

New Hermeneutics of the Davidovian Work: Critical Reading of V. V. Davidov: A Problematic Biography, by Roberto V. Puentes¹

Nova hermenêutica da obra davidoviana: leitura crítica de V. V. Davidov: uma biografia problemática, de Roberto V. Puentes

Nueva hermenéutica de la obra davidoviana: lectura crítica de V. V. Davidov: una biografía problemática, de Roberto V. Puentes

Orlando Fernández Aquino²

ABSTRACT

The work *V. V. Davidov: A Problematic Biography* (2026), by Roberto Valdés Puentes, constitutes a relevant milestone for contemporary studies in Cultural-Historical Psychology and Developmental Didactics by proposing a historiographical and epistemological reconstruction of V. V. Davidov's intellectual trajectory, distancing itself from traditional biographies and expository readings that tend to present his production as a finished conceptual system. This article aims to critically analyze this interpretative proposal, arguing that its main contribution lies in the establishment of a new hermeneutic horizon for understanding the Davidovian work. The adopted methodology was based on a critical review of Valdés Puentes's book, examining its theoretical foundations, its historiographical choices, and the epistemological implications arising from its approach. The results indicate that the originality of the work resides not only in its documentary breadth or the reconstitution of biographical episodes, but above all in the interpretative shift it promotes by conceiving Davidov as a thinker whose theory develops through revisions, internal tensions, and successive reformulations. It is concluded that this perspective inaugurates a new research program for Davidovian studies, offering significant contributions to the historiography of Cultural-Historical Psychology, to the epistemology of Developmental Didactics, and to the advancement of research on learning, the formation of theoretical thinking, and learning activity.

Keywords: Vasili V. Davidov; Cultural-Historical Psychology; Developmental Didactics; Learning Activity; Historiography of science.

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² Graduate Program in Education at the University of Uberaba (UNIUBE) - University Center of Patos de Minas (UNIPAM). Minas Gerais, Brazil. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3784-8908>. E-mail: orlando.aquino@uniube.br.

RESUMO

A obra *V. V. Davidov: uma biografia problemática* (2026), de Roberto Valdés Puentes, constitui um marco relevante para os estudos contemporâneos da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural e da Didática Desenvolvimental ao propor uma reconstrução historiográfica e epistemológica da trajetória intelectual de V. V. Davidov, distanciando-se das biografias tradicionais e das leituras expositivas que tendem a apresentar sua produção como um sistema conceitual acabado. Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar criticamente essa proposta interpretativa, defendendo que sua principal contribuição consiste na instauração de um novo horizonte hermenêutico para a compreensão da obra davidoviana. A metodologia adotada baseou-se na revisão crítica do livro de Valdés Puentes, examinando seus fundamentos teóricos, suas escolhas historiográficas e as implicações epistemológicas decorrentes de sua abordagem. Os resultados indicam que a originalidade da obra não reside apenas na amplitude documental ou na reconstituição de episódios biográficos, mas sobretudo no deslocamento interpretativo que promove ao conceber Davidov como um pensador cuja teoria se desenvolve por meio de revisões, tensões internas e reformulações sucessivas. Conclui-se que essa perspectiva inaugura um novo programa de investigação para os estudos davidovianos, oferecendo contribuições significativas para a historiografia da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural, para a epistemologia da Didática Desenvolvimental e para o avanço de pesquisas sobre aprendizagem, formação do pensamento teórico e atividade de estudo.

Palavras-chave: Vasili V. Davidov; Psicologia Histórico-Cultural; Didática Desenvolvimental; Atividade de estudo; Historiografia da ciência.

RESUMEN

La obra *V. V. Davidov: una biografía problemática* (2026), de Roberto Valdés Puentes, constituye un hito relevante para los estudios contemporáneos de la Psicología Histórico-Cultural y de la Didáctica Desarrollante al proponer una reconstrucción historiográfica y epistemológica de la trayectoria intelectual de V. V. Davidov, distanciándose de las biografías tradicionales y de las lecturas expositivas que tienden a presentar su producción como un sistema conceptual acabado. Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar críticamente dicha propuesta interpretativa, defendiendo que su principal contribución consiste en la instauración de un nuevo horizonte hermenéutico para la comprensión de la obra davidoviana. La metodología adoptada se basó en la revisión crítica del libro de Valdés Puentes, examinando sus fundamentos teóricos, sus elecciones historiográficas y las implicaciones epistemológicas derivadas de su enfoque. Los resultados indican que la originalidad de la obra no reside únicamente en la amplitud documental o en la reconstitución de episodios biográficos, sino sobre todo en el desplazamiento interpretativo que promueve al concebir a Davidov como un pensador cuya teoría se desarrolla a través de revisiones, tensiones internas y reformulaciones sucesivas. Se concluye que esta perspectiva inaugura un nuevo programa de investigación para los estudios davidovianos, ofreciendo contribuciones significativas para la historiografía de la Psicología Histórico-Cultural, para la epistemología de la Didáctica Desarrollante y para el avance de las investigaciones sobre aprendizaje, formación del pensamiento teórico y actividad de estudio.

