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Rethinking the philosophical underpinnings of cultural historical theory

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In the Vygotskian Academy little attention is given to exploring the philosophical underpinnings of Vygotsky's writings. However, without a sufficient understanding of the philosophical background it is difficult for cultural historical theory to be adequately understood. In contrast to the psychologists who attempt to dissociate themselves from philosophy, Vygotsky openly stressed the importance of the philosophical perspective for posing and resolving crucial questions raised in the domain of psychology. Philosophy was examined by Vygotsky from the perspective of its interconnections with a concrete discipline (in particular, with psychology). Vygotsky found the roots of the crisis in psychology in the failure of Cartesian dualism which was a dominant tendency in the domain of psychology. He was looking for a philosophical theory which allows for a radically new look at the key theoretical, methodological and practical issues raised in psychology as a discipline. Vygotsky was inspired not by a sole thinker but by multiple thinkers with various worldview orientations. The presentation will discuss the philosophical roots of Vygotsky's theory by focusing mainly on the philosophical ideas of Spinoza, Hegel, Feuerbach and Marx.

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