

The Use of Symbolic Resources in Developmental Transitions

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Abstract This paper introduces the idea of symbolic resources as the use of cultural elements to mediate the representational work occasioned by ruptures or discontinuities in the smooth experience of ordinary life, moments when the 'taken-for-granted' meanings cease to be taken for granted. In particular we are concerned with the use of symbolic resources in moments of developmental transitions, that is, the mobilization of symbolic elements ranging from shared bodies of knowledge or argumentative strategies to movies, magazines or art pieces. The paper begins with a brief theoretical sketch of these ideas, and then presents three case studies, each of which involves the use of a different type of symbolic resource within a particular age group. In the first, children are observed in interaction with a peer about a conservation problem. In the second, adolescents are observed negotiating the meaning of their art productions with their peers, teachers and parents. The third example looks at Western tourists searching for spirituality, adventure and freedom in Ladakh as an alternative to the materialism of modernity. In each case the analysis of the symbolic resources employed indicates the significance of the gaze of the other in the construction of meanings, and of the various constraints operating within specific situations. The analysis also reveals different modes of use of symbolic resources, linked to changing forms of reflectivity.

KeyWords constraint, culture, development, reflectivity,
symbolic resources, transitions

People find themselves within a cultural field that furnishes them with the symbolic means both for making sense of what happens and for managing their interactions with others. The smoothness of most

interactions generally serves to ensure that meanings can be 'taken-for-granted' while at the same time also legitimating the processes that generate them. From time to time, however, people find themselves faced with some kind of discontinuity, break or rupture in their ordinary experience, and in these circumstances they have recourse to symbolic devices available in their environments or their 'personal culture' (Valsiner, 1998) that enable them to make a new adjustment to the situation or to 'resolve' the problem. In other words, the use of symbolic elements by an agent in order to achieve something in a particular social, cultural and temporal context constitutes that symbolic device as a resource that enables the agent to make a transition from one socio-cultural formation to another (Zittoun, 2001). By exploring the ways in which symbolic resources are employed to mediate various transitions, this paper seeks to elaborate a conceptualization of the ways in which the thought and action of people are structured in the encounter between the subjective and the cultural. We are particularly interested in the influence of the constraints present in socio-cultural contexts on the use of symbolic resources. Further, in addition to considering the 'microgenetic' products of specific transitions, we are concerned with the influence of broader developmental constraints on the ability to employ symbolic resources.

Locating the Uses of Symbolic Resources in Transitions

Our general framework is a socio-cultural psychology that recognizes that people are positioned within different and intermeshed symbolic streams in the socio-cultural world, and in which they can be displaced or can relocate themselves (Benson, 2001; Duveen, 1997, 2001). From this perspective the person is seen as an agent continuously engaged in an active process of conferring a personal meaning to the locations and the symbolic streams in which he or she is embedded. Even where the meanings that emerge constitute part of a collective symbolic system, it is nevertheless a meaning that the individual has to appropriate for him- or herself. In part the context in which these processes are embedded is also always a temporal one. In the present, past gestures and habits guide actions, and orient them toward a future (Dewey, 1934; Josephs, 1997; Tap & Malewska-Peyre, 1991). Such a view also emphasizes the role of symbolic means in action and thought, and that phenomena linked to the work of identity, processes of learning, social interaction and located activities are highly interdependent (Carugati & Perret-Clermont, 1999; Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Hundeide, 2004). These interdependencies are precisely anchored

in the meanings people confer on things, people and situations, on their roles in such situations, and on their own intentions and the intentions of others (Bruner, 1990; Grossen, 1988).

Processes linked to 'transitions' are processes of elaboration related to the construction of meaning following a rupture in the 'taken for granted' or the emergence of something otherwise unexpected. In such circumstances the activity of meaning construction may need some kind of catalyst; it is when people lose the common ground, the taken for granted, that they have to re-create meaning. This is an old idea that can be found in such diverse traditions as pragmatism (Peirce, 1877), phenomenology (Schütz, 1944), early genetic psychology (e.g. Claparède's law of conscious realization) and recent discussions of social representations (e.g. Wagner, 1998; Wagner et al, 1999). Transitions involve sequences of problem/rupture, the engagement of representational labour leading to some resolution/outcome such that action can continue. Such ruptures can occur in one's inner life, in one's direct relationship with others, because of one's concrete or symbolic displacement, or from having to face an 'uncanny' or unfamiliar object. The kinds of representational labour involved in the construction of new meanings might include narrative, identity, actions or skills in the 'transition' to a new stability. In this sense, a transition is an 'occasion' for development—that is, a new symbolic formation that provides a better adjustment to a given social and material situation while protecting one's sense of self (Perret-Clermont & Zittoun, 2001). In a strict sense one could say that every interaction could be considered a 'transition', but not all interactions lead to new socio-cultural formations. Some transitions leave no residue beyond the particular microgenetic context in which they occur, whilst others may have ontogenetic or even sociogenetic consequences (cf. Duveen & Lloyd, 1990). Transitions can indeed open new possibilities, even if they always involve some loss (Baltes & Staudinger, 1996). During transition, under the emergency of the situation, people can mobilize different kinds of resources, internal—experience and skill—or external, such as help, advice or symbolic elements.

We are interested in the uses of *symbolic elements*: that is, in shared concrete things, or some socially stabilized patterns of interaction or customs that encapsulate meanings or experiences for people (whose experiences minimally overlap at this symbolic point; Cole, 1996). Some symbolic elements are cultural artefacts, like books or films; some are parts of complex, regulated symbolic networks with localizable boundaries (the Christmas crib takes its meaning from a defined set of rules, stories, institutions . . .). They can also be situation-specific:

argumentative styles or objectified judgements (such as putting a painting on a wall). What turns a symbolic element into a resource is both (a) the fact that it is used by someone for something; and (b) that in the context of a transition that results in a new socio-cultural formation, it entails a significant re-contextualization of the symbolic element to address the problem opened up by a rupture and to resolve it (Zittoun, 2001, 2003).

Symbolic resources are defined in their use in individual symbolic activity (as they arise in transitions) in two senses: firstly, it is only when a symbolic element (which might crystallize a representation or be a manifestation of an aspect of a social representation) is used that it becomes a symbolic resource; and, secondly, the precise character of a symbolic resource is circumscribed by the particular character of the elements employed (i.e. what is actually used to mediate the interaction). Such forms of symbolic activity, while being personal and connected to one's sense of self, always take place in the 'shadow' of real or imaginary others (people, institutions, traditions), a shadow that is always projected upon the here-and-now situation, constituting part of its socio-cultural frame.

The metaphoric notion of 'use' in a psychological sense has a double root. Vygotsky develops the idea of a person's 'use' of symbolic realities—language—as tools to form and channel thoughts. Another root of the notion of use is to be found in Winnicott's work: an object that can be used is an object given by the environment, the reality-status of which does not need to be clarified, but which allows a person to do things that are mainly related to 'emotional' and identity development. One can 'use' an object, the image of someone, a sentence, a frame, a cultural thing . . . to be sure to exist, to find a sense of unity and continuity through time, to rearrange one's own understanding about something, to symbolize one's feelings, to extend one's human experiences, notably through 'experiences by proxy', and so on (Winnicott, 1968/1989, 1971/1982). Generally speaking, *use* designates employing objects as instruments to do things. Objects can be used to act upon or within the physical world, the social world and the world of psychic reality (Blandin, 2002). Our examples will cover these three spheres of human action and thought; however, we will focus on the uses of objects for which the symbolic presence of the element is of more importance, or where the use of the resource implies a reference to the experience of others encapsulated in its symbolic, sharable form.