Palabras clave: Vasili V. Davidov; Psicología Histórico-Cultural; Didáctica Desarrollante; Actividad de estudio; Historiografía de la ciencia.

1. Introduction

Few scholars have exerted such a profound influence on the theory of school learning as Vasili Vasilievich Davydov (1930–1998). Since the second half of the twentieth century, his formulation of the theory of study activity has represented one of the most significant developments of the Cultural-Historical Psychology inaugurated by Lev S. Vygotsky (1896–1934) and further developed, among others, by Alexei N. Leontiev (1903–1979), Pyotr Ya. Galperin (1902–1988), and Daniil B. Elkonin (1904–1984). By shifting the focus of learning from the mere acquisition of knowledge to the development of theoretical thinking, Davydov offered a new paradigm for understanding the relationship between teaching, psychological development, and the formation of consciousness.

The international dissemination of this theory, however, has produced a curious phenomenon. As its concepts came to occupy a central place in educational scholarship, an interpretive tendency emerged that focused predominantly on the systematic exposition of its fundamental categories. Study activity, theoretical generalization, the ascent from the abstract to the concrete, and concept formation gradually became relatively stabilized reference points, often presented as components of a fully developed conceptual edifice. Although this movement played a decisive role in disseminating Developmental Didactics, it also tended to obscure the historical character of Davydov's intellectual development by reducing the visibility of the revisions, conceptual shifts, and theoretical tensions that accompanied his scientific production over nearly four decades.

It is precisely within this context that *V. V. Davydov: A Problematic Biography*, the unpublished work of Roberto Valdés Puentes, should be situated. Far from producing a conventional biography or merely an introduction to Davydov's thought, the author undertakes a historiographical investigation whose central object is the internal evolution of Davydov's theoretical system. The life of the Soviet scholar provides the organizing axis of the narrative, yet it is not its true analytical center. The real protagonist of the book is, above all, the historical development of a scientific system, traced from its earliest formulations to the reflections produced during the final months of Davydov's life. This methodological choice endows the work with a distinctive originality rarely found in the field of intellectual biography, shifting attention from the chronology of events to the dynamics of conceptual construction.

The present study aims to provide a critical analysis of Roberto Valdés Puentes' biography of V. V. Davydov, employing an analytical and interpretive reading of the work as its methodological approach. It argues that Valdés Puentes not only reconstructs Davydov's intellectual trajectory but also reconfigures the theoretical horizon from which that trajectory can be understood. Accordingly, this review contends that the book inaugurates *a new hermeneutics of Davydov's intellectual production* term proposed here to designate the transition from a predominantly systematic reading to a genetic, historical, and open-ended approach. Although this expression is not explicitly formulated by the author, it synthesizes the interpretive contribution identified in the present review.

This hypothesis is developed throughout the following pages through an examination of the book's intellectual architecture, its reconstruction of the theory of study activity, its interpretation of Davydov's final theoretical formulations, and the historiographical and epistemological implications of Roberto Valdés Puentes' proposal. It is argued, ultimately, that the book's principal contribution lies in restoring historical movement to a tradition that has often been presented as excessively stabilized, thereby opening new avenues for contemporary research in *Cultural-Historical Psychology and Developmental Didactics*.

The originality of the present study lies not merely in offering a critical assessment of the book, but in proposing an interpretive framework through which its principal scientific contribution may be understood.

2. The Intellectual Architecture of the Work: From Biography to the History of a Theory

From its opening pages, *V. V. Davydov: A Problematic Biography* makes it clear that it does not intend to follow the traditional model of scientific biography. Rather than organizing the narrative as a chronological succession of personal events, Valdés Puentes structures the book around the major theoretical problems that shaped the development of Davydov's thought. Chronology remains present, but it serves a secondary role within a broader investigative logic: to understand the genesis of specific concepts, their transformations, the crises they underwent, and their subsequent reformulations.

