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“What Is Absolutely Impossible for *One* Person, Is Possible for Two” — Annotations on Some Feuerbachian Elements in the Later Works of L. S. Vygotsky*

Introduction

Not later than with the publication of the first volume of the *Collected Works*, experts in cultural-historical theory should be acquainted with L. A. Radzikhovsky's (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 1, p. 384) statement that Vygotsky was not only “very familiar” with the work of the German materialist philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) “and valued it highly,” but beyond that “felt that Feuerbach's ideas could be used as a point of departure for the construction of a Marxist materialistic psychology.” Nevertheless, it seems that up to now the supposition that there is a systematic relation between some ideas of Vygotsky and some ideas of Feuerbach, despite its provoking implications, has not found noticeable resonance in the literature relevant to the subject. This is all the more deplorable, as the endeavor to clarify the real nature of the relation between Vygotsky and Feuerbach leads to a deeper understanding not only of Vygotsky's work itself but also of its political background.

Thereby one of the most significant findings is: Although Vygotsky had a throughout positive view of Feuerbach's ideas, his relation to the latter is not that of a straightforward succession. Rather, in the course of Vygotsky's scientific career, his appreciation of Feuerbach expressed itself in quite different ways, whereby three periods can be discerned:

In the first period (1924-1926/27), “Feuerbachianism” seems to have been for Vygotsky the quasi self-evident precondition for the realization of a “Psychology of societal man” in the sense of G. V. Plekhanov (cf. Plechanow, 1955, 1958). For a better understanding of this line of approach, as it is reflected for instance in the first chapter of *The Psychology of Art* (cf. Vygotsky, 1971), one has to take into account not only the writings of Plekhanov which Vygotsky is explicitly referring to, but also the literary and editorial work of A. M. Deborin, who had been a disciple of Plekhanov and was very influential in Soviet-Russian philosophy until the end of the 1920s. Deborin not only referred to Feuerbach in his own writings, but published an extensive book about Feuerbach in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the great philosopher's death. Furthermore, between 1923 and 1926, he edited, together with

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L. A. Aksel'rod-Ortodoks, three volumes of selected writings of Feuerbach; all this “contributing much to the propagation of Feuerbachian thought in Soviet Russia” (cf. Rawidowicz, 1931/1964, p. 496 — author’s transl.). Thus, it seems to be part of a more general trend that Vygotsky’s enthusiasm for Feuerbach’s “psychological materialism” reached a temporary peak in his great essay on the historical significance of the crisis in psychology. Here the name of Feuerbach is the password for the access to Vygotsky’s program for the systematic reorganization of psychology as a whole on a strictly materialistic base (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 3, pp. 322/324/327).

In the second period, which is the period of the elaboration and re-elaboration of the cultural historical approach (i.e., between 1927/28 and 1930/31), Feuerbach seems to have lost for Vygotsky his programmatic relevance, references to him apparently only serve as a methodological corrective against an impending deviation toward an idealism of the Hegelian kind (cf. Vygotsky, 1989, pp. 65 f.; Coll. Works, Vol. 5, p. 172); whereas in the last period (1931-34) Vygotsky’s relation to Feuerbach is overshadowed by the aftermath of the radical changes which took place within the scientific life in the Soviet Union in 1930/31 (cf. Rawidowicz, 1931/1964, pp. 498 f.; van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991, pp. 373-389; Keiler, 1999, pp. 79-86/pp. 139-142; Keiler, 2002, pp. 302-333/pp. 464 f.). As a consequence, when studying the later work of Vygotsky, we are confronted with a peculiar paradox: On one hand, there is a far-reaching overlap of Vygotsky’s lines of argument with ideas of Feuerbach especially in the area of developmental psychology (compare for instance Coll. Works, Vol. 5, pp. 216 and 231, with Feuerbach, 1957, pp. 82 ff.) but also in the framework of defectological investigations (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 2, pp. 218 f.) and in the area of psycholinguistics (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 1, p. 285); on the other hand, there are conspicuously few explicit references to the great philosopher (who, by the way, in the zenith of his popularity had been honored by the epithet “Germany’s Spinoza” [cf. Grün, 1874, Vol. 1, pp. 382 f.]). Thus, in regard to the period of 1931 up to Vygotsky’s death in 1934, the real extent of Vygotsky’s affinity to Feuerbach can be revealed only by a painstaking and time-consuming philological analysis — an analysis for which not only the knowledge of the respective work of Vygotsky but also an ample familiarity with the work of Feuerbach is the absolutely necessary precondition.