More precisely, uses of symbolic resources might sustain or scaffold the work of reframing and reorganizing the chaos and the uncertainty of a present situation. The definition of the situation can vary among

participants and differ from the 'official' definition of the setting; in any case, definitions might suggest possible actions and raise new problems, which will call for other symbolic resources. Processes of change can thus, for a given period, find support in such external meanings and devices; these can be internalized, modify one's understanding of one's experience, and enable a reorganization of understandings and their readjustments with one's changing experiences. Such re-coordinations and reorganizations can be both triggered and supported by symbolic devices.

For analytical clarity, we can distinguish 'external' from 'internal' effects of uses of symbolic resources (Zittoun, 2001). On the external side, one's use of a symbolic resource can reposition one in the webs of social relations; it can augment or diminish one's agency and 'power' upon the world, through the acquisition of skills, enabling social interactions or concrete actions. On the internal side, the uses of resources can regulate emotional experiences, change one's understandings of things or facilitate one's meaning constructions (Bruner, 1996). Hence, the 'uses' of symbolic resources modify the world: one's own, but also the shared world, through processes of externalization (Valsiner & Lawrence, 1997)—the creation of new symbolic realities. Finally, the use of symbolic resources can, in turn, create or modify available symbolic elements that might be used as resources.

While future-oriented, such processes are neither necessarily goal-directed, nor consciously intentional. If 'using' always supposes a kind of intentionality—in the weak sense of 'having one's mind applied to something' (Y. Greub, personal communication, 23 March 2002)—this does not mean that this is always done with a full awareness or reflexivity (how reflexive 'uses' of symbolic resources must be is one of the questions we will discuss). It is through interpersonal negotiations and uses of symbolic resources that the 'goals' of a situation are often progressively constructed, as, for example, in the case of matters of 'definition of the situation', as explored by Grossen and Perret-Clermont (1994): in a given frame, to construct what the situation is about—and, therefore, what the agent's role is supposed to be—is also part of problem-solving (at school, for example, or in a therapeutic situation). Symbolic resources offer temporary definitions, 'quasi-aims', bringing provisional meanings to some actions. Their use might confer some temporary reassurance, or bring some stability to the oscillation between actions and aims, experience and personal meaning. The symbolic resources used often represent possibilities and contain some hints about their consequences, thus proposing possible paths to the future (Josephs, 1997, 1998) and offering a semiotic regulation and

canalisation of action (Valsiner, 1998). We might think here of a mountaineer opening a new path up a cliff. He has to create the route to the summit, but at each moment he is mainly concerned with finding the next point to fix his rope to assure his own security and that of his companions who will follow. This location is then the point from which he defines his next movement along the cliff to find the next possible safe point. However, symbolic resources are not always used as the result of such a conscious intention. The extent to which symbolic resources are employed within a reflexive frame is an issue we shall return to, but it is one that locates the use of symbolic resources within a context of interaction in which the gaze of the (real or symbolic) other is also always present.

Symbolic Resources and Social Representations

Social representations (cf. Duveen, 2000; Jodelet, 2002; Moscovici, 2000) also form part of culture and are of a symbolic nature; they offer a means to confer meanings on ruptures and events, and thus can furnish symbolic elements that might be used as symbolic resources. But we also need to distinguish between these two terms, or at least between the perspectives appropriate to each of them. Epistemologically, a social representation is a structure emerging from patterns and programmes of communications and practices that take place within a given social space. They are identified by researchers through a long process of distillation, and are conceptualized as distributed systems of meaning and action, as social facts that exceed the symbolic activity of any one individual. In contrast, symbolic resources are things that have an actual, concrete embodiment. In short, social representations are constituted as part of a researcher's interpretative framework for rendering some form of social action intelligible, while, in speaking about symbolic resources, we want to emphasize the practical or pragmatic quality with which people make use of the things they find within their field of action.

Of course there is a connection between these two terms. When one of the villagers described by Denise Jodelet (1991) insists that their 'lodger' uses different cutlery, they are not analysing social representations of madness, but, rather, trying to avoid being contaminated by the lodger's madness. Here the researcher and the villager may be interested in the same material artefact, the cutlery, but what each of them is doing with it, what they are using it for, is quite different. For the researcher, the cutlery is a sign that becomes both visible as a segmented aspect of the villager's material world and also meaningful as

part of the villager's practice, because it can be interpreted within a framework of social representations of madness that render intelligible these aspects of the cutlery and its use. For the villager the cutlery presents a far more pragmatic question. While they may be concerned with maintaining a sense that their world sustains a symbolic integrity, it is doubtful that they would themselves be in a position to express that integrity at all the complex levels that Jodelet describes. It is an integrity that is felt rather than articulated—and if it were otherwise, then research itself would be redundant. A social representation is a horizontally distributed system of meaning, while a symbolic resource is a punctual element that makes a vertical connection between internal life and social meanings through a particular and actual object that is both experienced and symbolic. If a social representation is like a net thrown over fruit trees to protect them from birds, a symbolic resource is a particular knot in the fabric that a bird tries to unpick. Thus, this distinction brings into play the idea of agency—the agency of the user of the symbolic resource—an issue that is only gradually coming to the forefront of social representations research (cf. the discussions on social identity in Deaux & Philogène, 2001). In a reflexive way we could say that for our theoretical endeavour the idea of social representations constitutes a kind of symbolic resource.

Constraints on Uses

Transitions always involve constructions of meaning, and where there is construction there are also constraints (cf. Duveen, 2002a, 2002b). We can distinguish two forms of constraint in the use of symbolic resources. Firstly there are constraints in access to, the ability to use, and the content of a symbolic resource (one can be freer and construct more complex things with complex artefacts than with single symbols). Secondly, there are the products of that use, which may be a constraint on action, both in the sense of restricting possibilities, but also in the sense of enabling forms of action.

Social representations exercise some constraint on a person's access to a symbolic resource through their constitutive role in people's identities and their related actions. They can also contribute to the process of legitimization of the use of specific symbolic resources. However, the use of symbolic resources can also reinforce or challenge social representations. The products from particular usages may serve to redefine identities or positions, or to regulate conflicts between webs of meaning attached to social representations in which a person is inscribed. Symbolic resources and social representation can be

interlinked and interdependent through representational changes across time, as in the dynamics described by Bauer and Gaskell (1999).

People's positions within symbolic networks inform the range and type of resources available to them, and thus also constrain uses of symbolic resources, at the level of both access and products. These positions themselves are more or less controlled by other agents—peers, teachers, tour operators—who exert more or less power, and therefore also constrain access to symbolic resources. On the one hand, the main function of legitimation is to regulate both access to symbolic elements and the manner of their use (e.g. censorship, school curricula, inquisition, mass media, all of which can also be supported by social representations). On the other hand, even within such constraints, the use of a particular symbolic element may serve to relocate someone symbolically in opposition to a given position, and therefore call for a redefinition of the status attributed by others (e.g. if a 'bad' student is seen by his or her teacher reading a 'good' book, he or she may be symbolically legitimized and relocated). As well as these 'external' positionings, the products of the use of symbolic resources can also be more 'internal' in the reshaping of a person's representation of his or her world (the 'good book' can be a novel of revenge for a lower-class boy, or offer new perspectives on events; it can contain and symbolize some of his unformulated angst and melancholy).

