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3. BOUNDARY CROSSING EVENTS AND POTENTIAL APPROPRIATION SPACE IN PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

Teaching cultural elements, such as literary texts, pieces of music, films, sculptures, and other similar artefacts, is one of the educational aims of a school. As part of our past and present society, cultural elements are considered to be fundamental. At a social level, they belong to shared bodies of knowledge which might foster social cohesion; at the level of individuals, they are expected to play a fundamental role in the students' intellectual and emotional development and in their capacity to act as future citizens. In the present state-of-the-art, however, more research is needed into the way in which the cultural elements taught at school are used by students as *resources* for emotional elaboration and developmental processes.

Starting from this consideration, the research project on which this contribution is based examines how secondary school students make sense of cultural elements taught in three different disciplines: philosophy, literature and general knowledge. Drawing upon socio-cultural and dialogical approaches inspired by Vygotsky and Bakhtin (Grossen & Salazar Orvig, 2011; Marková, 2003; Valsiner, 2007; Wertsch, 1991; Zittoun, 2006), we address two complementary questions: Do students make sense of a cultural element taught in class by referring to cultural elements they know from other contexts? Conversely, do they make sense of personal or social phenomena occurring outside the school by referring to cultural elements taught at school?

Assuming that cultural elements at school have some connection with cultural elements in other contexts, we begin by a brief presentation of our theoretical framework and focus upon what we call *boundary crossing events,* that is a connection (made either by the teacher or by a student) between a cultural element that is part of the lesson, and other elements that belong to the outside world. Then we examine whether these boundary crossing events foster the creation of a *potential appropriation space*, in which students can give a personal sense to the bodies of knowledge taught in class. After presenting the study from which our data is taken, we report three contrasting examples of boundary crossing events and their subsequent potential appropriation spaces.

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DIALOGICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION

Our research project is located at the intersection of two research strands. The first examines the interactional and discursive processes involved in teaching and learning. An impressive body of research into classroom interactions has shown that part of the teaching-learning process consists of the teacher's and students' joint construction of a shared meaning of the school subject matter (e.g. Grossen, 2009; Grossen & Bachmann, 2000; Kumpulainen, Hmelo-Silver, & Margarida, 2009; Littleton, 2000; Renshaw, 1998; Rojas-Drummond, Mazón, Fernandez, & Wegerif, 2006). Thus, part of the students' activity is to make sense of the ground rules at work in the situation and to decipher the teacher's point of view about the subject matter (Mercer, 2000). Further development has focused upon the personal sense that the students give to school in general, or to certain school subject matters (for example grammar or mathematics) (Rochex, 1998, 2004). It has also been shown that making sense of school or, for example, mathematics or a piece of literature, is mediated by significant others (parents, teachers, et cetera.) and is fundamental in being successful at school.

The second research strand concerns the role of semiotic mediation in thinking and development (Valsiner, 2007, 2009). Studies in this field have shown that people engaged in the daily work of making sense of problematic situations usually draw on a variety of available resources (Zittoun, 2006). In this context, cultural elements (such as complex cultural artefacts that are primarily intended to carry meaning) can, in some situations, be used by people to develop new understandings, redefine themselves, or make sense of an event. For example, a picture can help them to maintain an experience of self-continuity although they change their place of residence; a novel might help them to define future plans; or a song can bring them to reflect upon some historical issue. Such uses of cultural elements have been called *symbolic resources* (Zittoun, Duveen, Gillespie, Ivinson, & Psaltis, 2003; Zittoun, 2006). A cultural element is used as symbolic resource when it is mobilised by a person, who intentionally links it with something which is beyond its normal, shared meaning: for example, when a novel is not only read by a person in order to follow the fiction or analyse 19th century's language, but also because it enables her to reflect upon her life choices. In other words, the notion of *symbolic resource* captures the fact that under certain conditions cultural elements might participate in the young person's development and socialisation. It refers to the fact that a person uses a cultural element *in connection with* an experience made in her personal life that turns it into a symbolic resource; uses of symbolic resources are always personal.

Beyond their differences, these research strands converge on two points: (a) Both see interpersonal relationships as mediating the personal sense that a learner gives to an object of knowledge (Perret-Clermont, Carugati, & Oates, 2004). Emotionally significant others play a fundamental role in the process of making sense of a cultural element. For example, a parent who acknowledges that a child likes a specific story might facilitate his/her further internalisation of the story (Miller, Hoogstra, Mintz, Fung, & Williams, 1993; Zittoun, 2010). Social

interactions are thus constitutive of the process of appropriation and internalisation of knowledge.[3] (b) Both see learning as a socially and institutionally situated process (Grossen, 2000; Resnick, Säljö, Pontecorvo, & Burge, 1997; Valsiner, 2008, Zittoun, 2008). Consequently, a certain body of knowledge (for example a cultural element) may take on various meanings depending on the sphere of activity in which it is embedded and the representations that the participants have of its aims and of the task to be carried out.