As indicated in the abstract, I will focus in this article on what might be called the “crypto-Feuerbachianism” of the “later” Vygotsky (1931-34). And in doing so, I am pursuing a double aim:

On one hand, I want to give an idea of the methodological difficulties one is confronted with if one does not uncritically accept Radzikhovsky's assertion of the close affinity of Vygotsky to Feuerbach as an "insider's" expertise, but tries to prove the validity of this assertion. On the other hand, I will present data which, in my opinion, are compelling enough to prove that there is even more to this assertion than can be deduced from Radzikhovsky's words.

As a starting point I have chosen two passages in the later work of Vygotsky where there is an obvious reference to Feuerbach, in order to reveal the hidden meaning of these kinds of references, and subsequently explain the general significance of what can be called the "Feuerbach principle" in Vygotsky's later work.

Two Quasi-Quotations Charged with Problems

The first of these two passages is the final word of Vygotsky's introduction to E. Gracheva's book on the education and instruction of severely retarded children which was published in 1932, and the second passage is from the final part of Vygotsky's posthumous work *Thinking and Speech*.

The final word of Vygotsky's introduction to Gracheva's book reads as follows:

"Only social education can lead severely retarded children through the process of becoming human by eliminating the solitude of idiocy and severe retardation. L. Feuerbach's wonderful phrase, might be taken as the motto to the study of development in abnormal children: 'That which is impossible for one, is possible for two.' Let us add: That which is impossible on the level of individual development becomes possible on the level of social development" (Coll. Works, Vol. 2, pp. 218 f.).

And at the end of *Thinking and Speech* we can read: "In consciousness, the word is what — in Feuerbach's words — is absolutely impossible for one person but possible for two. The word is the most direct manifestation of the historical nature of human consciousness" (Coll. Works, Vol. 1, p. 285).

As clear as these two references to Feuerbach are at first glance, a closer look shows that they are charged with problems. First, we notice that in both cases the source of the reference is not specified, so that, if we are not Feuerbach experts, we have great difficulty in examining whether what Vygotsky aims to express with his quasi-quotations really corresponds to Feuerbach's original intent. Second, although the source is not specified, it seems that Vygotsky in both passages is referring to one and the same original statement by Feuerbach, but is imparting to it in each case a different sense, corresponding to two completely different

thematic contexts. However, in doing so, Vygotsky not only gives an impressive illustration of his own reflections on the relationship between meaning and sense (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 1, pp. 275 ff.), but also provokes the suspicion that there must be something wrong with his references to Feuerbach; that is, that there must be, either in the introduction to Gracheva's book or in the last chapter of *Thinking and Speech* — if not in both cases — a misinterpretation of the respective original statement of Feuerbach.

“Man with Man — the Unity of I and Thou — Is God.”

And this suspicion seems to be even more justified, when we reintegrate Feuerbach's statement in its original context, namely paragraph 12 of the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (first published in German in 1843). Because, in doing so, we have to realize that in this paragraph Feuerbach is dealing with a topic that seems to be quite far from the problems Vygotsky is dealing with. It is Feuerbach's point, by referring to “a striking example”, namely that of the natural sciences, to demonstrate the fundamental

“truth that man's conception of God is the human individual's conception of his own species, that God as the total of all realities or perfections is nothing other than the total of the attributes of the species — dispersed among men and realizing themselves in the course of world history — succinctly combined for the benefit of the limited individual” (quoted after Feuerbach, 1966, p. 17).