However, beyond these symbolic and cultural constraints on the uses of resources and their outcomes, there are also constraints related to an agent's own psychological processes. Our suggestion that there can be variations in the extent to which people are able to reflect on their use of symbolic resources can also be seen as a suggestion that there may be some broad developmental constraints on such use. In some cases there may also be constraints associated with specific forms of expertise (or its absence).

Uses of Symbolic Resources in Three Developmental Transitions

Within this theoretical frame, we explore three situations in which symbolic resources are used to mediate transitions. We examine children, adolescents and adults facing a rupture and finding themselves needing to elaborate new meanings in order to re-establish stability. The children are observed engaging in a cognitive task with a peer who can behave in unexpected ways, especially when they are of the opposite gender. Here the rupture and the representational work are dealt with at the micro-level of an interaction that has itself been

strongly constrained by the adult investigators. In the second example, adolescents find themselves facing a problem arising from the fact that the artwork they produce in school can have different meanings in different contexts. How can they sustain a sense of what this ‘uncanny’ object means across different social settings, and retain their own sense of identity? In the third example, Western adult tourists arrive in Ladakh, in the Indian Himalaya, in search of ‘authentic’ experience, and use symbolic resources in the construction of, and reflection on, these experiences. Of course, given these three situations and their different constraints, people use different kinds of symbolic resources with different aims, and different outcomes. However, these three examples also provide the opportunity to consider the role of developmental constraints on the use of symbolic resources, a role that is explored through a focus on the extent to which people have a reflexive grasp of their use of such resources.

Symbolic Resources in Children’s Peer Interaction in a Problem-Solving Situation¹

In order to consider the complexity of the use of symbolic resources in collaborative problem solving, we shall consider the example of a study of children collaborating on the classical Piagetian problem of conservation of liquids (Psaltis & Duveen, 2002, 2003). In this study we have adopted the pre-test, interaction, post-test design introduced in Genevan research in the 1970s (cf. Doise & Mugny, 1984), and adapted by Leman and Duveen (1996, 1999) to incorporate asymmetries of gender in addition to asymmetries of knowledge. In these studies the experimental design is articulated by the way in which the experimenter constrains the interaction phase. In the Genevan research this often took the form of pairing children at different developmental levels (e.g. a non-conserving or intermediate child with a conserver), with the consequence that, during the interaction phase, children might encounter a partner who contradicts their preferred or expected way of giving a solution to the problem. Here each child’s resource consists of his or her specific preferred strategy, whose expression in the interaction also serves as a marker of his or her general pattern of thought or level of development. The requirement imposed by the experimenter that the children should reach a joint agreement on a solution to the problem also serves to make each child’s initial approach relevant to the situation, as well as constraining the formal goal of the interaction. Thus, in our study only two pairs out of a total of eighty-four did not reach an agreement. However, the situation remains open in the sense that it affords different ways of reaching that

goal by allowing children to draw on all their relevant resources. It is this negotiation of the sub-goals and strategies used at this micro-genetic level that forms a central focus of our studies, and we have been interested in trying to link particular interaction patterns as moments of identity regulations with the outcome of these negotiations in terms of the cognitive development of children.

Earlier research has suggested that in these kinds of peer interaction conservers are more assertive (e.g. Miller & Brownell, 1975), although such generalizations in fact referred only to same-sex pairs. Where asymmetries of knowledge are framed within mixed-sex pairs (such as a conserving girl or boy paired with a non-conserving boy or girl, Fm and Mf, respectively, in our notation), Leman and Duveen (1996, 1999) have reported clear gender-marked patterns of interaction in terms of argument style. For instance, in a study employing Piaget's moral development stories, autonomous girls faced with heteronymous boys were observed to make greater use of a wider range of arguments, in part because these boys were asserting their own position quite clearly (Leman & Duveen, 1999, 2003). At the micro-genetic level such conduct could be described as a form of situational positioning at the inter-personal level. Here, the interlocutors are making use of arguments, counter-arguments and communicative patterns as symbolic resources to reach a joint agreement while at the same time negotiating their positions. In our problem-solving situation, for example, one child could be claiming to be more knowledgeable and attempting to play the tutor, exhibiting an assertive behavioural style, and the other child either accepting being positioned as the tutee or resisting this positioning.

From previous research (Leman & Duveen, 1999) we expected that the gender composition of dyads would influence the communication patterns of the discussions and the social representations of gender at the age we were interested in (6- to 8-year olds). By including gender as a dimension in the research design, the situations we constructed also provided children with potential moments for the organization and regulation of their social-gender identities. Even at this age, children have well-established social representations of gender (cf. Duveen & Lloyd, 1986, 1990; Lloyd & Duveen, 1990, 1992), which, in part, furnish them with a code for managing the conduct of their interactions with other children. In the interaction setting some of these shared representations become more or less relevant and can even provide the direction for constructive interpretations of the situation. In fact, the internalization/externalization process (Valsiner, 1998) present in an interaction setting—especially externalization—is

defined by the code of conduct that is semiotically regulated by the process of social representing. More specifically, in these interactions the situation is framed around the articulation of different levels of semiotic mediation. When one child employs a particular argumentative style, this can serve as the signifier for positioning both children within the interaction, with one being placed in the role of tutor or expert and the other as tutee or novice. But these positionings can themselves either be consistent with or conflict with expectations about interactions positions derived from social representations of gender. A girl positioned as a novice by a boy asserting himself as an expert may find this situation all too familiar, while a boy who finds himself positioned as a novice by a girl may find that this conflicts with his expectations about his identity. These are only some of the possible forms in which such interactions may take shape, since even among young children the field of gender is not constituted as a single monolithic representation, and there are varieties and forms of masculinities and femininities which find expression even in the play and other interactions of 5-year olds and which can produce moments of resistance to the dominant representation (Duveen, 2001).

Different Ways of Using Symbolic Resources

The arguments, counter-arguments and argumentative styles used as resources by children in negotiating a joint solution to the problem are both constrained and enabled by the competencies of each interlocutor and the social representations of gender. Here, the social representations of gender are legitimizing some forms of behavioural style while creating tension in some other forms of interaction. That is particularly true for mixed pairings.

A characteristic example of the pattern of interaction between a conserving boy (M) and a non-conserving girl (f) was the following:

M: They are equal because it was the same in here right? (pointing to the pre-transformation glass).

f: Yes

M: He poured it in here but this is taller and narrower. So we have the same right?

f: Yes. Come! (calling the experimenter)

EXP: What did you agree?

M: That we have equal

Here, the conserving boy initiates the conversation by putting forward a conserving argument; the non-conserving girl does not resist being positioned as the less knowledgeable tutee. In at least half of Mf

pairings a communication pattern similar to the one presented was taking place. We coded that pattern as 'no-resistance'. Such patterns were not generally linked to developmental progress on our post-test measure. On the whole, female non-conservers did not make significantly more progress than a control group of non-conservers who did not take part in any interaction phase. Communication patterns of this type can be compared to what has been described in the social-psychological literature as compliance or conformity in studies of social influence. The result of an application of such an argumentative style is an asymmetry in the ownership of meaning and might result in what Wenger (1998) calls marginalization and non-participation through a particular form of negotiability. At the same time it is a form of identification with a certain type of femininity legitimized by the dominant social representation of gender in childhood.