This methodological choice reflects a sophisticated understanding of the nature of scientific production. The book does not treat concepts as abstract entities detached from

the historical circumstances of their emergence. Instead, it reconstructs the enduring relationship among theoretical problems, empirical investigations, and conceptual reformulations, demonstrating that the development of Davydov's theory did not proceed linearly but through successive processes of theoretical reconstruction.

The very organization of the book embodies this conception. Its five parts trace Davydov's intellectual trajectory from his formative years to his final notes written in 1997, addressing such issues as the influence of P. Ya. Galperin and D. B. Elkonin, the development of the theory of study activity, the successive versions of its structural model, and the growing significance of affectivity, personality, and the subject, culminating in an analysis of the relationship between Davydov and Vygotsky. The result is not merely a biographical narrative but a genuine history of the formation of a scientific theory.

It is precisely this methodological approach that distinguishes the book from much of the literature devoted not only to Davydov but also to other Soviet scholars. Whereas many studies focus on the systematic exposition of theoretical concepts, Valdés Puentes shifts attention to the process through which those concepts were constructed. Consequently, the theory of study activity no longer appears as a static conceptual system but as a historical construction continuously subjected to critical revision.

This shift in perspective has implications that extend well beyond Davydov's biography itself. It transforms the way the entire tradition of Developmental Didactics can be reinterpreted by restoring to its concepts the historical movement through which they were constituted. Instead of presenting finished categories, the book reveals scientific problems in continuous development; instead of a closed theoretical system, it portrays a theory that remains open to dialogue, criticism, and transformation.

It is precisely at this point that Valdés Puentes' work reveals its most original contribution. By reconstructing the historical development of Davydov's theory, it invites readers to move beyond an essentially systematic interpretation toward a *genetic understanding of scientific thought*. This shift in interpretive perspective constitutes the foundation of what I designate as *a new hermeneutics of Davydov's work*, whose implications will be examined in the following sections.

3. The “Problematic Davydov”: The Historical Reconstruction of a Theory in Development

It is precisely at this point that what, in the interpretation advanced in this review, constitutes the book's principal scientific originality comes into view. The *historical-genetic hermeneutics of Davydov's work* is employed here to designate the interpretive shift promoted by Valdés Puentes' study. This is not merely a new reading of Davydov, nor simply the incorporation of previously unpublished documents or the revision of biographical episodes. Rather, what is at stake is a transformation of the very conditions under which Davydov's intellectual production is understood.

The notion of *hermeneutics* is used here in its epistemological sense. It is not limited to the interpretation of texts but refers to the horizon of understanding through which a scientific tradition is read, received, and developed. Every major intellectual tradition is mediated by interpretive frameworks that ultimately determine what is regarded as central or peripheral, established or problematic. Consequently, to alter the hermeneutic horizon is to transform the very object of understanding itself.

This has occurred repeatedly throughout the history of science, whenever scholars who had long been interpreted through crystallized readings came to be understood in light of new historical questions. The originality of Valdés Puentes' work appears to lie precisely at this level. His purpose is not merely to expand knowledge about Davydov but to transform the way in which his intellectual production may be interpreted by future generations.

This shift becomes evident from the book's subtitles. By characterizing Davydov through the expression *A Problematic Biography*, the author does not suggest that the scholar's personal life was problematic. Rather, he argues that Davydov's scientific production can only be understood when examined through its internal tensions, successive reformulations, and the theoretical problems that remained unresolved at the end of his intellectual journey. The adjective *problematic* thus ceases to have a biographical meaning and acquires an epistemological one. It designates a theory in motion, whose intelligibility depends less on the stability of its concepts than on an understanding of the questions that continually drove its reconstruction.

From this perspective, Davydov no longer appears as the author of a completed theoretical system. His work is instead presented as a process of continuous inquiry, characterized by successive conceptual shifts. These changes are no longer interpreted as mere terminological refinements but become the very object of analysis. Rather than a thinker enclosed within the coherence of a finished system, what emerges is a scholar who continually revises assumptions, expands conceptual categories, and seeks to respond to new theoretical and experimental challenges.