An idea which Feuerbach expands as follows:

“The domain of the natural sciences is, because of its quantitative size, completely beyond the capacity of the individual to view and measure. Who is able to count the stars in the sky and at the same time the muscles and nerves in the body of a caterpillar? (. . .) Who is able to observe simultaneously the difference of height and depth on the moon and at the same time observe the differences of the innumerable ammonites and terebratula? But what the individual does not know and cannot do all of mankind together knows and can do. (. . .) While one person notices what is happening on the moon or Uranus, another observes Venus or the intestines of the caterpillar or some other place (. . .) Indeed, while one person observes this star from the position of Europe, another observes the same star from the position of America. What is absolutely impossible for *one* person alone is possible for two” (cf. *ibid.* — rectified by me after the original [German] version [cf. FGW, Vol. 9, pp. 279 f.]).¹

¹ Besides the fact that there are only lamentably few official translations of the writings of Feuerbach, the understanding of his ideas is rendered even more difficult for the English reading public by the fact that these translations sometimes lack the necessary authenticity. Thus, quite paradoxically, the *Collected Works* versions of Vygotsky's quasi-quotations of Feuerbach in both cases are closer to the German original wording than the official English translation of the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, which reads: “What is absolutely

If Vygotsky is singling out precisely this last phrase, in order to emphasize that the basic idea of his own conception about the education of severely retarded children is already anticipated by the conceptions of Feuerbach, the reproach of misleading the reader (i.e., misusing Feuerbach's authority for the propagation of an idea which is quite far from Feuerbach's original conceptions) can only be refuted by proving that the selected phrase serves only as a code for other passages in the work of Feuerbach which correspond much better to what Vygotsky is aiming at. And in fact, it is possible to furnish evidence for that, because there are at least three more paragraphs in the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* which could be conceived as a further "expansion" of Feuerbach's basic idea in the direction of what was "properly meant" by Vygotsky.

Thus paragraph 59 reads as follows:

"The single man for himself does not possess the essence of man, neither in himself as a moral being nor in himself as a thinking being. The essence of man is contained only in the community², in the unity of man with man — a unity, however, which is based only on the reality of the distinction between I and thou" (cf. loc. cit., p. 71).

And paragraph 60 reads: "Solitude is finiteness and limitation; community is freedom and infinity. Man for himself is man (in the ordinary sense); man with man — the unity of I and thou — is God" (ibid.).

And eventually in paragraph 63, Feuerbach stresses that already in his *Essence of Christianity* (first published in German in 1841) he has decoded the "secret of communal and social life, the secret of the necessity of the 'thou' for an 'I'." For him, the explanation of this "secret" is

"the truth that no being — be it man, God, mind, or ego — is for itself alone a true, perfect, and absolute being, that truth and perfection are only the connection and unity of beings equal in their essence. The highest and last principle of philosophy is, therefore, the unity of man with man. All essential relations (. . .) are only different kinds and ways of this unity" (loc. cit., p. 72).

And following this explicit reference to the *Essence of Christianity*, we find no less than two passages that fit very well with the phrase, quoted by Vygotsky. In the first passage Feuerbach says:

impossible for one man alone to accomplish is possible for two men to achieve" (loc. cit., p. 17). Consequently, for the sake of a more authentic appreciation of Feuerbach's ideas, a (responsibly realized) rectification of problematic terms and figures of speech in the official English translations is inevitable here and there.

² The German term used by Feuerbach is "Gemeinschaft".

“Thus man is the God of man. That he is, he has to thank Nature; that he is man, he has to thank man; spiritually as well as physically he can achieve nothing without his fellow-man. Four hands can do more than two, but also four eyes can see more than two. And this combined power is distinguished not only in quantity but also in quality from that which is solitary. In isolation human power is limited, in combination it is infinite. (. . .) Wit, acumen, imagination, feeling as distinguished from sensation, reason as a subjective faculty, — all these so-called powers of the soul are powers of humanity, not of man as an individual; they are products of culture, products of human society” (quoted after Feuerbach, 1957, p. 83).

And in the other passage we can read:

“Community enhances the force of emotion, heightens confidence. What we are unable to do alone we are able to do with others. The sense of solitude is the sense of limitation, the sense of community is the sense of freedom” (loc. cit., p. 124, fn.).

That Vygotsky, when referring to Feuerbach, has in mind precisely these ideas becomes very clear when we go back to the starting point of our “philological” excursion, that is, Vygotsky’s introduction to Gracheva’s book, and have a look at the complete context in which Vygotsky’s reference to Feuerbach’s “wonderful phrase” is integrated.