On the other hand, Fm pairings of a conserving girl with a non-conserving boy typically followed a bi-modal interaction pattern. It would either be an interaction where boys would *substantially resist* the girls' conserving arguments (where at least two turns of non-conservers speech are rebuttals or a non-conserving argument) or *explicitly recognize* the girls' arguments as true (where non-conservers give at least one conservation argument or using phrases of the A-ha moment like 'I understand!', 'Oh, now I see!'). These patterns more closely resemble what is generally described as conversion in work on social influence, in which there is some internal reorganization rather than merely external compliance. In some of these conversations we even observed boys who accepted the girls' arguments almost from the outset and then continued the discussion by making an effort to convince the girls that actually their newly acquired skill was something that the girls (already conservers!) should be convinced to follow! It seemed that for these boys being positioned as the tutee by a girl was unacceptable.

In the Mf pairings generating compliance, the argumentative style of the boy-conserver is legitimized by the shared social representations of gender so that the conversation follows a pattern expected by both the boy *and* the girl. In the Fm pairings, however, the situation was very different. Here the girl who started the conversation by trying to position herself as the tutor often encountered considerable resistance from the boy. Even in cases where the boy actually found the girl's arguments sufficiently compelling to accept them, he would try to save face or take control of the discussion just before the agreement at the end of the conversation: for example:

- F: Well, they are equal because this is fatter but this is[
 m: [it's fatter but this is narrower
 F: and it looks like[
 m: [and since this is taller this is less (water) but they are equal, he just changed glass.
 F: it looks like, it looks like this is more
 m: they are equal, he just changed glass, and this is longer but they are the same
 F: but this is fat and it looks like it has less
 m: but they are the same, shall I call him? come!
 EXP: what did you agree?
 m: equal

Most of the conversations that took this form were linked to cognitive progress on the post-test for the non-conserving boy, and the post-tests were also notable for their introduction of novel arguments. Further, these were the only group of non-conservers who made significantly more progress than the control group.

Outcomes: Finding an Answer, Developing New Competencies

On a theoretical level these findings suggest that interpersonal positioning is the result of a dialectical process very similar to that described by Marková (1990) in her three-step model. The negotiation of interpersonal positioning directly implicates both aspects of self—the Meadian 'I' and 'me'—and therefore contributes to a redefinition of self. In our study the parameters of the setting are established by the constraints we introduced as experimenters. Within this framework, the positioning of the self during an interaction is the result of a dialogue between the constraints set by the experimenter, the competencies of both the interlocutors, and the social representations that legitimize or challenge the positioning as a broader cultural constraint. In fact this inter-personal positioning has far-reaching consequences for the cognitive development of the children through the interaction dynamics since the resources used by each interlocutor for the solution of the problem become, at each turn, more or less likely to be used depending on the legitimization process that takes place.

As these comments suggest, the use of specific argument styles as symbolic resources is continually inflected by their contextualization within social representations of gender. An initial assertion about the solution to the task has a different meaning when it is produced by a conserving boy addressing a non-conserving girl than when it is used by a conserving girl addressing a non-conserving boy. Similarly the

arguments and counter-arguments that may follow an initial assertion also take on different meanings according to the context in which they are articulated. In an immediate sense the effects of the use of a specific symbolic resource become apparent through the consequences it produces within the interaction. Children may, then, become aware of positioning their partner or of being positioned by him or her. But even if the process of the interaction itself can generate some awareness of positioning for the children, this does not in itself indicate that children have a reflective grasp of the symbolic resources at their disposal. Indeed, there are grounds for supposing that these children remain largely unreflective about their symbolic resources. In the conversations themselves we observed practically no comments that indicated any reflective grasp (whereas, as we shall see in the following two examples, such comments did emerge in the talk of adolescents and especially of adults). Rather, it seems that in many instances the resources are accessible to the children only as a knowledge that can be expressed in practice, rather than as something that can be grasped as a resource and deployed strategically in an argument. Certainly, we did observe some conversations in which children exhibited such strategic use of resources, especially where a conserving child was seeking to persuade a non-conserver. But such conversations were generally of the *substantial resistance* or *explicit recognition* type, in which it is often the resistance of the non-conserver that provides the occasion for such strategic use of resources.

As we suggested earlier, there is a double articulation of meanings in the use of symbolic resources during these problem-solving interactions. At one level, the styles of arguments and counter-arguments used by children as manifestations of the convictions they bring to the situation are activated through the presence of the other. At a second level, however, as we have also seen, there can be consistencies or inconsistencies between the positions evoked by the use of these styles and the gender relations within the pair. In this sense, positioning always has a symbolic dimension within the field of gender. This dimension, however, is one that is introduced by the experimenters through the way in which we have constrained the situations, and even if it has a structuring effect on the negotiations, this becomes apparent only through the analysis of the whole set of transcripts. Whether the children themselves ever reflect on the influence of gender in their conversations is difficult to determine, though again there were no indications of this in their comments during their conversations. However, the gender structuring of the conversations may have different consequences for children in terms of their awareness of the extent to which

they were active participants in the solution of the problem. Comparing the interactions in the Mf and Fm pairs, one is struck by a paradox. In the Mf pair there is little conflict but the interaction is marked by the inequality in the positions of the participants; on the other hand, in the Fm pairing the conflicts between different perspectives are brought into the open in a context where the two children exhibit a greater equality in their participation in the discussion. The balance in the contribution to the discussion in such Fm pairs may itself become abstracted as a semiotic mediator of 'symmetry' that supports an 'egalitarian' solution of the conservation problem. On the other hand, the passive positioning of a girl in the asymmetrical discussion in Mf pairings may lead to the abstraction of a symbolic mediator of 'asymmetry' that hinders the subsequent elaboration or reflection upon the problem in the post-interaction period in egalitarian terms. In other words, it is situations like the typical Fm interaction (which are more likely to be linked with progress on the post-test than any other same or mixed-gender pairing) that create more tension and rupture that is at once both cognitive and social. Such situations demand more representational labour in order to bring the situation back to an 'equilibration' in terms of both the contradictory convictions and the contested positionings that challenge the dominant social representation of gender in middle childhood.

These comments point towards a need for reworking the concept of socio-cognitive conflict introduced by the Genevan researchers. The effort to bring together the idea of 'social marking' and 'socio-cognitive conflict' as a two-fold mechanism of cognitive development (Doise & Hanselmann, 1991) was rather mechanical, and these concepts were very rarely investigated in tandem. The rich description of the use of symbolic resources and the constraints set upon their use in our approach provides a clearer specification of the social aspects of socio-cognitive conflict. As we have seen, the use of symbolic resources afforded the resolution of both the inter-personal conflict and the task itself, while also providing, in some circumstances at least, the occasion for a specific transition process.

Adolescents' Art Objects as Uncanny Objects²

Artistic productions can be viewed as extensions of the individual projected into the world and materialized in visual and physical forms. The visible, material nature of an art object attracts speculation about what it is, and, as a new object that appears in the world, it demands interpretation.

