Lecture as Council of Europe Visiting Professor. University of Uppsala.

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SOCIAL DETERMINISM AND EDUCATION.   2.

In my first lecture I considered a problem arising from the
sociologists' definition of education as the transmission of
culture.   It may appear at first that this is an obscure matter,
but I believe that it is in fact a central problem in developing
a satisfactory sociology of the educational process.   Although
some aspects of the sociology of education, for example the relation
of education to social structure and social mobility, have developed
rapidly in recent years, there is still, as Jean Floud has noted,
a pressing need for work to be done on the sociology of the school
and the classroom.   Here only fragmentary and sporadic progress
has been made since Willard Waller's classic Sociology of Teaching,
first published in 193 , but significantly enough reprinted in
195 .   I believe that the analysis and interpretation of the idea
of the school as an institution concerned with the transmission of
culture, is the most promising foundation for the sociological
study of the educational process.

Our theoretical problem arose when it became clear that the
adoption of the idea of education as transmission of culture
tends to lead us to a view of education which stresses conformity
and which sees educational institutions as part of the mechanism
of social control.   Within this frame of reference, there is
some difficulty in accounting for innovation, creativity and
freedom, all of which are highly valued in our western society.
I argued that this difficulty arose from our adoption, with the
term culture, of certain theoretical assumptions which have become
associated with it.   The term was shaped within a tradition of
inquiry which was concerned to examine the social determinants

of individual behaviour.   Creativity or freedom was seen as intensely
individual, and hence it eluded this system of social determination.

We now face the problem of handling the idea of creativity
within the conceptual scheme of sociology.   If I am right in
thinking that this problem arises rather from the use of our
concepts than from any intractable empirical evidence, then we
should be able to point a way of overcoming it by revising
our theory.

The key question is: does it make sense and prove helpful to
speak of the social conditions of individual creativity or
freedom?   I hope to show that it does, and my interpretation of
the situation will be broadly within the academic tradition
which is known as cultural sociology or symbolic interactionist
sociology.

Culture, comprising complexes of understandings shared between
minds, is primarily learned through communication.   It is
assimilated in this way because it underlies all communication and
indeed supports it.   Without the common understandings of culture
there could be no communication.   "We know, and we can effectively
communicate with, other minds because behind us all there is the
common life which holds us together as a unity in diversity..." [1]

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1.   Stark, Werner.   The Fundamental Forms of Social Thought.
London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.   p. 228.

The ideational aspect of this common life is what we call culture,
and it is this fund of common ideas which is passed on in
communication and supports communication.   Normally we communicate

through symbols, - most commonly language, but on occasion
mathematical symbols, the symbolic forms of visual art and so
forth - and all these symbols represent and grow out of common
understandings in the culture.

(5)

     Thus the child absorbs the culture as he learns the language,
for the language is loaded with the values and understandings of
the social group which uses it.   This experience of adopting values
as we learn language is familiar to those adults who are interested
in languages other than their own.   It is also part of the
experience of anthropological field work, as the following passage
testifies.

     General behaviour, attitudes, and values are not taught by any
formal training.   These are inextricably bound up with life in the
society and become unconsciously adopted by any one fully partaking in
social life.   Even a European, when speaking the language and trying
to enter into their social activities, finds himself unconsciously
taking for granted values that he never had before and which are
certainly not to be found in European life.   They seem to follow
naturally from the social situation and to be bound up with language
itself.

     From the very earliest then children learn language for and in
communication with others.   Such a view of language development
is scarcely novel, but it needs to be emphasized because it points
a paradox in Piaget's account of the linguistic development of
children.   Piaget claims that egocentric speech precedes social
speech, that though they learn words from others, children use them
to speak as it were for themselves, before they begin to communicate
with others.   This seems an uneconomic and slightly illogical theory
which is not really XXXXX forced on us by the empirical evidence,

and Vygotsky differs fundamentally from Piaget in his account
of the genesis of speech and language,   Moreover, Piaget has conceded
many of Vygotsky's points.

Vygotsky, having taken the position that "Speech for oneself
originates through differentiation from speech for others", [2]

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2. Vygotsky, Lev Semenovich, Thought and Language. (Edited &
translated by Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar.   Boston & New York:
Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley.   1962.
p. 133.