A Revealing Textual Comparison

In the final part of this introduction, Vygotsky is first reporting on an empirical study, realized by V. S. Krasusskii, which had shown that free collectives of severely retarded children are formed according to the principle of heterogeneity of intellectual levels (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 2, p. 217), then enters the discussion of the views of Edouard Séguin, a prominent representative of 19th century curative pedagogy, and finally gives the following summary:

“The developmental path for a severely retarded child lies through collaborative activity, the social help of another human being, who from the first is his mind, his will, his activities. This proposition also corresponds entirely with the normal path of development for a child. *The developmental path for a severely retarded child lies through relationships and collaborative activity, with other humans.* For precisely this reason, the social education of severely retarded children reveals to us possibilities which might seem outright Utopian from the viewpoint of purely biologically based physiological education (. . .) The term *idiot* (. . .) literally means *solitarius*, a lone man: He is really alone with his sensations, without any intellectual or moral will. (. . .) Contemporary scientific research is wholeheartedly proving (. . .) that the source of idiocy is solitude. (. . .) In this respect, as we have already said, it is the social education of severely retarded children which becomes the sole sustainable and scientific path toward their education. In addition, it

alone is capable of recreating the absent functions where they are not, because of a biological sense of inadequacy in the child. Only social education can lead severely retarded children through the process of becoming human by eliminating the solitude of idiocy and severe retardation. L. Feuerbach's wonderful phrase, might be taken as the motto to the study of development in abnormal children: 'That which is impossible for one, is possible for two.'" (loc. cit., pp. 218 f.).

In conclusion, Vygotsky's reference to Feuerbach's "wonderful phrase," then, in no way can be seen as misleading. Rather, this reference is based on what has been called by Immanuel Kant a "*synthesis*," by which, "in the most general meaning," he understood "the act of putting various presentations together and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition" (cf. Kant, 1982, p. 37). For all that, the difficulty obviously lies in that this process cannot be simply reversed. That is, we cannot readily infer from the result of the "synthesis" back to those "various and manifold presentations" which are its basic material. Rather, this original material must be known in advance to identify the synthesis in question as a synthesis at all. In the present case, this means that for a recognition of what Vygotsky is aiming at with his reference to "L. Feuerbach's wonderful phrase," advance knowledge of the writings of Feuerbach or at least a sufficient familiarity with the central ideas of his philosophy are a basic requirement.

An Attempt at Decoding

This becomes even more clear, when we try to figure out the meaning of the quasi-quotation at the end of *Thinking and Speech*.

Here, if we take the literal wording, Vygotsky should also refer to paragraph 12 of Feuerbach's *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (cf. above, p. 4 f.). But, as follows from our preceding analysis, this would make no real sense.

A second perusal of the relevant writings of Feuerbach, however, reveals that Vygotsky at the end of *Thinking and Speech* obviously is trying to put together certain reflections of Feuerbach on the relationship between thinking and speech, as put forward in his critique of Hegel's philosophy, with another basic idea of Feuerbach which also can be found in the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*.

In fact, it is paragraph 41 where we can read:

"Not alone, but only with others, does one reach notions and reason in general. Two human beings are needed for the generation of man — of the spiritual as well as of the physical man; the community of man with man is the first principle and criterion of truth and generality" (loc. cit., pp. 58 f.).

And in his *Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy* Feuerbach writes: "Language is nothing else than the *realization of the species*, the mediation of the 'I' with the 'You' in order to manifest, by eliminating their individual separateness, the unity of the species" (quoted after Feuerbach, 1972, p. 63 — rectified by me after the original [German] version [cf. FGW, Vol. 9, p. 27]).

Every verbal representation of a thought is therefore

"not a mediation of the thought within the thought and for the thought itself, but a mediation through language between thinking, *in so far as it is mine*, and the thinking of another *person, in so far as it is his*, (. . .) a mediation through which I prove that *my* thought is not mine but thought *in and for itself* so that it can just as well be that of the other person as it can be mine" (cf. loc. cit., p. 64 — rectified by me after the original [German] version [cf. FGW, Vol. 9, pp. 28 f.]).

In other words: The verbal utterance of a thought is "the means through which I free my thought from the form of 'mine-ness' in order that the other person may recognize it as his own" (cf. loc. cit., 66 — rectified by me after the original [German] version [cf. FGW, Vol. 9, p. 31]).

"Synthesizing" all this to the statement that, according to Feuerbach, in consciousness the word is absolutely impossible for one person but possible for two, certainly is correct in essentials, although it might seem illegitimate to present this statement as a quasi-quotation.