In art classrooms the objects that emerge from an adolescent's

creative activity open up a gap between the creator and the object; in this sense, art objects are 'uncanny objects'. A social demand to anchor the object by locating it within the representational field of art may well be in conflict with functional demands of schooling. As an art object becomes anchored within current symbolic networks, it extends a social identity to the person who created it. A two-fold function is implied here. The significance attached to the object reflects back on the producer, who then has to manage the tributes, the disgust or the shock associated with the object. However, for children or students who produce them, art objects are uncanny objects in a second sense. The objects that emerge from their own hands are under-determined because they have not yet mastered the techniques to translate ideas into objects that adequately capture their intentions. Therefore, when trying to make sense of their own art objects, initially they rely on the discourses of others.

From early in life, children in Western societies are presented with paint and paper to play with. Parents interpret the squiggles, paint splashes and blotches that their children produce as early signs of creativity, imagination and individuality. Adults have a vested interest in recognizing the characteristics of full personhood emerging from their offspring. Parents' reactions to their offsprings' squiggles bootstrap the child's developmental trajectory by providing a language and an interpretation that indicates what is expected of the child as part of a society's social representation of the person (Maus, 1985).

Elements of the curriculum fulfil symbolic functions: for example, art represents the unconscious, primitive and emotional aspects of the person, and science, the rational, logical and cerebral (Iverson, 1998). Therefore accepting or rejecting a social identity extended in the art classroom as opposed to the science laboratory has different social consequences. The way art objects are 'named' and recognized is constrained by dominant social representations of art. This ensures that there is always a limited range of social identities that will be offered to a student in the art classroom.

The Problem: Art Objects in the Classroom

The empirical study investigated the way students made sense of their own art objects and the symbolic resources that they had available for doing so. Year 9 students (aged 13/14 years old) were never sure about how their objects would turn out. Visual realism is not a generally achieved representational stage (Golomb, 1999; Piaget & Inhelder, 1956) and few adolescents achieve it without explicit training. Graphic development is arrested for most people in Western societies in

comparison to, for example, China and Japan (Golomb, 1999). Yet these students drew upon a wide range of symbolic resources to make sense of their art objects and manage the social identities that were extended to them.

In a series of lessons one art teacher instructed the class to create their own lino-prints. In her opening commentary the teacher reminded the class of the German woodcuts of the 20th century and spoke about the political unrest and religious symbolism depicted in various prints. She presented lino-prints by famous artists such as Picasso to demonstrate various techniques such as how to produce a 'clean' and 'strong' print. Students practised ink rolling techniques and experimented with applying multiple layers of coloured ink. Many students produced finished prints during these lessons. Before placing them on a rack at the back of the classroom to dry, students would seek out the teacher and classmates to show off their prints. Students chatted to each other as they worked. They spoke about aspects that had 'gone wrong', about effects that had not worked and about experiments that they were not happy with. Sometimes prints were ripped up and put in the waste-paper bin. Some students could be seen returning again and again to the drying tray to catch a glimpse of a finished print. Their lino-prints had become either 'good' or 'bad' objects (Benson, 2001; Winnicott, 1971/1982).

The Diversity of Interpretations

Often students took their prints and artefacts home. Although art fulfils specific symbolic functions within the school and within society, these values may not be recognizable or shared by others in a student's life. As groups such as peers, teachers and families anchor art objects within their own hierarchically structured systems of meaning, objects acquire values, such as good, bad, weird, creative, funny and strange, and such meanings may be expressed in different ways. At school, for instance, it might be the marks given by a teacher, whereas at home, the parents frame a painting and put it on the living-room wall, or they might just throw it away. All of these provide 'concretized' judgements, and it is through these symbolic forms that students perceive the interpretations of the gaze of the other on their art productions.

A student's art production, then, was open to conflicting interpretations. Some students experienced relative congruence across communities in the way their objects were received and interpreted. Others experienced conflict: for example, Val, who was considered by her teacher to be good at art, spoke about her family's recognition of her school art objects in the following way:

My family think it's a bit weird, because it's not something you see all the time, it's just different.

She explained that her dad had some pictures in the house because her step-mum liked pictures of flowers and scenery. Her mum, who lived in a different house, did not have any pictures that she could recall and her grandmother had photographs of 'just us'. She said that her mum in particular considered that the art objects she produced in school were 'weird'. She said that the lino-print that she made during the study would be considered 'weird' if she took it home.

William had a fear that he would be mocked by his younger brother for taking art objects home that were 'not very good', although he said that his parents probably would not mock him.

Brother will take the piss but not parents.

William explained, 'when I've done a piece of artwork that I don't think is very good and I think I might get laughed at, I'll either rip it up or put it in the bin or hide it'. Indeed, William tore up a lino-print in one of the classes observed. However, the production of a good art object in the past can sustain a student through bad experiences. For example, William took confidence from the fact that his work had previously been entered for an art competition and had met with a favourable response:

I was happy to show my pottery in Year 7. A vase pot with shell shapes. They thought it was very good. They complimented me.

Conversely, bad incidents from the past could also be carried forward. Hayley talked about a critical incident from the past when she recalled a clay pot that she had made that got smashed on the way home.

All the hours and time that you spend making something, just to find out that it smashed on the way home. I wanted to show it to my mum. I don't really take it [artwork] home; I sometimes leave it at school. (*prompt—why is that?*) Because there's not enough room at home. In my house it just gets smashed anyway. Yeah, my mum just don't keep stuff.

There seemed to be no legitimate place for Hayley's art objects in the home. She said that she did not like Art and had chosen not to continue with it the following year.

Some students, such as William and Val, acquired good enough relationships with their art productions to see them through occasional failures in the classroom or to sustain their interest in the subject despite not being supported across all social settings. However, it seemed that without some recognition that their productions were

good, students such as Hayley disassociate themselves from their art objects and opt not to continue with the subject in the future.

From the Gaze of the Other to a Redefinition of Identity

As art objects were anchored by various groups within their systems of meaning, they acquired values that extended social identities to the students. Being recognized as 'the creative one', 'talented', 'not good at art' and 'not got a clue' placed a student under pressure to resist or accommodate the extended identity. Val's case demonstrates a tension between being recognized by her teachers as 'good at art' and being recognized as somewhat odd by her mother, who judged her art object to be 'weird'. Therefore, along with other objectifications of ideas, art objects engender concern, interest or pride from teachers, caretakers, peers and students themselves. It may well have been that Val's mother detected an incongruity between the 'weird' object and the kind of person she hoped her daughter was becoming.

There were numerous ways in which art objects were recognized and then repositioned outside the school classroom. Pictures were framed, hung on a wall, stuck to the fridge door, given as presents to younger siblings, taken to grandmother's house and placed on the mantelpiece, yet they were also accidentally smashed, lost, deliberately tidied away or placed in the waste-paper bin. One way to avoid a possible negative judgement about one's self was to destroy one's own art object before it reached the public domain.

Students struggled to find some congruence between their own art objects and social representations of art within society. They spoke about art as the expression of inner feelings, showing that they recognized a dominant Western social representation of art as the manifestation of the inner self in external objects. They described 'high art' as lofty subject matter; as idealization and as transcendental images, acquired through visits to art galleries, occasional visits to famous museums abroad and from lay artists whom they knew. However, they made sense of classroom art in terms of the structures and functions of school life. Therefore, they had difficulty in relating this dominant social representation of Western art with their own art. In consequence, they drew a strong symbolic boundary between classroom art and what they called 'real art'. They tended to regard classroom art as less important and belittled their own productions. In consequence they relied strongly on the recognition and legitimation provided by others.