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comments:

"Our results must seem paradoxical from the point of view
of Piaget's theory: The weaker the child's contact is with the
group - the less the social situation forces him to adjust his thoughts
to others and to use social speech - the more freely should the
egocentrism of his thinking and speech manifest itself.   But from the
point of view of our hypothesis, the meaning of these findings is
clear: Egocentric Speech, springing from the lack of differentiation
of speech for oneself from speech for others, disappears when the
feeling of being understood, essential for social speech, is absent." [3]

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3.   Ibid. p. 137.

Writing of the experiments which lie at the centre of his book,
Vygotsky says, "The purpose of all three series of experiments was
to eliminate those characteristics of egocentric speech which bring
it close to social speech.   We found that this always led to the
dwindling of egocentric speech.   It is logical, then, to asaume
that egocentric speech is a form developing out of social speech." [4]

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4.   Ibid. p. 138.

Now, since egocentric speech is forXXXXXXX Vygotsky social
speech being adapted as inner speech, it follows that those forms
of thinking which make any use of language or other forms of symbol
grow out of the culture. To say that social speech precedes inner
speech is to say that cultural speech precedes symbolic thinking,
which is indeed created from it. This suggests that culture may
determine our thinking because it provides us with the tools of
thought.   We do not clothe our ideas in symbols, but rather learn
our ideas through symbols, a point which Cooley puts rather well.

"A word (he writes) is a vehicle, a boat floating down from
the past, laden with the thought of men we never saw; and in
coming to understand it we enter not only into the minds of our
contemporaries, but into the general mind of humanity continuous
through time.   The popular notion of learning to speak is that the
child first has the idea and then gets from others a sound to use
in communicating it; but a closer study shows that this is hardly
true even of the simplest ideas, and is nearly the reverse of truth
as regards developed thought.   In that the word usually goes before,
leading and kindling the idea - we should not have the latter if
we did not have the word first." [5]

Cooley, Charles H.   Social Organization.   (1909) reprinted in
The Two Major Works of Charles H. Cooley.   Glencoe, Ill.:   The
Free Press, 1956.   p. 69.

In a broad sense we may say that language is a symbolic repre-
sentation of culture, and this might lead us to the conclusion that
the learning of language is merely a mechanism by which we are
indoctrinated into culture, a means of inducing mental conformity.
We may maintain our view of education as a form of social control

and suggest that the development of language is the moulding of the
mind.   Cultural understandings would then dominate our behaviour,
largely because they dominate our language. ~~_____~~

Starting from Vygotsky's observation that "the meaning
of every word is a generalisation or a concept", 6 we might
suggest that the learning of language is a process not merely of
aqquiring means of communication, but also of concept formation,
Our behavioural environment and the entire cast of our thinking
would then be determined, or at least deeply influenced, by our
language.   Such a view is sympathetic to the theories of Sapir
and Whorf in linguistics, and is the line of thinking in psychology
which has studied social determinants of perception.

To assess how far language determines thought, we must consider
the development of egocentric speech from social speech for in
egocentric speech we have the stem from which thought grows.
Here I shall follow and comment upon Vygotsky.   In his view
vocal egocentric speech becomes the inner speech of thought.
"Inner speech is for oneself;   external speech is for others.
It would indeed be surprising if such a basic difference in function
did not affect the structure of the two kinds of speech.   Absence
of vocalisation per se is only a consequence of the specific nature
of inner speech, which is neither an antecedent of external speech
nor its reproduction in memory but is, in a sense, the opposite
of external speech.   The latter is the turning of thought into words,
its materialisation and objectification.   With inner speech, the
process is reversed: speech turns into inward thought.   Con-
sequently, their structures must differ."[7]

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7.   Ibid. p. 131

It is not possible in the time available to probe Vygotsky's
position as deeply as it deserves. Basically however, it is this:
egocentric speech is a stage in the process of the development of
inner speech, of the "inward aspect of language, the side turned
toward the person, not toward the outer world." [8]   This inner
~~language~~is~~---~~

8. Ibid. p. 152.

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language is the language of thinking, and it is constructed out of
the language of communication.   But it is not structurally the same
as the language of communication.   We forge in communication the
tools we use in reflection, but the process is XXXXXXX one of
improvisation.   It may be compared to a problem which we solve by
using a chair as a step ladder and a bicycle pump to reach out with.
A chair is not designed for this purpose nor is a bicycle pump
designed as an extensible reaching stick.   In the same way, the
language we use in thinking strains the language of communication
to serve our own needs.   We build a new structure from the elements
of the old.