A Plea for a Change of Perspectives

Briefly summarizing, we can state that the demonstrated method, to depart from explicit references to Feuerbach in order to get a better understanding of Feuerbachian elements in the later work of Vygotsky, is quite successful. After all, by using this method we can show that there is much more "Feuerbach" in the "later" Vygotsky than can be assumed at first glance. But at the same time we have to admit that this is only a rather limited success — and furthermore a success which can only be reached under certain circumstances: The method merely works in those cases where we already have plain references to Feuerbach, and, moreover, we must have at least a rough idea, *where* to search in his writings.

Thus, inevitably the question arises whether it would not be wiser to take the opposite way right from the start, that is, getting first thoroughly familiar with the writings of Feuerbach and the psychological views which are contained in them, and then examining step by step Vygotsky's work, to find out in what way it contains, openly or concealed, Feuerbachian

elements. Indeed, this seems to be not only the more meaningful but also the more efficient method (cf. Keiler, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997/1999).

In what follows, I will confine myself to the most important findings of this kind of approach:

First of all, we have to recognize that nobody else but Feuerbach himself was the “Feuerbach of Psychology” — and this not only in the figurative but in the literal sense. Starting with his early *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* (first published anonymously in 1830 [cf. FGW, Vol. 1]) and ending with his last work on moral philosophy (finished in 1868, first published posthumously in 1874 [cf. Feuerbach, 1994]), we realize that the concern with psychological questions, although not the dominant leitmotif, nevertheless is pervasive in Feuerbach’s scientific work. Even his critique of Hegel is in some essential aspects formulated from a psychological point of view (a fact stressed by Plekhanov already in 1897). It is not just that Feuerbach’s permanent advancing of “inner reasons” in the last analysis always turns out to be a psychological argumentation; there are two comprehensive treatises as well which reveal themselves at first sight in their basic topics as psychological writings. And more than that, after a closer analysis they can be characterized as programmatic essays in which, mediated by a profound criticism of various idealistic conceptions, are formulated clearly and unmistakably the theoretical-methodological principles of a strictly materialistic psychology. The first of these treatises is entitled *Against the Dualism of Body and Soul, Flesh and Spirit* (cf. FGW, Vol. 10). It was first published in 1846, and it is precisely this treatise which Vygotsky is referring to and taking quotations from in his famous essay on the historical significance of the crisis in psychology and in his article “Mind, Consciousness, the Unconscious” (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 3, pp. 322/324/327/116). Unfortunately, up to now there is no English translation of this in many respects very important writing of Feuerbach. The other treatise is entitled *About Spiritualism and Materialism, Especially with Regard to the Freedom of the Will* (cf. FGW, Vol. 11), first published in 1866 and repeatedly quoted by Plekhanov in his *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (cf. Plechanow 1958). Likewise there does not exist an English translation of this treatise. Apart from these two doubtless psychological writings, there are many passages in Feuerbach’s work where he declares himself *expressis verbis* for psychology. In addition to this, various of his writings reflect essential psychological insights in such an impressive way that we can say without exaggeration that the complete works of Feuerbach contain a system of guidelines and statements of immediate relevance for the design and the realization of a materialistic, cultural-historically oriented psychology (his remarks on the genesis of the human conscience

could serve as a very impressive example [cf. FGW, Vol. 7, pp. 137/139/141; Feuerbach, 1994, pp. 419-425]).

The “Feuerbach Principle” in Vygotsky’s Later Work

Having all this in mind, what then is meant by the “Feuerbach principle” in Vygotsky’s later work?

Whereas for Vygotsky as the author of *The Crisis in Psychology* the writings of Feuerbach are an *object* of reference, a source of quotations, for the “later” Vygotsky Feuerbach’s ideas serve as a *guideline* for his theoretical work and as a *medium* in the analysis and evaluation of the relevant literature. That is, the “later” Vygotsky, not just when reading the contemporary psychological literature but also when re-evaluating earlier authors, is looking “through Feuerbach’s spectacles” or, if you prefer the prism-metaphor, as it was sometimes used by Vygotsky: His reception of contemporary authors and the re-evaluation of earlier authors is “refracted” by the “prism” of Feuerbach’s views.