Applied to our research object, this view also implies that, as has been shown in the field of mathematics for example (Abreu, 1995), there might be some tensions between various spheres of activity, outside and inside school, in which the apparently "same" cultural element is mobilised. We can therefore form the hypothesis that part of the students' practice consists of identifying whether these two worlds could or should be connected, and if so, in which ways. In other words, learning at school and making sense of a cultural element taught at school might imply a process of crossing boundaries between the inside and the outside of a given learning-teaching situation.

TENSIONS IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING FRAMEWORK

From a socio-cultural perspective, a school is a culturally and historically situated social institution. The school's policies, organisation, curricula, pedagogical practices, modes of communication with parents and other communities, goals and values, frame the teaching-learning activities in the classroom. In turn, they are also framed by broader social and institutional practices. A school can thus be seen as a *community of practice* (Brown, 1997) in which the participants develop shared practices that contribute to the reconfiguration of the context in which they occur. Hence, the context is both a framework and a result of the participants' activity.

Since teachers and students are also participants of other communities of practice, teaching and learning at school require them to position themselves as members both of the school community and of these other communities. From this standpoint a teaching-learning situation appears to be a concentrate of elements pertaining to the here and now of the classroom and to the *there and then* (other classrooms, other communities of practice), which give rise to tensions that the participants have to manage.

The tension between everyday and formal knowledge is one of them. By everyday knowledge, we refer to objects of knowledge, competence, skills, etcetera that are not part of the school curriculum and are not submitted to explicit teaching at school. By formal knowledge, we refer not only to the subject matters and object

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[3] Here we do not oppose appropriation and internalization, as has been done by various authors (Rogoff, 1995; Toomela, 1996); rather, we consider appropriation as a socially situated activity of progressive mastery and sense-making, and internalisation as its mental phase – the process whereby signs and meaning in the world find some psychic translation (Lawrence & Valsiner, 1993, 2003; Wertsch & Stone, 1985).

of knowledge that belong to the school curriculum, but also to the fact that knowledge, competence, skills, etc. that are taught at school require specific modes of thinking, including formal conceptualisation, hypothetico-deductive reasoning, and reflecting about the implicit rules organising knowledge (Rochex, 2004; Vygotsky, 1986). On the other hand, bodies of knowledge taught at school should enable students to orient themselves in their social and professional environment, and are aimed at becoming a form of daily knowledge (that is, equip them to be integrated in the society in which they live). Some schools can favour the links between everyday and formal knowledge, for example by anchoring the formal curricula in the students' everyday knowledge (Hedegaard, 2009; Hedegaard & Chaiklin, 2005). Other schools rather disregard the links between formal and everyday knowledge and keep them distinct (Rochex, 1998). Students themselves might draw upon everyday knowledge or knowledge learned in another context, to make sense of the school subject matter.

A second source of tensions concerns the respective importance conferred by the participants to the subject matter or to interpersonal relationships. We shall call it object-focused vs. relation-focused interactions. In fact, teacher-students interactions might focus upon the subject matter, whereas in other cases, they might focus upon the quality of interpersonal relationship at the expanse of the subject matter. For instance, with students who have had a difficult school career, teachers might want to establish a good relationship (Zittoun, 2004) before focusing upon the teaching of a certain subject matter. In contrast, in the context of University education, teaching-learning situations mostly focus upon the object of knowledge and tend to neglect interpersonal relationships in a way that might lead the students to feel anonymous and uneasy (Coulon, 2005).

A third source of tensions might arise from the various social identities involved within the students' various spheres of experience (Hermans, 2002; Perret-Clermont, 2009). Outside school, they might have developed competences, skills and knowledge (language speaking, games, sports, theatre, et cetera) that are part of their identities and give them a certain kind of expertise. Within the school context, these various types of experience may or may not be acknowledged; they might be valorised and contribute to the construction of a positive self image, or, on the contrary, be experienced as a private matter that should be carefully kept away from the school context. Thus, a classroom community might, or might not, leave some room for more symmetric relationships in which the students refer to their competence, skills or knowledge in fields other than school disciplines themselves. The students might also be more or less liable to negotiate various facets of their identity. Moreover, in the internalisation process, students, as well as teachers, may find school subject matters that correspond to their private experience and give them a personal sense (Rochex, 1998). Within a classroom community, students and teachers may disclose this personal commitment and make it a *res publica* (Bruner, 2002), or on the contrary, keep it hidden as something belonging to their private life.

