BOOKS

This paper trys to show the importance of sociology of knowledge theories and research for advancing the field of sociology in general and sociology of education in particular areas. The basic tenets of the sociology of knowledge critique of positivist sociology are discussed, and the approaches of ethnomethodology, phenomenological sociology and a more obviously structuralist sociology of knowledge are reviewed in important writings in the last decade.

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The Sociology of Knowledge/The Sociology of Education: A Review Essay

There can be no doubt that the past ten years have witnessed an important theoretical development in the history of sociological thought. One might identify the roots of this development as lying in the early part of the decade of the 1960's in a book, not in sociology, but in the history of science. We are referring of course to Thomas Kuhn's remarkable work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.[1] The significance of Kuhn's analysis for sociological theory lay in his concept of "normal science" and the social foundations of scientific concepts. Kuhn suggested that the perceptions of the scientist depended for their coherence upon a "paradigm," a comprehensive conceptual and theoretical structure which has become an accepted part of the "normal" body of scientific knowledge during a particular historical period because of its (the paradigm's) success in solving a few problems considered most important at the time. In this view, science has an important social aspect which had been both ignored and hidden by the linear view of the development of scientific thought. Science, Kuhn argued, did not progress in a straightforward way, but rather as a series of paradigmatic revolutions in which success depended not only upon successful problem solving, but also upon popular recognition, among scientists, that the new paradigm promises future success as a way of conceptualizing physical phenomena and their interrelations. In Kuhn's own words, "Surveying the rich experimental literature from which these examples are drawn makes one suspect that something like a paradigm is prerequisite to perception itself. What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual conceptual experience has taught him to see. In the absence of such training there can only be, in William James' phrase, 'a bloomin' buzzin' confusion'." (Kuhn, p. 113). Scientists acquire their knowledge of science, therefore as a function of the paradigms extant at the time, through education and scientific literature, without a complete understanding, necessarily, of the reasons why these paradigms are dominant in the scientific community of the period. Scientific knowledge takes on a certain ideological character when understood in terms of Kuhn's analysis. It is precisely this demonstration of the social aspects of what was and is assumed to be the immutable nature of science and scientific knowledge that makes Kuhn's work so significant for the sociology of knowledge.

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[1]Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

In the nineteenth century and earlier, it was argued that knowledge of social phenomena was necessarily different from knowledge of physical phenomena. In his excellent summary and analysis of the major intellectual developments in sociology of knowledge, Peter Hamilton[2] points out the Kantian distinction, which was later developed by neo-Kantians — Windelbrand, Richert, Cohen and Natorp, between social and natural sciences in terms of their methods forced upon them by the fundamental differences intrisic to the phenomena they were studying. Weber, too, was convinced of the need to understand social phenomena as the relationship of socially constructed meanings. Yet for all of them, and for Marx and Mannheim[3] as well, science and mathematics were exempt from the relativism of social structures and relationships. The significance of Kuhn's analysis and of subsequent work in the field is to diminish the gap between physical and social phenomena insofar as it brings science under sociological scrutiny more intensively than ever before.

With this brief introduction as a point of departure, the remainder of this essay will try to put together an analytical summary of what we think are some of the major books in sociology of knowledge which have appeared in the last ten years that would be of most interest to educationists. Included in these books is the work of many scholars with diverse academic backgrounds, but whose common passion, and passion is often the best way to describe an interest in sociology of knowledge, is examining the social correlates and social meanings of knowledge. We also necessarily refer to current work in epistemology and psychology which is seminal to such an analysis of knowledge. Clearly, the books we discuss do not exhaust the field and readers many know of excellent work which we have either overlooked or ignored, especially books of quite recent publication. One such book which we must cite but which we cannot discuss at this time is Cicourel's *Language Use and School Performance.*[4]

The major theorists of contemporary work in sociology of knowledge are undoubtedly Alfred Schutz,[5] and Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann.[6] Their perspective might be said to take a philosophical definition of knowledge, i.e. as "justified true belief," as a starting point from which to work backwards toward a sociological understanding of what the term "justified" means, not logically as in P. H. Hirst's suggestion that "all knowledge is differentiated into a number of logically distinct forms or disciplines" whose concepts are logically related to publicly agreed upon truth criteria, but existentially with respect to that which is believed to be true.[7] They seek to analyze the *social* processes and rules governing the creation or discovery of this "true belief," which, they hypothesize arises as a product of social organization, but which also makes social organization possible. Seeking a sociological explanation of how true belief or knowledge is justified takes one beyond the limits of conceptual analysis and normal epistemo-

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[2]*Knowledge and Social Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974).

