the feelings, the emotions; b) the educational function in the broad sense of art implies an education in art. We have found in Vygotsky's work a theory of art and aesthetic education which centers on the question of work on the emotions. The artistic œuvre is a "social technique of feelings", he claims, analysing – similarly to the way in which Dekker semiotically examines symbols – the internal logic of works of art which transform the emotions. But this presupposes an education in the reception of works of art, a prerequisite for the deployment of their educational action; and this education must be aimed at everyone in the egalitarian society that the USSR of the time was planning to establish. As we previously mentioned, Vygotsky began outlining a theory of aesthetic education in the reception of works of art in his first published book, *Educational Psychology*, but this

descriptions of the construction of imagination and of creative activity through children's artistic activity, the goal of which is not to create works of art, but precisely to develop these functions in relation to the work on the emotions. The question of the effect of art and its mechanisms, like that of the education in reception, ceased to be addressed in Vygotsky's work.

A draft of an aesthetic education therefore, which, in order to be completed, was doubtless awaiting a theory of the emotions which would allow Vygotsky to more precisely define the possibilities of art education as an educational action; a theory which itself has remained a draft, with a strong emphasis on the need to be able to analyse the emotions as a historical and cultural product, notably thanks to the educational action of art. The enquiries of Dekker and numerous others propose concrete descriptions of this intertwining of education and emotion. However, the psychological theory to analyse in detail the concrete mechanisms essentially remains a wasteland.

Notes

- ¹ Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "Cultural Transmission and Inter-Generational Interaction," *International Review of Education* 47 (2001): 77-95.
- ² Dekker, "Cultural transmission", 89.
- ³ Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "Moral Literacy: the Pleasure of Learning how to Become Decent Adults and Good Parents in the Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century," *Paedagogica Historica* 44, no. 1-2 (2008): 137-151; see also Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "A Republic of Educators: Educational Messages in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting," *History of Education Quarterly* 36 (1996): 155-182.
- ⁴ Dekker, "Moral Literacy".
- ⁵ Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Inge Wichgers, "The Embodiment of Teaching the Regulation of Emotions in Early Modern Europe," *Paedagogica Historica* 54 (2018): 48-65.
- ⁶ In the Netherlands, the Utrecht university professor of learning psychology C.F. van Parreren (1920-1991) became an enthusiastic propagandist of the work of Vygotsky and his Russian followers such as Gal'perin and Davydov. *Sovjetpsychogen aan het woord*, red. C.F. van Parreren en J.A.M. Carpay (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1972). His student, René Van der Veer, professor at Leiden university, has become one of the world leading specialists of studies on Vygotsky. *Understanding Vygotsky* (Oxford: Blackwell), written together with Jan Valsiner is still one of the best introductions into Vygotsky's work.
- ⁷ We refer to the original Russian texts and translations in several languages; we quote the English translations where available.
- ⁸ "Yet, surprisingly, Vygotsky never returned to these aesthetic questions in his abundant later work, with the exception of an article written in 1932." Françoise Sève, "Presentation," in *Psychologie de l'art, Lev Vygotsky* (Paris: La Dispute), 9.
- ⁹ Lev S. Vygotsky, "Problems of Method," in *Mind in Society. The Development of Higher Psychological Process* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931/1978), 58-78, 65.
- ¹⁰ For the following, see René Van der Veer and Jan Valsiner, *Understanding Vygotsky. A Quest for Synthesis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Semyon Dobkin, "Ages and Days (Semyon Dobkin's Reminiscences)," in *One is not Born a Personality. Profiles of Soviet Educational Psychologists*, ed. K. Levitin (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), 23-38; Mikhail Makhovskiy, *Lev Vygotsky: A Biography* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999); C.F. van Parreren and

