

Abstract submitted by Shannon Brincat

Title:

Towards a global social ecology: Bookchin, Vygotsky, and imagination

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In the wake of ecological crises, there has been a resurgence of interest in the relation between dialectical thinking, ecology, and human social structures. The overlapping biospheric, oceanic, and climate crises have highlighted a number of indelible weaknesses at the core of late capitalism, one of the most important pressing the lack of an ability to think through and imagine alternatives to the imposition of global neoliberalism. Taking the question of rebuilding human communities as its guiding theme, this paper will examine the dialectical thinking of Murray Bookchin and Lev Vygotsky as potent new ways to embrace the faculty of imagination for developing a genuinely international ecological and democratic life. The first part develops Bookchin's dialectical naturalism as capable of not only transcending dualistic conceptions of "man/nature" but in expanding our awareness of the potentialities of history along what Bookchin terms the "libertory pathways" to a restorative relation between human "second nature" and biological "first nature". The second part then uses Vygotsky's reconceptualisation of the faculty of imagination as "creative activity" that allows us to see how the faculty of imagination is developmental, interpenetrated with reality, and dependent on social-history and culture. Taken together these offer a powerful lens to re-imagine global cities oriented toward a social ecological future.

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