[3]*Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936).

[4]New York: Academic Press, 1975.

[5]*Collected Papers i,* ed. M. Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962); *Collected Papers ii,* ed .A. Broadersen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), and *Collected Papers iii,* ed. I. Schultz (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).

[6]Peter Berger & Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966).

[7]*Knowledge and the Curriculum* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 5.

logy, because whatever the logical or analytic parameters of knowledge may be, the empirical determination of how knowledge is socially justified or legitimated may be quite different. In other words, the problem which Schutz, and Berger and Luckmann take as needing explanation is not whether "x" in itself is true or false, scientific or magical, rational or irrational, valid or invalid, but rather to explain the social processes through which "x" has become part of a society's body of commonsense or specialized knowledge. As Berger and Luckmann have put it, the sociology of knowledge must deal with "whatever passes for 'knowledge' in a society regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity (by whatever criteria) of such 'knowledge'."[8] The right to theorize about knowledge is no longer the right of the philosopher alone. The creation, organization, transmission, and distribution of knowledge are proper areas of study for the sociologist. It is his task to explain the processes by which knowledge is differentially distributed and valued in societies, and the processes by which this knowledge is defined or otherwise given meaning and by which these definitions and meanings are maintained.

Studies in the sociology of knowledge proceed with a number of diverse and often fascinating methodologies. In a useful collection of papers brought together by Roy Turner[9] the work of leading ethno-methodologists is well represented by such men as Harold Garfinkle, Melvin Pollner, Don Zimmerman, Harvey Sacks, and Lawrence Wieder. The label ethnomethodology covers what positivist sociologists might like to call a multitude of theoretical and methodological sins. However, this multitude has as a common thread an interest in explaining how common, or practical activities involving social interaction are accomplished; that is to say how such interaction is made meaningful by participants as it is occurring. This preoccupation with meaning links ethnomethodology with all other areas of sociology of knowledge insofar as knowledge, whether commonsense or specialist, is the result of cognitive operations. Turner has summarized the specific concern of the ethnomethodologist as an attempt to provide a "description and analysis of the members' resources for finding what they find and doing what others will find them to have done."[10] Ethnomethodology is not the methodology of the researcher, but rather the methodology of members of society as they participate in giving meaning to practical activities.

In our opinion one of the most fruitful aspects of ethnomethodology has been its concern with analysis of ordinary language. Just as analytic philosophers have provided useful insights into the uses of language through analyses of concepts in their logical, formal and conversational settings, the work of ethnomethodologists like Aaron Cicourel[11] has concentrated on explaining social structural correlates of the uses of language in a variety of contexts, and has emphasized the contextual variables which form an essential part of the commonsense meaning of language but which are often ignored or, more accurately, taken for granted so that through strictly linguistic analysis the way in which language is used and understood to convey meaning is only partially understood. Cicourel argues that to divorce the meaning of language from the interactional setting in which meaning is assigned is to misunderstand the function of normative rules in language by

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[8]p. 3.
[9]*Ethnomethodology: Selected Readings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974).
[10]Turner, p. 11.
[11]*Cognitive Sociology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973).

assigning ideal-typical meanings to concrete interactive situations. Without a knowledge of the social context of language use no full understanding of meaning can be accomplished because language meaning depends not only on knowledge of the abstract, dictionary, ideal type meaning but on the degree to which this meaning is in some way related to the living use of words in interaction that is context specific.

The realization that oral language alone may not successfully communicate intended meaning is obviously an important consideration in any classroom situation. When teaching, what is it that we assume to be implicitly known by the pupils which will enable them to correctly receive, recognize and represent that information we intend them to learn? In his own work Cicourel has attempted to explain certain of the processes of understanding communication using a number of modalities by examining communication strategies of both hearing and deaf children. As is so often the case in research, "normal" patterns of behavior are illuminated by looking in detail at the "abnormal". In studying deaf children's sign language Cicourel found that "The absence of a basic modality like hearing and normal speech forces us to re-examine our understanding of how language reflects our thinking and memory, and how the latter processes alter any final recognition or feature extraction that can be said to operate on cross-modal sensory inputs."[12]