These three types of tensions (formal vs. informal knowledge; object-focused vs. relation-focused interactions; identities inside vs. outside school) are of course

not exhaustive. However, they show that teaching-learning situations as a concentrate of a here and now and a *there and then*, include discontinuities, divergences and tensions between various communities of practice and the various positionings of individuals within these communities. They can be considered as three indicators, which, taken together, inform us about the specificity of the teaching-learning framework created in the classroom.

BOUNDARY CROSSING EVENTS AND POTENTIAL APPROPRIATION SPACE

Any teaching-learning framework implies boundary crossing practices, by which students and teachers make connections between various communities of practice in which they participate (Wenger, 1998; see also in a slightly different way Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003). With the notion of boundary crossing events, our intention is to emphasize, firstly, the uniqueness of the teaching-learning framework characterized by modalities of various types of tensions. Secondly, we want to highlight the semiotic processes and uses of artefacts (Walker & Nocoon, 2007) that people activate as they move from one sphere of experience to another in order to make sense of events in different contexts and communities of practices (an issue related to transfer; cf. Beach, 2003; Säljö, 2003).

At a methodological level, our suggestion is that the way in which students make sense of philosophy, literature and general knowledge by connecting cultural elements taught in these classes with elements from outside, and by using them to make sense of their personal everyday life or of social phenomena, may be captured through boundary crossing events.

We identified two types of boundary crossing events (BCE): in the first, the teacher or a student imports a cultural element, a social event, or a personal experience occurring outside the context of the classroom and connects it with a cultural element currently taught in the classroom. Excerpt [1], taken from a philosophy class given by Paul, the regular teacher, offers an illustration (in italics the BCE, original in Appendix):

[1]   Paul_14 (School B, translated from French)
The students have read a text by the philosopher Bertrand Russell. The teacher, Paul, is commenting on it, when Ralph raises his hand:
Ralph   yes but couldn't there be some exceptions to what he ((Russell)) says?
Paul   well, that's, err? […]
Ralph   I don't know, for example the stories of Robin Hood

As he attempts to make sense of Russell's text, Ralph recalls an alien cultural element, *Robin Hood*, a fictional character made famous mainly through literature and films, and lets it cross the borders of the present lesson. *Robin Hood* belongs to popular, everyday culture, that is, to a different sphere of experience than Russell's text in a formal philosophy lesson; in that sense, the mention of *Robin Hood* is here a BCE.

The second type of BCE consists of exporting a school subject matter outside the class in order to make sense of elements, events, or experiences that take place in everyday life. This is for example the case when a student connects texts on racism that have been read in class with the fact that some newspapers report an aggressor's nationality only when he or she is a foreigner (see Excerpt [4]).

In line with our theoretical framework, we assume that by connecting elements from outside and inside the class, BCE indicate how the participants manage the tensions between the two contexts. The occurrence of a BCE is a privileged moment to observe how the tensions between formal and informal knowledge, between object-focused vs. relation-focused interactions, and between identities outside and inside school are handled, and to observe what teaching-learning framework is locally and temporarily achieved. More specifically, our hypothesis is that the way in which these BCE reconfigure the teaching-learning framework may encourage the emergence of what we call a *potential appropriation space* —a space in which learning and change can occur—both at the level of shared activities, and at the level of each person involved (Zittoun, 2004). The term 'potential' is intended to stress that a teaching-learning situation may, under certain conditions, offer an opportunity (potentiality) for learning, or a thinking space Perret-Clermont (2004). It also refers to Winnicott's notion of potential space (1971): provided firstly by 'good enough' interpersonal relationship, and then by cultural traditions, a potential space is experienced when people feel safe enough to engage in playing and creative processes, in adopting different points of view, engaging in counterfactual thinking, etcetera.[4] Thus, the term 'potential' is meant to emphasise that learning involves both collaboration and creativity (Littleton, Rojas-Drummond, & Miell, 2008). In other words, when BCE open a potential appropriation space, the cultural elements under discussion are liable to become symbolic resources for learning and for making a personal sense of learning. Therefore, the general aim of our study is to analyse the characteristics of BCE, to examine how they reshape the teaching-learning framework and to explore their role in the creation of a potential appropriation space.

DATA, METHOD OF ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The data was collected in three Swiss upper-secondary schools (mostly 17-19 year-old students): School A and School B offer pre-academic tracks, whereas School C offers vocational tracks. We observed 14 teachers and their students, in 16 different classrooms, and in three disciplines: literature, philosophy (in Schools A and B), and general knowledge, which is specific to School C and consists of the study of

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[4] Although Winnicott was mainly interested in the changes leading to the development of the self, it should be noted that the potential space hence defined is extremely close to that of "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1986) more familiar in studies of learning, which can be created by others, in play or in fiction, and that is the zone in which new understanding can emerge through exploration and counterfactual thinking (or "as-if" processes, see Valsiner, 2008).

various themes in the field of cinema, art, history, literature, etcetera. In total, 56 lessons (27 in literature, 16 in philosophy and 13 in general knowledge,) were videotaped and analysed, all in French. These classroom observations were part of a broader collection of data consisting, among others, of interviews with the teachers.

