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Hello Class,

The Unit 9 reading for Lev Vygotsky link is not working. Please view another article below, comparable to the Unit 9 reading.

Gitavygodskaya Remembers Her Father, Lev Vygotsky, in TC Conferences

In two related conferences between October 23-26, the relationships between theory and practice in education and in psychology were discussed over an intense four-day period.

While several academic departments and their students--Curriculum and Teaching, Human Development, and International and Transcultural Studies-- sponsored and worked toward the success of the conferences, along with the Eureka Free Educational Center of Moscow, the initial idea for the blockbuster event was the brainchild of Professor Leslie Williams and Lois Holzman, Director of the East Side Institute for Short Term Therapy.

The organizers of these marathon examinations of Lev Vygotsky, who is typically known primarily as an educational and cognitive psychologist succeeded in approaching one of the seminal thinkers of the 20th century within the wider framework of an exploration of the psychology of culture and the culture of psychology.

The conferences brought together educators from the classroom and issues such as: Are psychology and culture at cross purposes? What in culture makes it a potential force for human growth? And how can we characterize the culture of current psychology and the psychology of current culture?

While the list of participants read like a who's who of experts on the contemporary application of Vygotsky's views on culture, psychology, teaching and learning in schools, it was Gita Vygodskaya, the daughter of Lev Vygotsky, who received her Ph.D from Moscow University, who claimed center stage in a personal discussion of her father's life and work.

Dr. Vygodskaya, who is 72, spoke about her father and his work in a very personal way, but especially about how he was hounded by Soviet authorities and how his works were abandoned, and indeed, destroyed. Lev Vygotsky died of tuberculosis at the age of 37.

Dr. Vygodskaya, speaking in Russian, said that, "The world today knows him [Lev Vygotsky] as one of the most important psychologists of the 20th century, a pioneering scientist who did breakthrough research on the nature of human development. As a human being, he was a very modest and delicate person. He was a very good, devoted friend."

Speaking about the horrendous atmosphere of the times in which Vygotsky lived, Gita Vygodskaya said that the attacks began while he was still alive, in the early 1930s, when he and a colleague wanted to show "the historical development of human behavior." But, Vygodskaya remarked, "apparently Stalin was not supportive of a dynamic view of human development." Once that occurred, "the criticisms and charges made against Vygotsky had a political character."

According to Vygodskaya, her father was a useful target because some of his writings contained the word "paedology," which Vygotsky understood as the science of the totality of child development. He compared it with geography: we study people, landscapes, industry, political systems, and we call it geography. Well, Vygodskaya said, "He [Vygotsky] believed that we needed to develop a science of child psychology that would reflect the whole; that is, the factors that contribute to the child's overall development."

Eventually, Vygotsky's "rather humble theories of human development" reached political conclusions and he would have been arrested and sent to Siberia, according to his daughter. Tuberculosis intervened and he died.

Vygotskaya closed her remarks by saying, "Today Vygotsky's work has been taken up by progressive psychologists and educators around the world. I'm just so very pleased that finally his name and, more important, of course, his work, is remembered and used."

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