In regard to the contemporary literature, this becomes very clear not just in his references to the findings of V. S. Krasusskii (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 2, pp. 200 f./p. 217) and the findings of D. McCarthy (cf. Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87) but is even more striking in the case of his references to the findings of S. Fajans (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 5, pp. 233 ff.)³ and the findings of W. Peters (cf. Coll. Works, Vol. 5, p. 236)⁴. And in regard to earlier authors, this Feuerbach-determined attitude shows, as we have already seen, quite clearly in Vygotsky’s reference to the work of E. Séguin. But his well-known references to Tolstoy’s and Dostoyevsky’s writings in the last chapter of *Thinking and Speech* (cf. Coll. Works., Vol. 1, pp. 268 f./pp. 271 f.) could likewise be used as examples.

In sum: The “later” Vygotsky’s relations to Feuerbach could be characterized most strikingly by means of that Vygotskian “keyword” according to which “there is always a background thought, a hidden subtext in our speech” (Coll. Works, Vol. 1, p. 281). In this sense, Feuerbach’s reflections (especially his reflections on the fundamental significance of the “thou” for the “I” and the synergetic effects of the community of man with man) have to be qualified as a “hidden subtext” to Vygotsky’s explicitly unfolded conceptions. That is not

³ For a better understanding the reader should use either the original Russian source (i.e., *Sobr. Soch.*, Vol. 4, pp. 305-308) or the official German translation (cf. ASch, Bd. 2, pp. 142-148), because in the English translation Vygotsky’s “Feuerbachianism” is veiled by an inappropriate terminology (the author of the translation apparently did not grasp the meaning of the Russian term “obshchnost” which is equivalent to the German word “Gemeinschaft” and should be translated as “community” and not as “communication”).

⁴ Here again, for a better understanding the reader should use either the original Russian source (loc. cit., pp. 309 f.) or the official German translation (loc. cit., pp. 149 f.), because the English version is once more inappropriate (this time, in addition to the constant incorrect translation as “communication”, “obshchnost” is translated twice as “intercourse”).

to say that Vygotsky's conceptions could be simply reduced to the psychological ideas of Feuerbach or could be directly derived from them. But the turn to Feuerbach's psychological approach leads, as I have tried to show, to a more profound understanding of the later work of Vygotsky. This statement holds especially true as well for *his* conception of "interiorization"⁵ as for his theory about the "interaction of ideal and rudimentary forms" in the development of higher, specifically human characteristics and forms of the child's activity (cf. Vygotsky, 1994) — a theory which has been so terribly misinterpreted by A.N. Leontiev (cf. Leont'ev, 1998)⁶. Consequently, the project of a systematic disclosure and analysis of Vygotsky's later work implies inevitably the disclosure of the system of the psychological ideas of Feuerbach.

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⁵ Compare the relevant passages in the fifth chapter of the *History of the Development of Higher Mental Functions* (Sobr. Soch., Vol. 3, pp. 144 ff., respectively Coll. Works, Vol. 4, pp. 105 f.) with Feuerbach's reflections on the genesis of the human conscience (FGW, Vol. 7, p. 137; Feuerbach, 1994, pp. 419-423).

⁶ In the recently published English version of the respective article (cf. Leontiev, 2005) the unsuitability of Leontiev's critique of Vygotsky's conceptions (denouncing them as borrowed from E. Durkheim's idealistic Sociology) is partially masked by a (once again) inappropriate terminology (for instance, the difference between "socialny" [= social] and "obshchestvenny" [= societal] is not taken into account).

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Appendix

Table 1

References to L. Feuerbach in the work of L.S. Vygotsky (free accessible writings)

Locus of Reference:

„Crisis in Psychology“ (Coll. works, Vol. 3, pp. 322, 324, 327)

„Mind, Consciousness, the Unconscious“ (Coll. works, Vol. 3, p. 116)

Locus of Reference:

„Concrete Human Psychology“ (Vygotsky, 1989, pp. 65 f.)

„Pedology of the Adolescent“, Part 3 (Coll. works, Vol. 5, p. 172)

„Introduction to E.K. Gracheva’s Book“ (Coll. works, Vol. 2, pp. 218 f.)