In a first analytical step, we identified all the BCE occurring in these lessons: 144 BCE were found and the elements outside the classroom that were bridged to the cultural element taught in class were attributed to one of three thematic categories: (a) social, political or historical facts, for example, racism; (b) personal experience or reference to an autobiographical element; (c) cultural elements that were not part of the lesson, such as "Robin Hood" in Excerpt [1]. We also found that these BCE were included in sequences (BCE sequences) made up of four parts: introduction, opening, thematisation of the BCE, and closing. Since, some BCE were directly linked to each others, the 144 BCE identified corresponded to 125 BCE sequences.

In a second step, various aspects of these BCE sequences were analysed, for example: who provoked the BCE, who made it, what reactions did it elicit from whom and of what type. This enabled us to categorise these BCE sequences in eight profiles, according to who made the BCE (teacher or student), who provoked it, and what type of reaction it triggered.

Our third analytical step aimed at answering our hypothesis: do BCE play a role in the creation of a potential space of learning? To explore this question, we focused on the reaction provoked by a BCE: was there a thematic development, that is, some sort of discussion? If so, did this thematic development open a potential space of learning? In other terms, the quality of the thematic development following the BCE was taken as an analytical clue to infer whether a potential space of learning was opened or not.

Due to length limitations, we only present three excerpts: two were taken in School C, in two different classrooms in which a teacher (Elisabeth and Eric) gave a class of general knowledge, and one excerpt was taken in School A in a class of philosophy given by Patrick. These three excerpts correspond to three different profiles of BCE sequences. The first is an example of a profile in which the teacher introduces a BCE that does not give way to any thematic development. The second excerpt exemplifies a profile in which the teacher makes a BCE that gives way to a thematic development. The third excerpt illustrates a profile in which a student makes a BCE that gives way to a thematic development. In each case, we show how the three types of tensions identified above to characterize the teaching-learning framework were handled, and their effects on the construction of a potential appropriation space.

BOUNDARY CROSSING EVENTS AND POTENTIAL APPROPRIATION SPACE

Example 1

Excerpt [2] belongs to the most frequent profile (28 BCE sequences out of 125): The teacher introduces a BCE on his or her own initiative, that is, it is self-elicited; it prompts minimal feedback and the teacher closes the sequence. Thus, the BCE is completely integrated within the teacher's flow of discourse while she holds the floor.

Excerpt [2] is taken from a general knowledge class (School C) about the historical evolution of communication media. The class is given by their teacher, Elisabeth. Under the teacher's guidance, the students are trying to answer various questions in a written exercise. At a certain point, Elisabeth, makes a connection between the school subject matter (the functioning of a telegraph) and a cultural element supposed to be known by the students (in italics the BCE):

[2]   Elisabeth_16 (School C, translated from French)
1 Elisabeth   in comparison with today what is the difference?
2 Student 1   today it's direct
3 Elisabeth   SMS, internet mails, now it's direct, there is no interlocutor between (.) at that time even to call there was- did anybody see *Little House on the Prairie* when the shrew of the village runs the post office, there is a phone and she has to take all the calls and redirect them for example (.) don't you see ?
4 Students   yes yes
5 Elisabeth   well again the generation who saw *Little House on the Prairie*
6 Student 2   yes I have seen it
7 Elisabeth   and then she has small cables and then she puts the calls through to people but she's obliged to be there (.) the telegram it's a little bit the same except that from the post office […] from the post office somebody had to go to the person

The BCE introduced by the teacher is a well-known and popular TV series (*Little House on the Prairie*), that has not been shown on TV for a long time. The students' feedback is limited to confirming that they know this TV series, and the exercise continues.

Let us take our three types of tensions as indicators of the way in which the teaching-learning framework is reconfigured by the BCE. Looking first at the tension between formal and informal knowledge, we see that the teacher borrowed a cultural element from outside the classroom and connected it with the school subject matter. *Little House on the Prairie* was taken as an illustration of the subject matter on which the lesson was focused; it anchored the history of communication media into something that was supposed to be known by the students and anticipated misunderstandings. By putting a familiar object at the service of an unfamiliar subject matter, the BCE created a bridge between two

spheres of experience and was meant to facilitate the students' understanding of the subject matter.[5]

In so doing, the teacher focused on the subject matter, kept control over her own didactical goal and positioned herself as a teacher. Thus, as regards the second type of tension (object-focused vs. interaction-focused interactions), the framework was clearly on the side of object-focused interactions.