This methodological choice represents a significant departure from part of the international tradition of Davydov studies. A considerable body of scholarship has, quite legitimately, been devoted to the systematic exposition of the **theory of study activity**, describing its structural components, its fundamental actions, and its didactic principles. Yet this literature has frequently privileged the internal coherence of the theoretical system while giving comparatively little attention to its historical development. Valdés Puentes deliberately shifts this perspective. His primary concern is to understand *how* the theory was constructed and *why* certain conceptual categories underwent transformation over nearly four decades of intellectual production.

It is precisely at this point that the present essay locates the book's greatest scientific contribution. Its originality lies not merely in the body of information it assembles but in its reconfiguration of the very object of inquiry. Davydov ceases to be interpreted as the architect of a stabilized theoretical system and instead emerges as the protagonist of an ongoing historical process of scientific elaboration.

This transformation of the hermeneutic horizon has implications that extend far beyond the biography of the Soviet scholar. It also reshapes the way Developmental Didactics itself may be studied, taught, and further developed in the decades to come.

4. Reconstructing the Theory of Study Activity

The clearest demonstration of this interpretive perspective is found in Valdés Puentes' analysis of the theory of study activity. Rather than presenting it as a completed theoretical model, he reconstructs its historical development by tracing the successive transformations that shaped its elaboration.

This methodological choice is particularly fruitful because it reveals that the fundamental concepts of Davydov's theory neither emerged simultaneously nor remained unchanged over time. Instead, they constitute progressive responses to the theoretical and methodological problems encountered throughout decades of experimental research and theoretical reflection.

In examining the successive versions of the structure of study activity, Roberto Valdés Puentes demonstrates that Davydov repeatedly reformulated the internal organization of this central category. What is often presented in literature as a single, unified model proves instead to be the outcome of a prolonged process of conceptual reconstruction. This historical analysis prevents oversimplified interpretations and demonstrates that the theory of study activity never remained intellectually static.

The significance of this demonstration is considerable. For many years, a substantial portion of the literature focused on describing the actions of study activity, procedures of control and self-regulation, evaluation, and the formation of scientific concepts, taking as its reference a relatively consolidated version of the theory. Valdés Puentes' approach fundamentally reshapes this picture by showing that these components were progressively reorganized at different stages of Davydov's intellectual development.

Even more importantly, this reconstruction is not merely historiographical in purpose. It enables readers to understand why certain theoretical difficulties recur throughout Davydov's work. Rather than treating these difficulties as occasional inconsistencies, Valdés Puentes demonstrates that they are indicators of the theory's own developmental movement.

This interpretation profoundly changes the way study activity should be understood. Instead of appearing as a fixed set of didactic categories, it emerges as a scientific construction that remains permanently open to revision. The theory reveals itself less as a closed system of answers than as a research program undergoing continuous transformation.

This feature becomes particularly evident when the analysis reaches the final phase of Davydov's intellectual production, during which issues that had previously occupied a secondary place—especially those concerning needs, motives, emotions, and personality—assume increasing prominence in his theoretical reflections. It is precisely

within this context that Valdés Puentes identifies one of the most significant turning points in Davydov's entire intellectual trajectory, an analysis that constitutes one of the book's most original and insightful contributions.

5. The Late Davydov and the Reopening of the Theory

If the reconstruction of the successive versions of the theory of study activity constitutes one of the book's most significant historiographical contributions, its analysis of the late Davydov arguably represents its most original epistemological achievement.

One of Valdés Puentes' greatest merits lies in demonstrating that the final years of Davydov's intellectual production cannot be understood as a mere continuation of his earlier formulations. On the contrary, they constitute a period of intense theoretical revision, during which categories that had previously been absent, or peripheral gradually came to occupy a central place in his reflections. His attention increasingly shifted toward issues related to needs, motives, emotions, imagination, personality, and the subject, signaling a significant expansion of the theory's explanatory horizon.

This transformation did not occur abruptly, nor did it represent a break from Davydov's previous work. Rather, it was the outcome of a long process of intellectual maturation, through which Davydov appears to have recognized that a theory of human development cannot be confined to the analysis of cognitive structures, however sophisticated they may be. The development of theoretical thinking must instead be understood in its unity with the affective-volitional dimension of human activity.

In this respect, Valdés Puentes draws attention to an issue of exceptional importance. Davydov's notes from 1997 suggest an effort to reposition the need-motive sphere at the center of activity theory. This movement may be interpreted as an attempt to overcome a limitation that Davydov himself had identified in his earlier formulations: the relative predominance of the operational dimensions of activity over the internal conditions that endow activity with psychological meaning.