This difference of structure between the language of thought
and that of communication is a vital point. Vygotsky treats it
as follows:

"Inner speech is not the interior XXXXXX aspect of external
speech - it is a function in itself.   It still remains speech, i.e.
thought connected with words.   But while in external speech thought
is embodied in words, in inner speech words die as they bring forth
thought.   Inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure
meanings.   It is a dynamic, shifting, unstable thing, fluttering
between word and thought, the two more or less stable, more or less
firmly delineated components of verbal thought.   Its true nature
and place can be understood only after examining the next plane of

verbal thought, the one still more inward than inner speech.

"That plane is thought itself.   As we have said, every thought
creates a connection, fulfills a function, solves a problem.   The
flow of thought is not accompanied by a simultaneous unfolding of
speech.   The two processes are not identical, and there is no rigid
correspondence between the units of thought and speech.   This is
especially obvious when a thought process miscarries - when, as
Dostoevski put it, a thought 'will not enter words'.   Thought has
its own structure, and the transition from it to speech is no easy
matter." 9

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9. Ibid. 149.

I am not entirely happy with Vygotsky's distinction between
thought and word here, but my final analysis will not depend upon it.
What seems to be important is the principle of differentiating
structures.   Following Vygotsky for the moment, we may disṭinguish
three planes, each with its own structure:

        1.   Thought

        2.   Inner speech.

        3.   The speech of communication.

To these we may add a fourth structure, that of culture. We are
dubious about the relationship proposed between thought and inner
speech, but this is not of vital importance to us since it is
the relationships between culture and communication and inner
speech which primarily concern us.

Here we find first a complex of common understandings which
we have called culture.   Culture has a structure of its own.
It is not composed of discrete understandings but of patternings
of understandings.   These complexes cluster round cultural

values and institutions. Thus, for example, in our own society
we have the institution of Christmas, and round it there clusters
a complex of Christmas understandings. One might say that the
structure of culture is psychological in principle, and not unlike
the complexes of depth psychology.

Now, when these understandings are translated into the language
of communication, their structure is changed, for language has
its own structure, a logic or syntax.   Thus even in the language
of communication, we may think. Indeed, literature may be regarded
as a species of thinking in the language of communication. Within
the discipline and order of languages, we may establish new relationships.
For example, adjectives may be attached to unusual nouns, predicates
to unaccustomed subjects.   We are able to talk of a golden mountain,
not because we have experienced one, but because the adjective golden
may be attached to the noun mountain according to the structural
principles of language, and being so attached it is capable of
raising in our minds a new image.

In short, the grammatical structure of language makes it capable
of forging relationships not implied in the culture.   Much literature
achieves its effects in this way.   One may say that art depends
upon the use of a medium which has structural principles of its
own, independent of those of the culture and capable of interacting
with these.   Thus language can be used as a calculus of thinking.

Now, the inner language of personal thinking seems to me to
differ from the language of communication principally XXXXXX in
achieving
a compromise between psychological, cultural and grammmatical
structures.   Words can be used in personal and cultural connotations,
and the grammar of language can be adopted or abandoned at will.
Whether it is possible to distinguish between inner language and

thought as Vygotsky does, I am doubtful, but the problem is not
one which we need to resolve here.

For our purposes, it is enough to suggest that in the language
of communication and in the inner language, it is possible to
establish relationships which are not already found in the culture.
Language, though created from culture and emerging from common
understandings, comes to be a thing in itself with a potentiality
as a calculus.   Thus, it allows us to handle the ideas of our culture
in an active way, and makes culture a resource rather than a determinant.
Culture becomes a medium in which we work.   Of course, it is clear
that the possibilities it offers us cannot be unlimited.   A sculptor
must come to terms with his block of marble.   But we cannot say that
the image he will fashion is already implicit in the stone.
Because of symbols, culture confronts man as the medium confronts
the artist, providing him with the possibility of being creative.