Considering finally the tension between identities outside and inside school, we see that by referring to a popular TV series within the classroom, the teacher did not only assume that her students were TV viewers who watched popular TV series, but also implicitly positioned herself, as well as her students, within a certain social space where these cultural elements had an implicit value. She let the students' identities outside school enter the classroom and used them as a support to make sense of the subject matter.

Briefly put, the teaching-learning framework that emerges from this BCE is focused on the subject matter, controlled by the teacher and acknowledges some aspects of the students' cultural practices outside the school. However, the BCE does not give way to a discussion. Therefore, from an observer's standpoint, it is difficult to tell whether or not it opened a potential appropriation space in which the students might use a TV series as a symbolic resource and appropriate the knowledge at stake. An observation of a longer time scale would be necessary to answer this question.

Example 2

The second example also belongs to a frequent profile (30 BCE sequences): the BCE is self-elicited and introduced by the teacher, and it gives way to a thematic development. Excerpt [3] is taken from a general knowledge class given by Eric, a teacher who puts great emphasis upon the quality of his relationships with his students. Just before this excerpt, the students watched a film called "War Photographer" (a documentary about the American photographer James Nachtwey), an activity that belongs to a teaching module concerning cinema. Before the projection, Eric confessed that each time he sees this movie, he is moved. After the projection, he questions his students about the film. A student gives his opinion (in italics the BCE):

[3]   *Eric_151 (School C, translated from French)*
1   Fabien   well I think that except for two or three images nothing was really
                   very very shocking

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[5] In the literature, a frequent assumption is that such a link is likely to help the student understand and make sense of the situation (Hedegaard & Chaiklin, 2005). However, there is also extensive literature that shows that "familiarity" is not always a facilitating factor and that it may also create confusions between various frames of reference (Rochex, 1998).

2	Eric	yeah it didn't move you to see for example this woman at the beginning in Kosovo who arrives and finds her house completely devastated?
3	Fabien	well I was rather moved to see people starving on the ground
4	Eric	yeah ?
5	Fabien	it happens in any country that's the way it is
6	Eric	*do you come from Italy?*
7	Fabien	yeah
8	Eric	north of Italy?
9	Fabien	yeah
10	Eric	do you have a house there?
11	Fabien	yes my grand-parents
12	Eric	yeah to what are you attached?
13	Fabien	oh not much because I don't go very often
14	Eric	yeah and here?
15	Fabien	here well yes it's my house
16	Eric	are you attached to your house?
17	Fabien	yes because I was born in it, I have been living there since I was very small
18	Eric	yeah what would you feel? Can't you put yourself in the place of this woman for example?
19	Fabien	yeah:: I could
20	Eric	but you're not moved, don't you give a damn about the other person's distress?
21	Fabien	it's not that I don't give a damn but it can happen to anybody, can't it.
22	Eric	(Student 2 raises his hand) yeah ?
23	Student 2	but what I'm saying is that this shocks me less than people who starve because now we've seen so much on the Iraq war, there were a lot of images of this, it's all – it's less shocking
24	Eric	you say on TV? The images you see?
25	Student 2	exactly, with the Iraq war yeah these images came again and again while images of persons who starve, we see them less
26	Eric	yeah so you were struck by images you're not used to seeing, is that right?
27	Student 2	yeah
28	Eric	and you ((name of a third student)) did you already see it last year?

Here, the BCE consists of a teacher's question about the student's biographical data (6: "Do you come from Italy?"). The teacher then asks further questions that gradually invite the student to adopt the point of view of a character in the film (a woman who lost her house during the war in Kosovo) and to justify the "morality" of his feelings.

How does this BCE reconfigure the teaching-learning framework? As regards the tension between informal and formal knowledge, we observe that the movie is

not discussed as a cultural artefact that may be subjected to an analysis of, for example, the form of the film, the approach and ethics of a war photographer, the role of the images on public opinion, etc. It is not treated as a formal object of knowledge or, put differently, it is not conceptualised in a way that allows the student to apprehend it on a different way than in everyday life.

If we consider now the second type of tensions, the discussion between the teacher and the student is dominated both by the asymmetry of their status and, on a pragmatic level, by the power of questions (asking a question obliges the addressee to answer). However, there is a discrepancy between the highly asymmetrical management of their roles and the topic of the discussion: personal judgements and feelings. The teacher focuses upon the emotions that the student *should* feel and, consequently, gives a compulsory character to the very fact of feeling certain emotions. The focus of the discussion is not the film anymore but shifts on personal matters so that interpersonal relationships predominate. What happens here is more dominated by relation-focused interactions than by object-focused interactions.