In this example, as in the previous one, adolescents were quite strongly constrained by the power of schools and the curriculum. They

seemed to have an unformulated sense of the problem resulting in clashing representations and discourses about their art productions. They seemed intuitively to search their social environments for cues that might be useful to position themselves, evaluate their art products, and determine future routes of action. However, they also seem to lack the ability for distanciation required for a more voluntary guided exploration of possible resources.

Adults' Touring in Ladakh³

Travel (etymology—*travail* (Fr.), travail, torture) implies rupture and displacement. Tourists who travel to Ladakh, which is situated high in the Indian Himalaya and known as 'Little Tibet', want to experience a different way of life, and want to be changed, to be affected, by that experience. Although most tourists have never been to Ladakh before, they have built up an image of it through the mass media and word-of-mouth. In the mass media of occidental culture, the Tibetan Plateau has been imagined as a spiritual land of peaceful Buddhists, as a land of mountains and adventure, and an exotic and timeless land that is as yet untouched by modernity (Dodin & Räther, 2001). All these aspects are evident in popular films like *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Himalaya*. This hybrid representation blends the narratives of the Golden Age, Shangri-La and materialistic modernization (Lopez, 1998). As an imaginative space, Ladakh is remote enough and filled with enough exotic potential to convince over ten thousand tourists a year to make the considerable investments of time and money to visit.

The Problem of Claiming a Position

One problem facing tourists is the identity task of claiming a certain tourist narrative. How do they know that they have experienced the 'real' Ladakh? How can they narrate this experience to significant others? Films and books are used by tourists to situate, and narrate, their own experiences within the symbolic field. This use of symbolic resources to claim a position is evident when tourists talk about their holiday photographs.

One of the most common holiday photographs of Ladakh is of Buddhist monasteries, which are invariably perched on the top of small hills, with whitewashed buildings rising up to a red temple at the summit. They are often described as being like the Dalai Lama's Potala Palace in Lhasa. These monasteries, surrounded by the snow-capped peaks of the Himalaya, are associated with the spirituality of Ladakh.

One English tourist, when asked why she took such a photograph, replied:

[The Buddhist monasteries] look incredible, because I had a book on Ladakh, and it was all the pictures I had seen and now I was there!

This woman is using the images that she had seen in books before arriving in Ladakh to judge that she was properly experiencing Ladakh. Presumably the pictures were of a similar monastery, and now she was taking the photograph 'because' Ladakh conformed to these pictures. Here the symbolic resource is a measure of the authenticity of the experience.

Symbolic resources can also be used to position one's own experiences of Ladakh in the minds of significant others—to answer the question 'what would they think about this?' or 'what impression will my narrative make on my friends and family?' One tourist from the USA showed a photograph of an archaic-looking stone bridge crossing a turquoise river and said:

That's a picture of the trail, going down into this gorge, and this bridge was at the bottom, . . . I took that picture for friends back home, they are going to ask me like, 'so you walked through the Himalaya, were there photos like in the movie *Himalaya*?' For the most part there weren't cliff-hangers, but some were pretty extreme, so I kind of took this picture for the people back home, although this does not look terribly dangerous, it does look very raggedy and steep . . . great movie, I loved the scenery.

This tourist was concerned about narrating his tour to his friends. He took the photograph because it was like the film *Himalaya*, which his friends had seen. The film documents a group of distinctly 'un-modern' Nepalese villagers on an arduous journey through dramatic landscapes involving turquoise waters, rock faces that are 'raggedy and steep' and stone bridges. This photograph, then, through its association with the film, realizes the un-modern aspect of touring the Himalaya, in part through the gaze of significant others. By taking a photograph of the bridge he crossed, this tourist is using the photograph to claim the position of an adventurer in the ancient, and undeveloped, Himalaya.

However, photography can be used more explicitly to position the tourist in the field of representation—the hero can position himself or herself within the picture. One Italian tourist showed a photograph of his two companions and their parked scooters and said:

This was the first stop, just outside of Leh [the capital of Ladakh], you know, we just wanted to have an *Easy Rider* picture.

Easy Rider is a cult film about riding motorbikes across the American

desert. The *Easy Rider* image is one of freedom, the open road and adventure. In this picture were scooters, the desert and the blue sky. One of the companions wore sunglasses, the other, a backward-facing baseball cap. This image manifests the freedom of being a tourist in the Himalaya. This tourist was very impressed with the roads in Ladakh. He described himself as a 'lonesome cowboy'. One quarter of all his photographs were of roads. His peak touring experience was this scooter trip, and he wanted to narrate it with an '*Easy Rider*' picture of his companions on the 'open road.'

Oscar Wilde observed that life imitates art. This brief analysis has shown how tourists use symbolic resources—books and films—both to evaluate their experiences as worthy of being photographed, and to claim a position for themselves as having had a spiritual, authentic, adventurous or free experience. The role of symbolic resources here is both constraining and enabling. These tourists are experiencing Ladakh through these symbolic resources, and as such are having their experience constrained. But equally this constraint is a foreground upon which they can exercise their identity. Unlike the adolescents who are positioned by others on the basis of their uncanny objects, the tourists are proactively trying to create themselves as occupying the positions that they aspire to—producing their photographs as legitimations.

Creative Elaboration of Symbolic Resources to Substantiate 'Remote' Ladakh

The *Lonely Planet* guidebook to the Indian Himalaya concludes its introduction to Ladakh with: 'Whatever the description, Ladakh is one of India's most remote regions' (Mayhew, Plunkett, Coxall, Saxton, & Greenway, 2000, p. 201). Remoteness is one of the main reasons why tourists invest the time and money to visit Ladakh, and this investment means that they are committed and motivated to realizing this ideal. Some tourists satisfy this motivation by creatively elaborating what they find in their guidebooks in the direction of remoteness, which, borrowing a concept from Bartlett (1932, p. 258), constitutes one of the main 'preferred persistent tendencies' in tourists' representation of Ladakh.

The tendency toward remoteness is evidenced when tourists mention how long ago Ladakh was opened to tourists. Despite all the guidebooks stating that Ladakh was opened to tourists in 1974, tourists often say in interviews (conducted in 2001) that Ladakh has only been open to tourists for four, ten, fifteen or twenty years. It is also evident when tourists, such as this British man, emphasize the inaccessibility of Ladakh:

The fact that you can only go two months a year or something makes Ladakh

special, to be in India at the right time, to be able to go to Ladakh and be able to see something that you can't see all year around.

There are two roads into Ladakh, each involving a two-day journey across the Himalaya. In winter these roads can be impassable due to snow. For this tourist, such isolation 'makes Ladakh special'. He must have read a guidebook to get the basic structure of his point—that the road is closed in winter. However, in the guidebooks it is written that the road is open not for two months but for four months (and even this is an underestimation). Furthermore, all the main guidebooks mention the daily flights throughout the year between Ladakh and Delhi, though few tourists care to mention this accessibility.