This interpretation substantially reshapes the conventional understanding of Davydov's intellectual legacy. For many years, the theory of study activity was identified almost exclusively with the didactic organization of learning actions. Valdés Puentes' reading demonstrates that, during the final years of his life, Davydov appears to have been moving

toward a broader conception of human activity, one in which cognition, affectivity, personality, and consciousness once again constitute a dynamic and inseparable unity.

The importance of this theoretical shift can hardly be overstated. It brings Davydov back into closer dialogue with one of the central concerns of Cultural-Historical Psychology since Vygotsky: the unity of thought and emotion. This does not imply that Davydov abandoned his earlier theory. Rather, it suggests that he sought to expand it by incorporating dimensions whose relative absence had begun to reveal significant explanatory limitations.

This interpretation gives new meaning to Davydov's intellectual production. His final formulations cease to be regarded as merely late reflections and instead acquire the status of a decisive stage in the internal evolution of his theory. Valdés Puentes' work demonstrates convincingly that to understand Davydov requires following this movement of conceptual reopening, thereby avoiding the tendency to freeze his theoretical production at a single moment in its development.

6. A Historical-Genetic Hermeneutics of Davydov's Work

Based on the preceding analyses, it becomes possible to state more precisely the interpretive hypothesis developed in this study. It is argued that the principal scientific contribution of *V. V. Davydov: A Problematic Biography* consists in the elaboration of a historical-genetic hermeneutics of Davydov's work.

The use of this expression requires some clarification. It is not intended to designate a hermeneutic theory explicitly formulated by Valdés Puentes, nor to attribute to the author intentions that are not expressed in the manuscript. Rather, it is an analytical category proposed by the essayist to synthesize the interpretive shift produced by the work. This *historical genetic hermeneutics* is characterized, in our view, by five constitutive elements.

The first is its genetic character. Instead of treating Davydovian concepts as stabilized definitions, the investigation follows their formation, transformations, and successive reformulations. The concepts cease to appear as finished products and come to be understood in their process of constitution.

The second element is its historical character. Each category is interpreted in close relation to the scientific problems that gave rise to it. The theory ceases to be presented

as an abstract structure and is revealed instead as the result of an intellectual trajectory profoundly marked by the historical, institutional, and experimental circumstances in which it was elaborated.

The third element is its dialectical character. The internal tensions within Davydov's scholarly production are not treated as inconsistencies to be eliminated, but as constitutive moments in the development of theory itself. Contradictions cease to represent weaknesses and become driving forces of scientific elaboration.

The fourth element corresponds to its open character. The work rejects any interpretation that presents Davydov as the author of a definitively completed system. By emphasizing the questions that remained open, Valdés Puentes restores to the theory its condition as a scientific project in permanent development.

Finally, this hermeneutics has a prospective character. The book does not limit itself to reconstructing the past. By identifying problems that Davydov left only partially resolved, it points toward directions for future research and invites the scientific community to continue the investigative movement initiated by the author himself.

These five elements, considered together, make it possible to understand why the present study argues that the work inaugurates a new interpretive horizon for Davydovian studies. Its originality lies not only in the presentation of new information, but in the transformation of the way in which this information comes to organize the understanding of the theory.

Consequently, Davydov ceases to be read exclusively as the author of a theory of study activity and comes to be understood as a researcher whose principal legacy consists in the permanent opening of new scientific problems.

7. Contributions to Cultural-Historical Psychology and Developmental Didactics

The implications of this new interpretation extend well beyond the domain of intellectual historiography and bear directly on the contemporary development of Cultural-Historical Psychology and Developmental Didactics.

First, Roberto Valdés Puentes' work helps overcome a recurring tendency in the international reception of Davydov's thought: the fragmented use of concepts drawn from different stages of his intellectual production, often presented as though they belonged to a single, unified theoretical formulation. The historical-genetic reconstruction offered by

the biographer demonstrates that many of the disagreements found in literature stem precisely from the absence of this evolutionary perspective.

Second, the book makes an important methodological contribution to studies within the Cultural-Historical tradition. By emphasizing the reconstruction of the genesis of concepts, it reaffirms the necessity of understanding any theoretical system in its historicity, thereby avoiding excessively normative or dogmatic interpretations.

Third, the work significantly broadens the possibilities for the future development of Developmental Didactics. By demonstrating that Davydov was progressively moving toward a more comprehensive integration of cognition, affectivity, personality, and activity, it opens new avenues for research aimed at deepening this theoretical unity.