Last Chapter of „Thinking and Speech“ (Coll. works, Vol. 1, p. 285)

Unmistakably identifiable Sources:

„Against the Dualism of Body and Soul“ (FGW 10, pp. 127, 125, 125 fn.)

„Against the Dualism of Body and Soul“ (FGW 10, p. 127)

Likely Sources:

„Principles of the Philosophy of the Future“ (Feuerbach, 1966, § 50)

„Principles of the Philosophy of the Future“ (Feuerbach, 1966, § 50)

„Against the Dualism of Body and Soul“ (FGW 10, p. 127)

„Principles of the Philosophy of the Future“ (Feuerbach, 1966, § 12, p. 17; §§ 59, 60)

„The Essence of Christianity“ (Feuerbach, 1957, pp. 83, 124 fn.)

„Principles of the Philosophy of the Future“ (Feuerbach, 1966, § 12, p. 17)

„Towards a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy“ (Feuerbach, 1972, pp. 63, 64, 66)

Textual Comparison 1

Vygotsky: Introduction to E.K. Gracheva's book

„Only social education can lead severely retarded children through the process of becoming human by eliminating the solitude of idiocy and severe retardation. L. Feuerbach's wonderful phrase, might be taken as the motto to the study of development in abnormal children: 'That which is impossible for one, is possible for two.' Let us add: That which is impossible on the level of individual development becomes possible on the level of social development“ (Coll. works, Vol. 2, pp. 218 f.).

Vygotsky: Last chapter of „Thinking and Speech“

„In consciousness, the word is what – in Feuerbach's words – is absolutely impossible for one person but possible for two. The word is the most direct manifestation of the historical nature of human consciousness“ (Coll. works, Vol. 1, p. 285).

Feuerbach: Principles of the Philosophy of the Future, § 12

„What is absolutely impossible for one person alone is possible for two“ (cf. Feuerbach 1966, p. 17).

Textual Comparison 2

Vygotsky:

„The developmental path for a severely retarded child lies through collaborative activity, the social help of another human being, who from the first is his mind, his will, his activities. This proposition also corresponds entirely with the normal path of development for a child. *The developmental path for a severely retarded child lies through relationships and collaborative activity, with other humans.* For precisely this reason, the social education of severely retarded children reveals to us possibilities which might seem outright Utopian from the viewpoint of purely biologically based physiological education ...“ (Coll. works, Vol. 2, p. 218).

„The term *idiot* ... literally means *solitarius*, a lone man: He is really alone with his sensations, without any intellectual or moral will. (...) Contemporary scientific research is wholeheartedly proving ... that the source of idiocy is solitude. (...) In this respect, as we have already said, it is the social education of severely retarded children which becomes the sole sustainable and scientific path toward their education. In addition, it alone is capable of recreating the absent functions where they are not, because of a biological sense of inadequacy in the child. Only social education can lead severely retarded children through the process of becoming human by eliminating the solitude of idiocy and severe retardation“ (Coll. works, Vol. 2, p. 218).

Feuerbach:

„Thus man is the God of man. That he is, he has to thank Nature; that he is man, he has to thank man; spiritually as well as physically he can achieve nothing without his fellow-man. Four hands can do more than two, but also four eyes can see more than two. And this combined power is distinguished not only in quantity but also in quality from that which is solitary. In isolation human power is limited, in combination it is infinite“ (Feuerbach, 1957, p. 83).

„The single man for himself does not possess the essence of man, neither in himself as a moral being nor in himself as a thinking being. The essence of man is contained only in the community, in the unity of man with man ...(...) Solitude is finiteness and limitation; community is freedom and infinity“ (cf. Feuerbach, 1966, p. 71). „Community enhances the force of emotion, heightens confidence. What we are unable to do alone we are able to do with others. The sense of solitude is the sense of limitation, the sense of community is the sense of freedom“ (Feuerbach, 1957, p. 124, fn.).

Textual Comparison 3

Vygotsky:

„In consciousness, the word is what – in Feuerbach’s words – is absolutely impossible for one person but possible for two“ (Coll. works, Vol. 1, p. 285).

Feuerbach:

„Not alone, but only with others, does one reach notions and reason in general. Two human beings are needed for the generation of man – of the spiritual as well as of the physical man; the community of man with man is the first principle and criterion of truth and generality“ (Feuerbach, 1966, pp. 58 f.).