- Kovač, 2000); Ekaterina Zavershneva, "The Vygotsky Family Archive (1912-1934)," *Journal of Russian & East European Psychology* 48 (2010): 14-33; Lev Vygotsky, *Notebooks*, ed. Ekaterina Zavershneva and René Van der Veer (Berlin: Springer, 1912-1934/2018).
- ¹¹ Alex Kozulin, *Vygotsky's Psychology. A Biography of Ideas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 2.
- ¹² René Van der Veer, "Vygotsky in context: 1900-1935," in *The Cambridge Companion to Vygotsky*, ed. Jarry Daniels, Michael Cole and Jim Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21-49, 24.
- ¹³ Lev Vygotsky, *The Psychology of Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1925/1971), 21. Among the abundant literature on this text, we have used, aside from Kozulin, *Vygotsky's Psychology* and Van der Veer and Valsiner, *Understanding Vygotsky*; David Kellogg, *The Real Ideal. An Illustrated Guide to Vygotsky's Psychology of Art* (Seoul: unpublished manuscript. http://lhc.ucsd.edu/mca/Paper/The_Real_Ideal.pdf); David West, "Lev Vygotsky's Psychology of Art and Literature," *Changing English* 6 (1999): 47-55; Marcelo Guimaraes Lima, "From Aesthetics to Psychology: Notes on Vygotsky's 'Psychology of Art,'" *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 26 (1995): 410-424.
- ¹⁴ Analysing the aesthetic response through an indirect method is what Dekker and Wichgers also practice in a certain manner in "The Embodiment of Teaching", embodying Vygotsky's remark: "The method of *The Psychology of Art* is analysis, abstraction (that is why there is not a word about the fable as such; I ignore its specific traits); let the historian show which feelings were experienced in which eras and in what form." Vygotsky, *Notebooks*, 76; the note dates from 1926.
- ¹⁵ Vygotsky, *Psychology of art*, 244. Another metaphor: "Art is vaccination, i.e., overcompensation (in every sense of the word: poison + immunity), i.e., weakness that creates strength, disease that generates super-health, and previously it was considered as just disease. But is the vaccination with smallpox really a vaccination of disease rather than health? It is both, but the meaning of disease is in super-health. This is the central complex of ideas that I adopted in *The Psychology of Art*, and not Freud, not the formalists. At its core, this is a dialectical principle of a philosophical, epistemological nature." Vygotsky, *Notebooks*, 81, written in 1926.
- ¹⁶ All quotations from Vygotsky, *The Psychology of Art*, 253. The last sentence is our translation from Russian.
- ¹⁷ Lev Vygotsky, "Contemporary Psychology and Art," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 45, (1927/2011): 107-117, 115.
- ¹⁸ While inspiring developed approaches within the movement, Vygotsky is opposed to the dominant Rousseauist concept of the child; see Rita Hofstetter and Bernard Schneuwly, "Knowledge for teaching and knowledge to teach: two contrasting figures of New Education: Claparède and Vygotsky," *Paedagogica Historica* 45 (2009): 605-629.
- ¹⁹ Lev S. Vygotsky, *Educational Psychology* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 1926/2006), 252-256.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 256.
- ²¹ Ibid, 261.
- ²² Ibid, 269.
- ²³ Lev Vygotsky, "The Instrumental Method in Psychology" (1930). <https://www.marxists.org/archive/vygotsky/works/1930/instrumental.htm>.
- ²⁴ Lev Vygotsky, "Imagination and creativity in childhood," *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* 42 (1930/2004): 7-97; Lev Vygotsky, "On the Problem of the Psychology of the Actor's Creative Work," in *Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky* (New York: Routledge, volume 6, 1932/1999), 237-244.
- ²⁵ Vygotsky, "Imagination", 21s.
- ²⁶ Here also, parallels can be drawn with Dekker's positions, as mentioned at the beginning of our text. Dekker, "Cultural transmission"

²⁸ It is worth nothing that Vygotsky insists moreover on the fact that the development of creative abilities is too often limited to art: "Unfortunately, traditional education, which kept children far away from work, allowed children to manifest and develop creative capacities primarily in the area of art." Ibid, 86.