This perspective is particularly fruitful in the contemporary context, where issues related to creativity, subjectivity, ethical formation, digital culture, and emerging learning technologies continually challenge classical models of teaching and learning. Valdés Puentes' interpretation suggests that the Davydovian tradition itself contains conceptual resources capable of engaging critically with these new challenges, if it is understood in its historical movement of development rather than as a self-contained and completed theoretical system.

This is perhaps one of the book's greatest strengths: it restores vitality to a theory that has often been presented as an established intellectual legacy by demonstrating that its true power lies precisely in its capacity to continue generating new questions for contemporary educational research.

8. A New Hermeneutics of Davydov's Work as a Research Program

One of the most fruitful consequences of the interpretation proposed by Valdés Puentes is that it repositions Davydov's work within an ongoing scientific process rather than a completed intellectual achievement. This aspect deserves particular attention because it shifts the discussion beyond historiography and epistemology to the very status of contemporary research in Cultural-Historical Psychology.

Every scientific tradition depends on the ways in which it interprets its classical authors. When such authors come to be read merely as architects of consolidated theoretical systems, their work tends to become an object of exegesis. Research then concentrates on the correct interpretation of existing concepts, progressively reducing

the space for new theoretical formulations. As a result, the further development of the theory gradually gives way to the preservation of its orthodoxy.

The interpretation developed by Valdés Puentes moves in the opposite direction. By demonstrating that Davydov's intellectual production was characterized by successive revisions, conceptual shifts, and unresolved theoretical problems, he restores to it precisely what defines every living scientific tradition: its enduring capacity to generate new questions.

This point deserves particular emphasis because fidelity to classical authors is often understood as the literal preservation of their formulations. The present work suggests a different understanding. To remain faithful to Davydov means to continue investigating the problems that his theory left unresolved, rather than merely reproducing its conceptual categories.

From this perspective, the notion of the unfinished classic, developed throughout the book, acquires particularly profound significance. A classic remains relevant not because it has provided definitive answers to the questions of its own time, but because it has formulated problems whose explanatory potential continues to inspire new lines of inquiry. Davydov's enduring significance derives less from the stability of his answers than from the extraordinary vitality of the questions he bequeathed to the scientific community.

It is precisely at this point that the present analysis identifies the broadest implications of the *historical-genetic hermeneutics* advanced by Valdés Puentes. Its purpose is not merely to reinterpret the past. Rather, it reorganizes the understanding of the Davydovian tradition to open new possibilities for its future development. In other words, it is a *hermeneutics oriented toward the continuation of scientific inquiry*.

9. Intellectual Biography as an Epistemology of Science

Another aspect that profoundly distinguishes this work concerns the way Valdés Puentes conceives the very genre of biography. Traditionally, scientific biographies seek to reconstruct the life of a given scholar in chronological order, relating to personal events, published works, and major intellectual contributions. Although this model possesses undeniable historiographical value, it often preserves a relatively rigid separation between the individual's life trajectory and the evolution of his or her theoretical production. In *V. V. Davydov: A Problematic Biography*, this separation virtually disappears.

The biographical narrative becomes an instrument for reconstructing the internal development of the theory. The focus of the investigation shifts away from the succession of events in Davydov's life and toward the dynamics through which his concepts emerge, mature, enter into tension, and undergo partial reformulation. This methodological choice profoundly transforms the epistemological status of biography itself.

In fact, the book is much closer to a *historical epistemology of science* than to an intellectual biography in the classical sense. Its true object is not Davydov as an individual, but the process through which a scientific theory comes into being. This characteristic explains the impression, frequently experienced throughout the reading, that the book's real protagonist is not Davydov as a person but the historical development of his thought.

This observation perhaps captures one of the book's most elegant features. The individual's life becomes intelligible because it follows the movement of the theory. Conversely, the theory becomes intelligible because it remains continuously connected to the concrete problems confronted by its author. This articulation gives coherence to the narrative while avoiding both biographical psychologism and conceptual abstractionism.

10. Scientific Appropriation of the Work

The scientific contribution of a scholarly work is measured not only by the originality of its interpretations but also by its capacity to reorganize future research agendas. In this respect, *V. V. Davydov: A Problematic Biography* demonstrates remarkable heuristic potential.