Allied to ethnomethodology and seeming somewhat less methodological esoteric, yet presenting conceptual problems of its own is the phenomenological school of sociology whose mentor is Alfred Schutz. He has suggested that only a small part of one's knowledge of the world originates within one's personal experience. For the most part one learns how to define the world found in the environment of one's in-group, including the formation of typical constructs "in accordance with the system of relevances accepted from the anonymous unified point of view of the in-group."[13] Schutz means by "in-group" those participating in a system of shared typifications and relevances. Pierre Bourdieu in his analysis of French education and culture, has examined the cultural codes of the academic or scholar in-group which permit those who possess them to interpret words, behavior patterns and scholarly works, in the same way, and give them the means to express themselves in a regularly identifiable way. "Individuals," he argues, "owe to their schooling, first and foremost, a whole collection of commonplaces, covering not only common speech and language but also areas of encounter and agreement, common problems and common methods of approaching those common problems; educated people of a given period may disagree on the questions they discuss but are at any rate in agreement about discussing certain questions."[14] In this way, among others, some knowledge is differentially distributed in society. In his work, Schutz has divided this stock of knowledge into "zones" based on a measure of cognitive and conceptual clarity or vagueness. These zones range from "a relatively small kernel of knowledge that is clear, distinct, and consistent in itself," to "zones of things just taken for granted, blind beliefs, bare suppositions, mere guesswork, zones in which it will do merely to 'put one's trust'," and finally to regions of complete ignorance, i.e. where there

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[12]Cicourel, p. 141.

[13]Dorothy Emmet & Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., *Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1970).

[14]Young, p. 191.

is no knowledge.[15] Both the process of creation of knowledge in all these "zones," as well as the distribution and status of this knowledge are important areas for the phenomenological sociologist to study. Knowledge is crucial because it provides the structure by which we experience meaning in life and because it is through the assumed reciprocity of what we and others *know,* what Schutz calls intersubjectivity, that social interaction can make sense and society can hang together. Ernest Gellner makes a similar point when he expresses his belief in the centrality of epistemology to our experience of the world. However, he does not take it as far as Schutz and other phenomenological sociologists. Gellner writes: "the foundation stone of our conceptual and moral edifice and, quite literally, of our world and our identity, becomes not some specially reliable and reverence-inspiring object or being out there; on the contrary, it is shifted inwards to our cognitive equipment, to our criteria of sound knowledge, of the recognition of truth."[16] The phenomenological researcher goes beyond epistemology in its formal philosophical sense to an examination of the process of reification, the way in which we populate our social and even physical world with objects and the way in which the process of knowing and its cognitive norms, reflected in rules for establishing validity, are worked out socially through the need for meaning in social interaction. Gellner poses the problem of the sociology of knowledge in the neatly formulated question: "How do we find out which world we are in, presupposing none?"[17] In one sense the sociologist seeks to answer this question ignoring the logically absurd nature of the question which philosophically presupposes a rational answer. The sociology of knowledge sets out to discover the way in which knowledge of this world and especially its presuppositions are socially generated and maintained while the philosopher concerns himself with problems of explaining how we are able to establish criteria of validity for our knowledge of what is the world as our cognitive criteria define it.

In recent publications thee phenomenological position has been most comprehensively discussed at a theoretical level in Paul Filmer's *New Directions in Sociological Theory.*[18] The papers included present a strong historical critique of the origins and use of the positivist paradigm in investigating social phenomena following arguments made earlier by Schutz and Berger and Luckmann. For example, in "Sociology and the Social World," David Walsh quotes Schutz on the essential difference between physical and social phenomena: " 'It is up to the natural scientists to determine which sector of the universe of nature, which facts and which events therein, and which aspects of such facts and events are topically relevant to their specific purpose. These facts and events are neither preselected not preinterpreted; they do not reveal intrinsic relevance structures. Relevance is not inherent in nature as such, it is the result of the selective and interpretive activity of man within nature or observing nature. The facts, data, and events with which the natural scientist has to deal are just facts, data, and events within his observational field but this field does not "mean" anything to the molecules, atoms, and electrons therein'."[19] It would be difficult to deny that such concepts as social class, deviant behavior, academic ability, etc. seem, upon reflection, to

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[15]*On Phenomenology and Social Relations,* ed. Helmut R. Wagner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 74.
[16]Ernest Gellner, *Legitimation of Belief* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 28.
[17]Gellner, p. 43.
[18]London: Collier-Macmillan, 1972.
[19]Filmer, p. 17.