This observation is directly linked to our third level of tensions. In fact, by questioning the student's personal life, the teacher refers to the student's identity outside school and threatens what Goffman (1971) calls the student's "territory" of the self (in this case, the student's home in Switzerland, his grand-parents' house in Italy). The teacher's and the student's personal identities are so deeply involved, their interpersonal relationships come so much to the forefront that for the student, criticising the movie amounts to a criticism of the teacher. Instead of treating the movie as a cultural element, the discussion concentrates on personal feelings and develops a slightly conflictual tone. In this context, the classmate's intervention (23) appears as a social and cognitive mediation. By inviting the teacher to shift his point of view and to adopt instead the role of a TV watcher who is regularly confronted with similar images (23, 25), the student brings new arguments that support his classmate's opinion and, indirectly, invites the teacher to share it.

This analysis shows that although in that case the BCE opened a discussion between the teacher and the students, the participants' emotional involvement did not open a space of reflection on the film itself, or even prevented the creation of such a space.

Example 3

The third example illustrates another frequent profile (23 BCE sequences): a student makes a BCE which is, directly or indirectly, elicited by the teacher and this BCE gives rise to a thematic development.

Excerpt [4] is taken from a philosophy class (School A). The class is given by their philosophy teacher Patrick. The lesson belongs to a teaching module on racism in which the teacher used a philosophical text by Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as a TV broadcast and newspaper articles. This blending of various sources reflected the teacher's goal: to use philosophy to stimulate the students' reflection in their everyday life. Just before Excerpt [4], Patrick and the students finished

analysing a newspaper article about a proposed French law against racism. Patrick is about to move on to another activity when he notices two students talking together (in italics the BCE):

[4]   Patrick_89 (School A, translated from French)
1   Patrick   yeah! Were you on racism or what err …
2   Student 1
    Student 2   yeah, yeah !
3   Patrick   yeah ! (he smiles)
4   Student 1   we were talking about newspaper articles
5   Patrick   yeah law articles? ((mishearing))
6   Student 1   no, newspaper
7   Patrick   yeah, and then?
8   Student 1   we were talking about the fact that when we often read about people who are attacked, in Switzerland, just attacked in the street, often they write "by two Kosovars", "by two Albanese", etc. and then they don't specify it when they talk about Swiss people ((on the lips of the student sitting behind we can read "it's normal" and he smiles while looking at the video camera))
9   Patrick   definitely! Definitely! Hmm it's never written "attacked by an inhabitant of the ((name of a place in the region))" (everybody laughs) no but it's true, it's true, does it upset you?
10 Student 1   yeah, one should actually see how it is said, because if we make a difference between saying "I've been attacked by two Kosovars" xx and that we could also say "I've been attacked by two Swiss people", there is a difference saying "I have been attacked by two Kosovars" in the sense that it's just because they are two foreigners
11 Patrick   yeah, yeah I mean and the mass media in my opinion they have a terrible responsibility. I think it is very unjust it should be forbidden. Or one should give the origin every time. and even so, what does it mean? One induces a lot of things. Here I mean, err, the mass media, in order to create a sensation, they induce very strongly err.. provoke xenophobia, hmm, by giving this detail when it involves a foreigner, and at the end we see only this, hmm we see the titles "kosovar", "kosovar", "kosovar" (he looks at everybody) hmm, err, imagine the ((name of the local newspaper)): "bevaisan" ((inhabitants of a small village)), "bevaisan", "bevaisan", hmm after three years you say: "they are all crazy these "Bevaisans!" Hmm, no but I mean it's.. (long pause, he seems to be moved) yeah, yeah it strikes me also, that this is allowed by the law (…) because here we do exactly the thing that Sartre denounces, we put labels and we reduce individuals to their national label. And consequently we induce in the population a rejection of these nationalities

Contrary to Excerpt [3], the BCE introduced by the student consists of exporting a school subject matter outside the school context to make sense of a social phenomenon: racism. It reconfigures the teaching-learning framework in the following way: the informal object of knowledge introduced in the lesson (that is, the reference to how some newspapers report aggression acts, turn 8) goes beyond the subject matter but fulfils the teacher's aim (as we know from an interview with the teacher), that is, using philosophy to involve his students in a deeper reflection on the world and themselves. Discussing this informal piece of knowledge is not an end in itself, but is at the service of the subject matter.

Consequently, as regards the tension between object-focused interactions and relation-focused interactions, the balance is clearly on the side of the former, since the whole discussion remains focused on the topic of the lesson: racism. Moreover, the management of their roles is quite symmetric, as shows the fact that the teacher takes up the students' ideas as a matter for his own reflection.

Considering finally the tensions of identities inside and outside the school, the BCE introduced by the student leads both the teacher and the student to disclose their opinions towards media and racism, and to acknowledge their respective position on this topic. In so doing, they partly stray out of their institutional roles and publicly display other facets of their social identity. However, the fact that the discussion concerns the way in which newspapers report acts of violence does not lead them to disclose their opinions beyond this topic and the discussion is framed by the school situation in which they act. The fact that at a certain point (turn 8) a student makes a comment sotto voce ("it's normal") and smiles without being noticed (except by the video camera) shows that such BCE may also easily become face-threatening, either because all the students do not share the same opinion, or because some students might be tempted to tease the teacher and their classmates on such a sensitive topic.