²⁹ Lev Vygotsky, "The Teaching about Emotions: Historical-Psychological Studies", in *Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky* (New York: Routledge, volume 6, 1933/1999), 71-235.

³⁰ We find some theories in the course: The Emotions and their Development in the Child. Lev Vygotsky, "Lectures on Psychology," in *The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky* (New York: Plenum Press; volume 1, 1932/2011), 289-358.

³¹ Lev Vygotsky, *Pedagogical Texts* (Berne: Lang, 1930-32/2018).

³² Vygotsky, *The Psychology of Art*, 350. The recent, intense development of research dedicated to the history of emotion confirms Vygotsky's intuition: "The emotions are cultural phenomena and not biological data. However, the biological exists in the manifestation of the emotion. Hence the impression that the history of emotions may henceforth, after years of experimentation, turn its back on cognitive psychology and other neurobiological sciences to address emotions historically." Bénédicte Sère, "History of the Emotions: Time for Review," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 1 (2017): 119-132.

When a teacher cannot be molded by the hands of strangers. Teachers of English and teachers of Russian in Vietnam, 1955-1986

Natalia Tsvetkova

Introduction

Studies on the history of education¹ have gained the attention of scholars from such diverse disciplines as political science, international relations, cultural studies, sociology, development studies, and finally, history. Each field of knowledge brings its own methodology, including various theories and research methods, as well as its own context for exploring the history of education.

The study of international relations, for example, consider education as an instrument of national security, foreign policy, and draw on theoretical backgrounds such as realism and constructivism in studying the history of education. From this perspective, education becomes a cohesive part of cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, and soft power, making the academic world part of a political game on both local and international levels. While adherents of realism agree that education as a part of public diplomacy or soft power helps to promote foreign policy aims, followers of constructivism argue that education and academic exchanges shape a system of values and norms that, in turn, shape identity, perceptions, and social, political, and economic constructs of the world.² Moreover, the webs of traditions, practices, identities, and interests of other entities can limit the intentions of a political power and its foreign policy. Finally, constructivism offers insights in the binary system of perception as constructed in such terms as "we/they", "strangers" or "another" that is widely applied in the study of international relations.³

History embraces diverse forms of research and views on education from the position of its cultural, family, and social functions. Historians typically launch their research from the standpoint of definite historical periods, using them to place the research subject in various historical contexts and assess what is happening with education under the effects of these contexts. Today, historians who study a period of European and global history known as the Cultural Cold War are taking a close look at the history of education. Researchers are renewing studies on educational exchanges, exploring the Americanization of European universities, and start new studies on how and why some new educational institutions were established in the context of the Cold War. Most of the studies discusses such anthropological concepts as Americanization/Sovietization, cultural imperialism, cultural transfer or response theory.⁴

This paper offers a narrative on the history of education in terms of the history of international relations and, more narrowly, in terms of the Cold War,

Kinderen zijn anders. Kinderen, opvoeding en
onderwijzing gebeurt overal. Maar wie goed
kijkt, ziet verschillen. Afbeeldingen en teksten
uit het verleden tonen die. In deze bundel staan
ze centraal: *images of education*, letterlijk en
figuurlijk. Wat zeggen prenten uit de Gouden
Eeuw of kindbeelden in historische jeugdboeken
ons? Hoe keken negentiende-eeuwers aan tegen
chaos in de klas? Wanneer werd verlegenheid
een probleem? Was de twintigste eeuw eigenlijk
wel de "eeuw van het kind"? En waar schoot de
opvoeding tekort?

Voor wie de eigen *images of education* tegen het licht
wil houden, geeft dit boek een caleidoscoop van
onderwerpen en benaderingen die vandaag in de
internationale geschiedschrijving van opvoeding
en onderwijs de toon zetten. Reflectie op de
actualiteit is daarbij nooit ver weg. Het verleden
plaatst hedendaagse kwesties in een nieuw, vaak
verrassend licht.

UITGEVERIJ

Passage