In both of these examples the preferred persistent tendency in the description of Ladakh is toward increasing remoteness. It seems that the direction of this tendency is related to the tourists' motivations for being in Ladakh. From the standpoint of symbolic resources, this indicates that people draw upon symbolic resources with certain motivations, a desired use, for which the resources themselves are creatively elaborated.

Tourists' Reflection on the Use of Symbolic Resources

The most creative use of symbolic resources arises when the tourist, at least temporarily, brings the constructive effect of the symbolic resource within his or her own experience. So, for example, some tourists (on some occasions) recognize a discrepancy between their experience and the symbolic resources upon which their expectations have been built. The following quotation is from a young English student:

The way the guidebook did describe it was that you have breakfast with the family while sitting on mats, more family-family, but it is just tourists and guesthouses.

This woman is not substantiating the ideal image of Ladakh, or twisting things in that direction; she is critically negotiating the ideal as presented by the guidebook. The guidebook portrayed popular guesthouses as authentic family homes. Such critique can be turned back upon oneself, as this exchange between an interviewer and an older couple illustrates:

Q: Why do you take photographs?

1: . . . We have all been brought up on the National Geographic

2: We are completely observers, we are not part of it

1: We don't know what is going on

This couple have brought into their reflexive awareness an aspect of the role of the *National Geographic* in constructing their experience, which brings them to the self-critical appraisal that they 'don't know what is going on'. The point to be made is that symbolic resources are not just used to overcome problems and ruptures, but can themselves become problematic, demanding further elaboration, and drawing into play a new set of symbolic resources.

Reflections on the role of symbolic resources, like these, do not come from nowhere; they themselves are constrained by the symbolic resources available. One of the tourists in this study most reflexive about tourism had read John Urry's study of tourism, *The Tourist Gaze* (1990), as part of his university sociology course. Others referred to the popular book by William Sutcliffe, titled *Are You Experienced?* (1997), which is a satire on tourists' search for authenticity in India.

Many tourists, before leaving for Ladakh, will choose to see certain relevant films, or bring relevant books with them to read while in Ladakh. For example, the tourist who photographed the gorge, comparing it to the film *Himalaya*, had deliberately gone to see the film after making his plans to tour Ladakh. And, as evidenced by his remark, the film had mediated his experience of Ladakh. Choosing from the range of available guidebooks on Ladakh is also a choice of symbolic resources that is often reflectively managed. One tourist said that he had bought the *Rough Guide* guidebook instead of the *Lonely Planet* guidebook because 'the *Rough Guide* doesn't tell you what to think like the *Lonely Planet*'. In such cases, tourists' actions are mediated not by the symbolic resource itself, but by the idea that the tourist has about the mediating effect of the symbolic resource.

Routes to Uses of Symbolic Resources

We can now try to come back to our first proposition and summarize some of the points raised in these examples. All three examples trace situations in which individuals are confronted with a rupture in the normal course of events. For action and thought to continue, something has to be done, acted, constructed symbolically, that gives some meaning and allows further action. The ruptures involve different orders of phenomena inducing different types of representational work: the presence of others having conflicting perspectives on a task; the insistent presence of peers, adults and the museum to reflect upon one's creation; the presence of objects, vacant time and a real Ladakh that contradicts one's previous representations. In the cases we examined, the rupture cannot simply be said to be caused by a clash

between representations; rather, it is lived by a specific person and agent, the ruptures are triggered by some 'resistance' of the real—a thing, a person—towards his or her action or understanding.

The transitions and ruptures can be more or less clearly perceived, or defined as such. In the case of the children, rupture involves a micro-genetic process, but, as we have seen, socio-cultural resources and issues that the children are not fully aware of also enter into the complexity of the situation. The emphasis seems to be on the way social representations of gender operate within the interaction, but the rupture that it generates is felt rather than articulated. In the case of the adolescents, the rupture is contained within a classroom situation that spills over into other contexts of the student's life as he or she takes the 'object' home, and so on. The emphasis seems to be on 'managing' conflicting socially extended identities, on the one hand, and trying to reconcile an emerging social representation of art with the functions of classroom life, on the other. Social representations suggest limits to how an art object can be anchored and what kind of social identity can be extended to the student by various groups. Again, here we are confronted with problems of the 'definition of the situation', which can be negotiated during social interaction, but which the adolescents might also reflect on in isolation, outside the immediate context of interaction. In the case of Ladakh, the rupture is both intentionally sought and created by the tourists, becoming itself a project for which they find appropriate symbolic resources, so that their use of these resources is clearly reflexive.

Constraints and Symbolic Resources

The things that we have identified as symbolic elements being used as resources are argumentative strategies, judgements and artefacts such as books and movies. If they can be considered as concrete 'crystalizations' of representations, what makes these social dimensions salient for users is often a function of the situation and the presence of other agents who play a constraining and legitimating role. Some of these variations can also be linked to the interactive character of the situation, which implies an ongoing construction of a definition of the situation—which may in fact not be shared amongst the participants. For instance, in the case of the children resolving a task, it seems as if the girl and boy construct different ruptures and goals: he wants to take the position of teacher (and has the arguments to do so), while she wants to escape the situation (and uses the strategy of compliance). The rupture for both of them seems less of a severe break with their ordinary expectation than is the case for the boy in the Fm condition

who knows the position he wants to occupy but finds he has only limited resources to achieve it.

In the second example, socio-cultural, institutional, mediational pressures are exerted on the adolescents. They seem to have some awareness of the social representations of art involved, the contradiction among concurrent representations held by various social legitimizing agents (school, art critics . . .), and experience a mismatch with their localized art activities and productions. The adolescent can either stay 'stuck' in these contradictions with only a partial grasp of the social representations of art, or find alternative views. Again here, the interaction in which the adolescent is involved will bring him or her into conflict with a person holding different perspectives on the issue. Their objects seem uncanny precisely because they exceed their producers, in the sense that they carry more meaning than their producers are aware of. But this surplus of meaning is in the minds of teachers and parents. The teacher has the problem of managing the class, he/she uses Picasso prints as resources, and draws upon the curriculum and popular representations of art when leading the class. The parents are trying to guess the future of their child; taking the uncanny object as a crystal ball, they read into it from a different set of representations and resources. The uses of resources here is at an 'emergency point'—even if the adolescents could find in the culture of the history of art some useful tools with which to locate themselves, they are only able to 'use' those tools to which they find some immediate and more personal connection. When such usages legitimize the adolescents' artistic activities, they serve to orient them towards further artistic activities, which might then in turn be read from different perspectives.