In this case, the BCE reconfigures the teaching-learning framework in such a way that the dialogue between the teacher and the student becomes a potential appropriation space. Cultural elements mobilised in the whole teaching module (Sartre's text, the text of a new law) have been used as resources that create opportunities for both the students and the teacher to construct new representations, and to share them.

DISCUSSION AND OPENING

The aim of the study reported in this chapter was to examine the way in which cultural elements which are taught in three disciplines, literature, philosophy and general knowledge, may be used as symbolic resources by students to aid learning and development. In order to do so, we analysed boundary crossing events, namely links between a cultural element taught in the class and an external element. According to our hypothesis, these BCE are part of a sequence that allows us to observe how the teacher and the students manage the tensions between, on the one hand activities, identities and bodies of knowledge that exist within the class framework and, on the other hand, those existing in different social contexts. More

specifically, our aim was to examine how these BCE contribute to reshaping the teaching-learning framework and to opening a potential appropriation space, a space where learning may occur.

Our observations of classroom interactions showed that there are two different types of BCE: the first consists of connecting a school subject matter with a cultural element, a personal experience or a social phenomenon, that are relevant for the student outside the class, and may be used to confer a personal sense to the taught element. The second type, which has received less attention in the literature, consists of using the cultural element taught in the class to make sense of a personal experience, knowledge or skill, or a social phenomenon. To identify situations in which the BCE might enable the students to engage in personal sense-making of the issues at stake, we were attentive to potential appropriation spaces thereby created.

The first type of BCE was presented in our first example, where a teacher referred to a cultural element assumed to be known by the students and invited them to use it as a resource in order to make sense of a school subject matter. This BCE was entirely managed and controlled by the teacher and did not provoke the students' participation. There was no obvious way in which the students made sense of the cultural elements brought by the teacher, so that it was difficult to tell whether a potential appropriation space had been opened at all.

The two other cases belonged to the second type of BCE, in which the cultural element taught at school was used to make sense of an event out of school. In the second example, we reported a case in which a BCE threatened the participants' face. The cultural element presented in the lesson (a documentary) had a very strong personal sense for the teacher but not for one of the students. It opened a discussion that was not far from conflictual and did not lead to a reflection on the documentary as a cultural artefact. The fact that the BCE involved a strong emotional dimension seems to have hindered the development of a potential appropriation space. In contrast, in the third example, the BCE was introduced by two students, and it opened a discussion between the teacher and one of the students. The students connected the cultural element studied in class (the text of a proposed law against racism) with a social phenomenon, the way in which newspapers sometimes report aggressive incidents involving foreigners. This BCE opened a discussion between the students and the teacher, and led to what seemed to be a potential space of appropriation in which the teacher and the students engaged in a joint reflection.

We thus hope to have shown that BCE sequences are privileged moments to observe how a teaching-learning framework is reconfigured and may, under some conditions, enable students to use cultural elements taught at school as symbolic resources and open a potential appropriation space. Further analysis of these conditions is also required to understand how these results might be used in the teaching-learning practices.

APPENDIX: EXCERPTS IN ORIGINAL FRENCH LANGUAGE

[1]

Ralph	ouais mais il n'y aurait pas certaines exceptions dans ce qu'il dit ?
Paul	ben c'est-à-dire euh […]
Ralph	je sais pas par exemple les histoires comme Robin des Bois

[2]

1	Elisabeth	par rapport à maintenant c'est quoi la différence ?
2	Elève1	maintenant c'est direct
3	Elisabeth	sms internet mails, maintenant c'est direct il n'y a pas d'interlocuteur entre (.) à l'époque même pour téléphoner il y avait- personne n'as vu dans La petite maison dans la prairie quand la mégère du village elle tient le bureau de post qu'il y a le téléphone et puis elle doit prendre tous les appels et les rediriger par exemple (.) vous voyez pas ?
4	Elèves	si oui oui
5	Elisabeth	ben de nouveau les générations qui ont vu « La Petite maison dans la prairie »
6	Elève 2	si j'ai vu
7	Elisabeth	et puis elle a des petits câbles et puis elle fait passer le téléphone chez les gens mais elle est obligée d'être là (.) le télégramme c'est un peu la même chose sauf qu'il faut qu'en plus du bureau de poste (s'interrompt et interpelle un élève qui parle) sauf qu'il faut en plus que depuis le bureau de poste quelqu'un ait chez la personne

[3]