„Language is nothing else than the *realization of the species*, the mediation of the ‘I’ with the ‘Thou’ in order to manifest, by eliminating their individual separateness, the unity of the species“ (Feuerbach 1972, p. 63 – rectified by P. K. after the original (German) version).

Verbal representation of a thought is therefore „not a mediation of the thought within the thought and for the thought itself, but a mediation through language between thinking, *in so far as it is mine*, and the thinking of another *person, in so far as it is his*, ... a mediation through which I prove that *my* thought is not mine but thought *in and for itself* so that it can just as well be that of the other person as it can be mine“ (cf. loc. cit, p. 64 – rectified by P. K. after the original (German) version).

Textual Comparison 4

Vygotsky:

„*It is not thought that thinks: a person thinks.* This is the starting point [In margin] Feuerbach: Deborin – Hegel, XXVI. What is man? For Hegel, he is a logical subject. For Pavlov, it is a soma, an organism. For us, man is a social person = *an aggregate of social relations, embodied in an individual* (psychological functions built according to social structure). [In margin] Man is always consciousness or self-consciousness for Hegel XXXVII“ (Vygotsky, 1989, pp. 65 f.).

„But, in the well-known expression of L. Feuerbach, it is not thinking that thinks – man thinks“ (Coll. works, Vol. 5, p. 172).

Feuerbach:

„The new philosophy has, therefore, as its principle of cognition and as its subject, not the ego, the absolute, abstract mind, in short, not reason for itself alone, but the real and whole being of man. Reality, the subject of reason, is only man. *Man thinks, not the ego, not reason.* (...) Only a real being recognizes real objects; only where thought is not the subject of itself but a predicate of a real being is the idea not separated from being. (...) Only when thought is separated from man and is determined for itself alone do awkward, fruitless, and, from this viewpoint, insoluble questions arise. How does thought arrive at being, that is, the object? For thought determined for itself alone, that is, posited apart from man, is apart from all ties and connections to the world“ (Feuerbach, 1966, pp. 66, 67, 67 f.; italics by P. K.).

Textual Comparison 5

Vygotsky: „Infancy“

„Because of all this, there is such a singular, unique dependence of the child on the adults that it sustains and permeates ... what would seem to be the most individual biological needs and wants of the infant. The dependence of the infant on adults creates a completely unique character of the child's relations to reality (and to himself): these relations are always mediated by others, and are always refracted through a prism of relations with another person. (...) Every relation of the child to the outside world, even the simplest, is always a relation refracted through the relation to another person. The whole life of the infant is organized in such a way that in every situation, visibly or not, there is another person. This can be expressed in another way by saying that every relation of the child to things is a relation accomplished with the help of or through another person“ (Coll. works, Vol. 5, p. 216).

„The adult is the center of every situation during infancy. It is natural for this reason that the simple closeness or distancing of a person signifies for the child a sharp and radical change in the situation in which he finds himself. [figuratively speaking] we might say that a simple approach and distancing of an adult arms and disarms the activity of the child. In the absence of the adult, the infant falls into a situation of helplessness. His activity with respect to the external world is seemingly paralyzed or at least limited and narrowed to a high degree. (...) This is why another person is always the psychological center of every situation for the infant. This is why, for the infant, the sense of every situation is determined in the first place by this center, that is, its social content, or, to put it more broadly, the relation of the child to the world depends on and is largely derived from his most direct and concrete relations with an adult“ (loc. cit., p. 231; textual change in the brackets by P. K.).

Feuerbach: „The Essence of Christianity“

„My fellow-man is the bond between me and the world. I am, and I feel myself, dependent on the world, because I first feel myself dependent on other men. If I did not need man, I should not need the world. (...) Without other men, the world would be for me not only dead and empty, but meaningless. Only through his fellow does man become clear to himself and self-conscious ... A man existing absolutely alone would lose himself without any sense of his individuality in the ocean of Nature; he would neither comprehend himself as man nor Nature as Nature. The first object of man is man. The sense of Nature, which opens to us the consciousness of the world as a world, is a later product; for it first arises through the distinction of man from himself. (...) The *ego*, then, attains to consciousness of the world through consciousness of the *thou*. Thus man is the God of man“ (Feuerbach, 1957, pp. 82 f.).