In the case of the tourists, the constraints on the representational work linked to travel are somehow given by the way the tourist-to-be creates the problem (contrary to the school situation, where the teachers strongly frame the problem). They create the goal of escaping modernity to find something 'other' (authentic, primitive, more real, more true). In modernity, they localize and find cultural elements that will allow them to achieve that goal—air travel, prepared guidebooks, cameras, correct clothing and tourist stuff. The irony is thus that without the uses of such resources they would never manage to see the 'other' as primitive/authentic/truer. There is a complex spiralling of 'insights' that are opened up for the tourists by these symbolic resources and yet the tourists themselves seem to be sufficiently aware of the irony to be yet further troubled; the guidebook (symbolic resource of modernity *par excellence*) becomes the measure of 'authenticity'. However, in situations of crisis brought on by the search for that

goal, the person might choose, often deliberately, from a vast array of potential resources (movies, good or bad novels), but he or she might also reject these. In contrast to the children and adolescents, the tourists appear isolated. Their audience and interaction partners are absent. Though these others appear as an echo in, for example, the quotation from the tourist who photographed the bridge ‘for friends back home’, the work of defining the situation and the array of possible resources depends mainly on the tourists themselves. It also seems that the kinds of meanings they are searching for lie beyond their culturally available tools (photos, guidebooks, films), which at best function as a concrete token of something more transcendental—something spiritual or Buddhist. Perhaps their own photographs come some way to achieving a satisfactory meaning construction, because they might read their memories and feelings back into their own pictures. The pictures are imbued with their experiences and so are extensions of themselves (similar to the children’s art objects or ‘productions’). For the tourists, the medium is film and ‘what’ they want to capture—the idea of Ladakh is important, significant (it fills many needs for them). In this sense the photos seem to be the opposite of ‘uncanny’: they seem to be full, replete with intentionality—personal feelings, meanings and values. The meanings that the photos need to capture and hold for the tourist go far beyond the actual image—the landscape or the bike. But to recover these meanings, the images need to draw on association after association.

Outcomes of the Uses

With the use of symbolic resources, there is always something produced, something externalized, which is attached to the producer primarily by the gaze of the other. Such an attached outcome of a person’s uses of symbolic resources can also take place when the other is merely symbolic. The product is public and affords the other an opportunity to make an attribution about who the producer is. The product becomes a vehicle for the producer being identified as a specific social agent. Hence, the gaze of the other on this outcome momentarily captures the identity of the person, who will therefore be engaged in a constant work of negotiation of that identity. Once in the gaze of the other, this product necessarily exceeds its producer as the meaning comes from the response of the other, and thus the producer has to struggle to get control over the product (as manifest in the gaze of the other). For example, the non-conserving boy in the second example working with the conserving girl realizes the solution in interaction with her, uses it to ‘teach’ her, and then, calling the experimenter,

seems to be claiming the solution to the task as *his* product. In one sense, of course, it is his product since he has appropriated something that he did not have before. But in his attitude he also seems to deny the participation of the girl in this construction. In this sense, in each of the studies we can distinguish the actor (boy/girl, adolescent, tourist) from the audience (boy/girl, experimenter, teacher, parents, classmates, friends, family, researcher). This distinction seems to be part of the rupture in each case: the boy wants to appear dominant, the adolescent is concerned about how other people will receive their art object, and the tourist takes photographs to show friends and family. Furthermore, in each case the actor appears as agentic in the management of this situation by exerting control over the construction and presentation of the product within which his or her identity is entangled: the boy uses a certain argument to claim the solution as his; the girl acquiesces so as to escape the gaze of the audience (boy and experimenter); the adolescent pays close attention to the opinions of their audience (teacher, friends and family) and guides his or her art object into the public domain or into the bin accordingly; and the tourist spends a lot of time looking for the 'right' photograph to portray his or her holiday for friends and family back home. Here again it seems as if there are increasing degrees of freedom, though in this case they seem to be entwined with anticipating the responses of others to the product. A methodological consequence is that it is often possible to identify or trace back a meaning construction process, enabled by the use of symbolic resources, through the identification of such new symbolic objects (Zittoun, 2001).

Reflective Uses of Symbolic Resources

As we have seen, the constraints exerted upon the availability of resources can vary a great deal, as also do the uses of the resources themselves. Within the limits set by the various situational constraints, people have more or less control over their identification and uses of symbolic resources. We might distinguish three types of uses as actualizations of different forms of reflectivity.

In the first example, children use argumentative strategies un-reflexively: they find an augmentative style useful, but they do not seem to be able to control its use, often appearing to act without exercising any choice or gaining any insight about their employment of a particular style. Adolescents seem to know that they should find resources, and at some point find a useful one—with its comforting effects. The tourists are the most reflective: they choose which guidebook to take in terms of how they want their experience structured; some can be

actively reflective in their search for relevant elements—they can guide the uses, they can reflect upon the adequacy of these uses. Similarly, young adults can listen to sad music when they feel sad, or refer to a movie that is interesting because they can identify with a line of action, or they can actively use the creativity of producing some new symbolic resource to re-think reality (Zittoun, 2003). Thus, there are symbolic resources that are ‘used’ without any conscious grasp of choice and what it enables; uses that become reflective (knowing that one prefers to choose an element for different outcomes); and reflective uses (choices made on the basis of knowing about possible uses). Hence we distinguish *non-reflective uses*, *becoming-reflective uses* and *reflective uses*. To some extent these variations in reflective engagement may be a consequence of the objects that serve as symbolic resources. Different types of object may afford reflection in different ways: it might, for instance, be easier to reflect on different interpretations of an art object than on argument styles articulated in conversation. The possibility of reflection may also vary according to context, as we saw in the contrast between the Mf and Fm conversations. Reflection may always be a function of both object and context, but it is also linked to the extent to which the constructive effect of the symbolic resource enters into the experience of the user. Once the constructive effect of the symbolic resource exists in the experience of the individual, then the individual has greater freedom in relation to that resource—they can begin to manage it explicitly. Such explicit managing seems important for greater creativity of uses.

This discussion of reflectivity in the use of symbolic resources seems to sketch a developmental line. Certainly the development of an ability to take the perspective of the other is important here. The presence of adults or peers who not only legitimate the use of given symbolic resource but also adopt a reflective attitude toward it might also be important for the emergence of such a reflective stance (cf. Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002; Nelson, 2002). Hence, a person’s socialization history might be quite important here. Amongst tourists, the ‘academic’ ones were also the most reflective about the cultural elements they mobilized; they indeed might have developed particular abilities to identify and mobilize relevant symbolic resources. Finally, we see in the case of adolescents an intermediary stage, where some elements start to become available, without being totally ‘internalized’. How people acquire this ability to localize and use symbolic resources reflectively is thus important, to the same extent that it is important that people might creatively use symbolic means to overcome situational and symbolic constraints exerted on their actions.

Notes

This paper results from a common reflection by the authors, following a symposium on the use of symbolic resources organized by the first author at the 6th International Conference on Social Representations in Stirling in 2002. Although the central sections refer to specific studies, the theoretical elaborations reflect the collective nature of this collaboration. This paper has been realized thanks to a European Marie Curie Fellowship and a Corpus Christi Research Fellowship (Zittoun), a Peterhouse research studentship and an Economic and Social Research Council postgraduate research studentship (Gillespie), and a Cambridge Commonwealth Trust and Corpus Christi College research studentship (Psaltis). The authors are also grateful to Jaan Valsiner and Mary Alston Fitts for their very helpful comments on this paper.

1. This section refers to a study by Charis Psaltis and Gerard Duveen that is part of a larger project that aims at rendering intelligible the role of identity in peer interaction and cognitive development. In this study asymmetry in knowledge was always present during the interaction phase since a conserver was always paired with a non-conserver. As in Leman and Duveen (1999), the gender combination of pairs was also varied to produce four pair-types: conserving boys working with non-conserving boys (Mm); conserving boys working with non-conserving girls (Mf); conserving girls working with non-conserving girls (Ff); and conserving girls working with non-conserving boys (Fm).
2. This section refers to an ongoing study by Gabrielle Ivinson.
3. This section refers to a study by Alex Gillespie.

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