1	Patrick	ouais ! Vous étiez au racisme ou bien euh..
2	Elèves 1+2	ouais, ouais !
3	Patrick	ouais ! (il sourit)
4	Elève 1	on parlait des articles de journaux
5	Patrick	ouais des articles de loi ? (il a mal compris)
6	Elève 1	non de journaux
7	Patrick	ouais c'est-à-dire ?
8	Elève 1	on parlait de quand on voit souvent des gens qui se font attaquer, en Suisse, agressés comme ça dans la rue, souvent ils mettent « par deux Kosovars », « par deux Albanais », etc., et puis ils ne précisent pas quand ils parlent de Suisses ((un élève au fond de la classe fait une remarque que l'on peut lire sur ses lèvres « c'est normal », le maître ne le remarque pas))
9	Patrick	tout à fait ! tout à fait ! hein, c'est jamais marqué « agressé par un habitant du Val de Travers » (tout le monde rit) non mais c'est vrai, c'est vrai, et ça vous choque ça ?
10	Elève 1	ben ouais, en fait faut voir comment c'est dit, parce que si, on fait la différence par exemple en disant euh « on s'est fait agresser par deux Kosovars xx pis que on pourrait aussi dire « on s'est fait agresser par deux Suisses », il y a une différence de dire « je me suis fait agresser par deux Kosovars » dans le sens que c'est juste parce que c'est deux étrangers
11	Patrick	ouais ouais j'entends, et les mass mes à mon avis là ont une sacrée responsabilité. Moi je trouve ça très malsain ça devrait être interdit. Ou alors il faudrait donner à chaque fois l'origine.. et même qu'est-ce que ça veut dire hein ? On induit pas mal de choses. Là j'entends euh, les mass mes, pour faire du sensationnel, induisent très fortement euh.. provoquent la xénophobie, hein, en mettant cette précision-là quand il s'agit d'un étranger, et on ne voit plus que ça finalement, hein on voit les titres « kosovar », « kosovar », « kosovar » (il regarde tout le monde dans un mouvement circulaire puisque les bureaux sont en U), hein euh, imaginez-vous dans l'Express: « bevaisan », « bevaisan », « bevaisan », hein au bout de trois ans vous dites : « ils sont tous fous ces Bevaisans ! ». Hein, non mais j'entends c'est.. (il regarde l'élève qui a soulevé la question) (longue pause, il réfléchit, semble touché) ouais ouais ça me frappe aussi ça, que ça soit permis par la loi (…) parce que là, on fait exactement hein quelque chose que dénonce Sartre, on met des étiquettes et on réduit les individus à

leur étiquette nationale. Et donc, on induit par là dans la population, un rejet de ces nationalités-là

[4]

1	Elève 1	ben je trouve qu'à part deux trois images il n'y avait rien de vraiment très très choquant
2	Eric	ouais ça vous a pas ému de voir par exemple cette femme au début au Kosovo qui arrive et qui trouve sa maison complètement dévastée ?
3	Elève 1	ben :: non ça m'a plutôt ému de voir les gens qui mourraient de faim parterre
4	Eric	ouais ?
5	Elève 1	ça arrive dans chaque pays donc voilà quoi
6	Eric	vous êtes italien d'origine vous ?
7	Elève 1	ouais
8	Eric	du nord de l'Italie
9	Elève 1	ouais
10	Eric	vous avez une maison là-bas ?
11	Elève 1	ouais mes grands-parents
12	Eric	ouais vous êtes attaché à quoi ?
13	Elève 1	oh pas grand chose parce que j'y vais pas souvent
14	Eric	ouais et puis ici ?
15	Elève 1	ici ben ouais c'est ma maison
16	Eric	vous êtes attaché à votre maison ?
17	Elève 1	ben ouais parce que je suis né dedans je suis là-bas depuis que je suis tout petit
18	Eric	ouais qu'est-ce que ça vous ferait vous ? vous arrivez pas à vous mettre à la place de cette femme par exemple ?
19	Elève 1	ouais :: oui je pourrais
20	Eric	mais ça vous émeut pas la détresse des autres vous vous en foutez ?
21	Elève 1	C'est pas une question que je m'en fous mais ça arrive à tout le monde voilà
22	Eric	(Elève 2 lève la main) ouais ?
23	Elève 2	mais moi je dis que moi ça me choque moins ça que des personnes qui meurent de faim parce que surtout maintenant on voyait la guerre en Irak il y avait beaucoup d'images de ça c'est tout c'était moins choquant
24	Eric	vous dites à la télé les images que vous voyez
25	Elève 2	voilà avec la guerre en Irak ouais ces images qui revenaient souvent tandis que des images de personnes qui meurent de faim on voit moins.
26	Eric	ouais donc vous, vous avez été frappé par des images que vous aviez pas l'habitude de voir c'est ça ?
27	Elève 2	ouais
28	Eric	et vous, vous l'avez déjà vu l'an dernier ?

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