Where does education enter into this picture? Well, of course,
education helps to elaborate language and gives us a greater command
of the structures of thinking we have just now distinguished. But
the matter goes far deeper than that, for education has *naturally* ~~traditionally~~
been concerned with a particular kind of tradition, the academic or
scientific or, since English is deficient here, the Vitenskapelig.

The academic disciplines are a kind of institutionalised public
thinking.   In mathematics, the sciences, history and philosophy
we create highly artificial structures which are from the outset
designed for their effectiveness as tools of thought rather than
as media of communication.   These structures offer desciplined
paradigms of ideal thinking.   We do not think logically, rather we
submit our thoughts to the discipline of logical analysis.   Trial
and error *may be* ~~is~~/natural, but scientific experiment guided by hypotheses

is an exquisite**ix** refinement of trial and error.   If the arts
represent one pinacle of the creative achievement of men, the
academic disciplines, properly understood, represent the other.
Barzun has called the acddemic tradition "intellect", and has
characterized it thus:

     Intellect is the capitalized and communal form of live
intelligence; it is intelligence stored up and made into habits
of discipline, signs and symbols of meaning, chains of reasoning
and spurs to emotion - a shorthand and a wireless by which the mind c
can skip connectives, recognise ability, and communicate truth.
Intellect is at once a body of knowledge and the channels through
which the right particle of it can be brought to bear quickly,
without the effort of redemonstration, on the matter in hand...
intelligence wherever found is an individual and private possession;
it dies with the owner unless he embodies it in more or less lasting
form.   Intellect on the contrary is a product of social effort
and an acquirement.[10]

10.   Barzun, Jacques.   The House of Intellect.   London: Mercury
Books, 1962   (Secker & Warburg, 1959).   pp 4-5.

    Within the culture itself there have been developed institution-
alized modes of creativity, of which the most important are the
arts and the sciences.   Creativity is possible in these XXXXXX
modes because they provide flexible conceptual frameworks,
calculuses and logics which are not inert but on the contrary
highly volatile and suggestive of innovation.   XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.   That such structures are the means of enhanced
freedom and individuality, Durkheim has hinted.
   The pressure exercised by the social group upon each of its

members does not permit individuals to judge freely the concepts
that the society itself has elaborated and where it has put something
of its character.   Such constructions are sacred to the citizen.
Furthermore, the history of scientific classification is, in the
last analysis, the very history of the steps through which this
element of social affect has progressively weakened, leaving more and
more room for the reflective thinking of individuals.[11]

Durkheim, Emile & Mauss, Marcel.   "Social Structure and the
Structure of Thought" trans. Jesse Pitts from "Quelques formes de
classification primitives". Annee Sociologique,   VI (1901-2),
pp. 66-72, in Theories of Society, edited Parons et al, Glencoe,
Ill.: The Free Press, 1961. Vol II, pp. 1065-1068.   P. 1067.

    This reflective thinking of individuals is the key to innovation
and creativity; and in reflective thinking the individual and the
cultural come to terms.   If I am right in seeing academic disciplines
as important modes of reflective thinking then it is clear that
education has much to do with ensuring that individual and culture
meet in a way favourable to creativeness.   Before we examine the role
of education in detail, however, we must return to the theoretical
problem posed by the separation of the two conceptual frameworks,
one of individual determination and the other of social determination.

    Within the conceptual framework of social determination,
the two principal factors in human behaviour are culture, that
is the shared understandings and ideas which come to the individual
as a member of the social group, and symbolic systems, which are
aspects of culture with logics of their own.   The symbolic systems
provide calculuses of reflective thinking, and present themselves
as resources for the individual.

