

Editorial

Psychology of Art: Thematic section

Vera Lúcia Trevisan de SOUZA¹  0000-0003-2062-0680

Lev Semionovich Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Russian psychologist considered the father of Historical-Cultural Psychology, began his reflections and studies in the field of Psychology investigating the esthetic reaction of the subject to art. These studies are addressed in his doctoral thesis, completed in 1925, entitled “*Psicologia da Arte*” (Vigotski², 1925/1999). The text, with wide and comprehensive meanings, is supported by references that reveal the depth of studies of the author in the field of art and psychology and it reflects his efforts to demonstrate art as a human phenomenon whose roots and essence are social, thus characterizing a powerful mediation between man’s reality and himself.

In the book, which was published in Brazil in 1999, Vygotsky presents a psychology that dialogues with the fields of Philosophy, Sociology and Art, discussing theoretical issues and concepts that have not yet been considered in the dominant interpretations of his work.

However, several researchers around the world have recently dedicated themselves to studying and understanding the concept of *perezhivanie* (Cole & Gajdamschko, 2016; Fleer, González Rey, & Veresov, 2017), a Russian expression whose translation into Portuguese has been the subject of many controversies, that would contain the idea of Vygotsky about the experience of emotions. Emotion is a concept that has been ignored in his work and it is the framework for the “*Psicologia da Arte*”, as we shall see in the following articles.

Vigotski (1925/1999), thus, defines the power of art to experience emotion:

... the true nature of art always implies something that transforms, that surpasses the common feeling, and that same fear, pain, and uneasiness, when aroused by art, imply something other than the those contained in them. And this something overcomes those feelings... thus, the most important mission of art is achieved (Vigotski, p.307).

According to the author, art extracts its content from life, but when it is appreciated, it produces much more content in the subjects. That is, in contact with an artistic production, the subjects experience

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¹ Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas, Centro de Ciências da Vida, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia. Av. John Boyd Dunlop, s/n., 13060-904, Jd. Ipaussurama, Campinas, SP, Brasil. *Correspondência para/Correspondence to:* V.L.T. SOUZA. E-mail: <vera.trevisan@uol.com.br>.

² The name of the author is written in different ways on Brazilian and foreign productions. Depending on Russians translations, the last name appears with two yy’s – Vygotsky, or with one y in the beginning – Vygostki, or with one in the end – Vigostsky, and, finally, with two ii’s – Vigostski. In Brazil, after a period discussing about what form of spelling would be the correct one, the majority of the author’s experts is now using the last form – Vigotski – and maintaining in the citations the form how it appears on the consulted edition.

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situations and/or phenomena expressed in it which, as such, do not belong to the subjects or to their reality. However, subjects experience their real emotions and feelings through art. Artworks, then,... are a kind of prolonged social feeling or a technique of feeling... (Vigotski, p.308). This is because art does not express life, or phenomena as they present themselves, but it focuses on the same foundations and aspects, which are antagonistic aspects of reality, subverting time and space. It is in this sense that Vigotski (1925/1999) affirms the dialectical character of the artistic expression that would contain a contradiction in the very relationship between form and content, between the represented and the representation. Then, in the enjoyment of art and the different natures of expression, the subject would be in contact with this contradiction, which favors the experience of emotions – *perezhivanie*.

... Art is based on certain vital feelings, but it produces a certain elaboration of these feelings... which consists in catharsis, in the transformation of these feelings into opposing feelings, into solutions. ... It increasingly introduces action of passion, disrupts internal balance, modifies will into new meanings, pronounces from the mind, and relives the feeling of those emotions, passions and vices that would have remained in an indefinite and immobile state without art. Art 'utters the word we were seeking, it sound the rope that was stretched and mute' (Vigotski, p.316).

This is the sense of catharsis that the author defends as the potential of the psychology of art. We comprehend *perezhivanie* as intense emotional experiences that impact development and interfere with its course. It is the kind of experience that gives the character of drama to development, which is understood as a revolution that has the environment as source, implying in this sense the concept of social situation of development that will be addressed in the first article.

By sharing many of these concepts, we have organized the articles that are part of this special theme with the purpose of contributing to the dialogue with researchers who have been dedicated to studies that reveal the plausibility of the psychology of art, whether for the advancement of new understandings and postulations or for the critical thinking in collective contexts.

The first article, Vygotsky's Psychology of Art: his fundamental yet unexplored text by Fernando González Rey, presents an in-depth analysis of some theoretical and conceptual issues present in the book *The Psychology of Art*, referring to the context of its production that have not been addressed in Vygotsky's works. He points out, in particular, the concepts of 'sense', '*perezhivanie*' and the 'social situation of development', as meanings that significantly increase the potentiality of the author's legacy for understanding the phenomena such as subjectivity, creativity and motivation.

In the second article, *To be or not to be: the perezhivanie of the actor in the studies of L.S. Vigotski*, Raquel Rodrigues Capucci and Daniele Nunes Henrique Silva address Vygotsky's concepts of art and psychology, particularly *perezhivanie*, and the considerations of Stanislavski regarding the *perezhivanie* of the actor. The authors present an interesting and instigating reflection on the aspects involved in the creative work of the actor and those that permeate the psychological processes in the development of the subject, especially in dramatic moments, characterized by the emotional experience that promotes changes in trajectories.

The third article, *The importance of the concept of perezhivanie in the constitution of transformative agents*, by Fernanda Coelho Liberali and Valdite Pereira Fuga, brings contributions from linguistics of the concepts of mobility and repertoire to dialogue with Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie* and expands the understanding of the subjects' developmental process. The authors defend the central role of the concept of *perezhivanie* for the development of subjects as transformative agents of a society, which has sometimes been characterized as harmful to the capacity of action of the subjects.

The last article, *Psychology of Art: foundations and practices for transformative action*, by Lucia Trevisan de Souza, Lilian Aparecida Cruz Dugnani and Elaine de Cássia Gonçalves dos Reis, highlights the humanizing dimension of art and its potential to affect the subject, electing it as the tool of psychologists'

work in favor of the constitution of more elaborate forms of thought and action about the world. The authors support their propositions on Vygotsky's concepts of imagination, emotion and consciousness as higher psychological functions influenced by people's enjoyment of art, whose centrality is the contradiction that the work contains within itself. They present, at the end, an analysis of an intervention experience carried out with young night high-school students, in which the potential of art in the promotion of the subject's power to act is evidenced.

The four articles illustrate the potentiality of concepts postulated by Vygotsky, particularly *perezhivanie*, imagination, emotion, and the social situation of development (1896-1934) to understand the processes of human development and propositions of transformative actions within different collective contexts.

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