The first contribution that may be appropriate concerns the need to distinguish the different stages of Davydov's intellectual production whenever his concepts are employed as the theoretical foundation of empirical research. Valdés Puentes' historical reconstruction demonstrates that such categories as study activity, generalization, theoretical thinking, school content, and development underwent significant transformations throughout Davydov's intellectual trajectory. Consequently, future investigations should explicitly indicate the particular stage of this conceptual evolution to which they refer.

The second contribution concerns the reintegration of the unity between cognition, affectivity, and personality. By demonstrating the growing centrality of the need-motive sphere in Davydov's later formulations, the book significantly expands the possibilities for investigating learning processes, thereby enabling scholars to move beyond overly cognitivist interpretations of study activity.

The third contribution is methodological. The work demonstrates the fruitfulness of *historical-genetic analysis* as a strategy for investigating scientific theories. Rather than limiting itself to the description of concepts, it traces their formation, successive revisions, and internal tensions. This methodological approach can be incorporated not only into research on Davydov but also into studies devoted to other authors within the Cultural-Historical tradition.

A fourth contribution is of particular importance for contemporary Developmental Didactics. By understanding Davydov's theory as an open system, Valdés Puentes provides a solid foundation for investigating new educational problems without departing from the Cultural-Historical tradition. Issues related to creativity, intellectual authorship, ethical formation, subjectivity, digital culture, and artificial intelligence may thus be examined as coherent developments of the theory's own historical movement rather than as topics external to it.

This observation is especially relevant for the development of Latin American scholarship. Over recent decades, numerous research groups have sought to extend the scope of Developmental Didactics beyond the problems originally investigated by Davydov. Valdés Puentes' interpretation offers an important epistemological foundation for this endeavor by demonstrating that the Soviet scholar himself maintained his theory in a state of continuous reconstruction.

From this perspective, the continuity of the Davydovian tradition depends not on the literal reproduction of its conceptual categories but on preserving the investigative method that guided their development. This is perhaps the book's most significant scientific contribution. It teaches readers less about what to think about Davydov than how to continue thinking with **Davydov**. This distinction, seemingly subtle, represents a profound transformation in the way the development of scientific theories can be understood.

11. Final Considerations

Throughout this essay, I have sought to demonstrate that *V. V. Davydov: A Problematic Biography* extends far beyond the boundaries of a conventional intellectual biography. Its contribution lies not only in its rich documentary foundation, its historiographical rigor, or the depth with which it reconstructs the intellectual trajectory of Vasili Vasilievich Davydov. Although these features are unquestionably significant, they converge toward an even broader scientific achievement: the transformation of the interpretive horizon from which Davydov's work can be understood.

It was precisely designated to designate this interpretive shift that the concept of a *historical-genetic hermeneutics of Davydov's work* was proposed. In our interpretation, Valdés Puentes restores to Davydov's concepts the historical movement of their constitution, allowing his theory to be understood not as a completed system but as a continuous process of scientific elaboration.

This perspective simultaneously reshapes the historiography of Cultural-Historical Psychology, the epistemology of Developmental Didactics, and the very way in which the tradition inaugurated by Vygotsky may be investigated. In doing so, the book restores vitality to Davydov's intellectual legacy.

His work ceases to appear as a conceptual heritage enclosed within its own internal coherence and instead reemerges as an open scientific program, continually challenged by new historical problems. It is for this reason that this review argues that the book's principal originality lies in inaugurating a new way of reading Davydov—not a reading oriented toward the search for a definitive theoretical system, but one grounded in the historicity of a theory that remained intellectually alive until its final writings. Few intellectual biographies achieve such an effect.

By critically reconstructing the internal development of Davydov's intellectual production, Valdés Puentes offers the scholarly community not merely a renewed interpretation of one of the foremost psychologists of the Cultural-Historical tradition but also an invitation to continue developing his work through new generations of researchers.

The book's high conceptual density presupposes readers who are already reasonably familiar with the Cultural-Historical tradition. Consequently, beginning researchers may find some of its specialized discussions challenging to follow. This

characteristic, however, does not diminish the book's scientific value. On the contrary, it reflects the author's deliberate decision to engage primarily with the specialized academic community.

If the interpretations advanced in this review are confirmed through future scholarly debate, Valdés Puentes' work may well represent a turning point in the contemporary reception of Vasili V. Davydov's thought. This, perhaps, is the greatest achievement of a book destined to become a reference work: not merely to provide new answers, but to transform the very questions that a scientific tradition comes to ask about itself.

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