If we now construct a model for individual behaviour, we shall find that symbolic systems enter into it and mediate between the culture as a body of ideas and the action system of the individual actor.
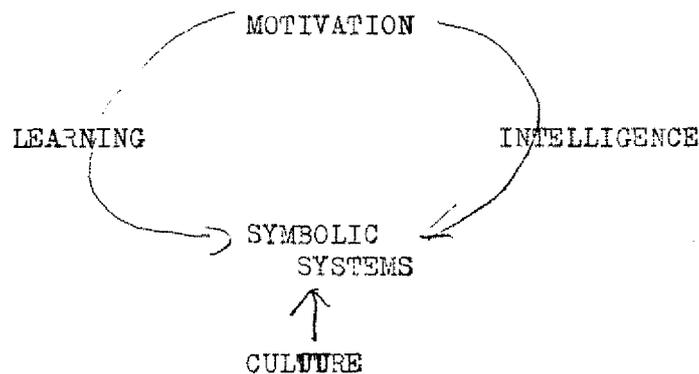
In this individual action system, the concept of motivation is fundamental. As Vygotsky says, "Thought itself is engendered by motivation, i.e. by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions. Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last'why' in the analysis of thinking." [12]   Of course, motivation in the mature individual can no longer be accounted for in purely individual terms since it involves cultural values. These values, however, have themselves been filtered through symbolic systems, so that our model is preserved.

By learning is implied here the capacity to acquire information, skills, etc., the store element in the performance of the individual. By intelligence I mean primarily the capacity to XXXX adduce relationships and to make imaginative projections. This imaginative aspect of intelligence corresponds in a broad way to the creative or divergent intelligence studied by Getzells and Jackson, [13] and

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13.   Getzels, Jacob W. and Jackson, Philip W., Creativity and Intelligence.   New York: John Wiley, 1962.

is implied in the final stage of development (noted in Inhelder
and Piaget's Growth of Logical Thinking, a stage at which the thinker
can handle the hypothetical as well as the actually existent.

In the individual action system, then, learning and intelligence
work in the service of motivation upon the behavioural environment
and in developed cultures a highly significant, or even dominant,
element in the behavioural environment consists of symbols and
symbol systems.   Many of these symbolic systems can be used creatively
as calculuses of thinking.   They serve the individual as resources
in learning and as media for the creative use of intelligence.

In the social action system the shared ideas or conformities of
culture crystallize into symbolic systems.   In so far as these
symbolic systems achieve the effectiveness as a calculus we have
mentioned above, they make culture a resource rather than a determinant
of thinking.   In so far as the symbol systems are inadequate as
tools of thinking, XHXXXXXIIIXXXXX the culture they embody will tend
to work more as a determinant and less as a resource.

Of course, any tool of thinking has its limitations, and the
freedom conferred by symbols is a relative one.   Yet I cannot
feel that it is helpful to speak of symbol systems and the cultures
embodied in them as if they restricted freedom.   They make freedom
possible - to some extent.   In a sense they place limits on us,
but only in the sense that an aeroplane limits where we can fly.
Although it is true that we can only fly in the part of the sky
where our aeroplane happens to be, yet without it we could not fly
at all.   The relation of symbolic systems to creative thinking is
analagous to the relationship of aeroplanes to flying.   It does not
seem helpful to regard them as placing restrictions on thinking.

It is now possible to marry our two schemes, the determinism of
psychology and the determinism of sociology.   Sociology is concerned
with the social determination of behaviour, and by implication with
the social determination of conformity.   Conformity gives rise to
symbolic systems.   Thus culture may be observed in two modes,
as patterns of behaviour and as systems of symbols.   These systems
of symbols constitute matrices or fields, which may be relatively
inert or relatively dynamic ~~field~~.   A dynamic symbolic field is one
which readily produces creative innovation, when an individual,
directed by motivation, enters into the system equipped with a
capacity for learning and intelligence.   The existence of such
individuals can be studied within the framework of psychology.
In the present state of knowledge at least, we must regard the
interaction of individual intelligence with symbol system as
constituting an area of freedom or indeterminancy.

Indeed, it is doubtful whether we can ever predict creative
responses in any normal sense.   If we are able to predict what
Einstein will think before he thinks it, then we have created it,
not Einstein, and he will go on from our position, rather than start
afresh.   To predict the creative is to make it happen.

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The time has now come to apply our findings to the practice of
education.   It is not possible in the time we have to follow out
in detail the implications of our conceptual framework for the
sociological analysis of the school and classroom, and I believe that
the best way to approach the general problem of application is to
XXX present to you a series of questions.

First, there are questions which involve value judgements rather