differ from such concepts as mass, atomic particles, electric charge, etc. But it is also difficult to explain clearly wherein the difference lies. It is argued by phenomenological sociologists that the positivist tradition in sociology in which social phenomena are treated for all analytical purposes in the same manner as physical phenomena has been obviously unsuccessful in giving us useful knowledge of the social world. It follows that some new conceptualization, some new theoretical and methodological approach to explaining, as well as to identifying the social world must be employed, if the social sciences are ever to go beyond their somewhat impoverished empiricism which has been their legacy from the nineteenth century. Walsh points out, for example, that social structure exists in members' recognition of "a common scheme of reference that constitutes a set of socially standardized and standardizing, seen but unnoticed, background relevancies by which members make sense out of their world."[20] The job of sociology is to explain how such things as social structure are created, used and maintained in social interaction. It cannot simply take social structure as a given to be invoked in explanation of other social phenomena. The conceptual foundations of the social sciences must be made problematic and not naively accepted as part of an objective social world.

However, this critique of positivism is not itself without some conceptual and practical problems, especially when we attempt to further clarify the precise nature of the differences between social and physical phenomena for purposes of differential treatment. These problems become obvious when one asks: "How may I know when I am dealing with physical rather than social phenomena and vice versa?" The answer cannot be that if you are a physical scientist you have the former and if a social scientist the latter. The answer must be outside the physical/social dichotomy. In the last analysis it must be found in differences in methods of measurement. On both sides of the dichotomy phenomena have an existence which is relative to the observer. The crucial difference between the two phenomena must be that the methods of measuring the one are invalid for measuring the other and this can be determined only through the experience of successful prediction on the basis of such measurement. If this were not the case then we would be at a loss to understand Schutz's basic argument. In any communication about "reality" we are already at least at one remove from it. Centuries of mystical writings in all religious traditions have demonstrated quite clearly that direct intuitions of "reality" cannot be communicated. We are forced then to deal with "reality" in symbolic terms. It is through intellectually devised tests of the seeming correspondence between symbolic representations of reality and reality itself that we assess the validity of the symbols and the methods by which they were formulated. The question then becomes: Are there different tests of this correspondence for physical and social "reality"? The logic of science would argue against different tests of success in achieving correspondence even though the methods of gaining insight into this correspondence may differ because the phenomena themselves are so different. The difference which Schutz puts forward as crucial is that of meaning: physical reality is essentially meaningless to its constituent parts; social reality is essentially meaningful to its constituent parts.[21] Both realities are meaningful to the observer, but social reality is additionally meaningful to its members, whereas physical reality is not.

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[20]Filmer, p. 19.

[21]Emmet & MacIntyre, p. 11.

The difference between the two phenomena must be taken account of because of the conceptual and methodological problems of assessing the validity of the symbolic representation of a reality which in itself is already a symbolic reality: it must attempt to explain the meaning of meaning. Phenomenological sociology assumes that this feature of the social reality which social scientists study makes it epistemologically invalid to treat social and physical phenomena as though they were analogous. Michael Phillipson, in his paper, "Theory, Methodology, and Conceptualization" has put it quite well:

> A basic premise of phenomenological sociology is that the inseparability of theory and research is ensured by treating methodology, not as the manipulation of a set of given research techniques, as is the case in conventional sociology, but as *the processes by which a sociologist generates an abstract view of a situation.* The processes of observation, selection, interpretation, and abstraction constitute the sociologist's methods of constructing his "Theory." In this sense, methodology comprises *how* the sociologist decides *what* social phenomena are relevent to his descriptive project at hand, and how he deals with these in developing his account or theory. Methodology, therefore, includes all the processes by which a theory is constructed. Unless we can reconstruct the processes through which the observer moves from his observations of the social world to his conceptual description of it we are in no position to evaluate this description; without this clarification our interpretation of his description has to rest on a series of taken-for-granted commonsense assumptions which allow us to implicitly assume that we "know what the observer means." Conventional sociology fails to treat these commonsense assumptions as problematic.[22]

Another very useful collection of papers which provides the reader with an introduction to most facets of the ethnomethodological and phenomenological approaches to sociological theory and research is found in Jack Douglas' *Understanding Everyday Life.*[23] Most of the leading lights in this movement in North America are represented, including Zimmerman and Pollner, Wieder, Cicourel, Roy Turner, Blum McHugh and Douglas himself. Papers in the book include critiques of positivist sociology, the analysis of everyday interaction contrasting the traditional and the phenomenological position on the analysis of language and meaning, and general discussions of the nature of sociological theory and truth. Douglas in his opening chapter, "Understanding Everyday Life," a long exposition of this new approach to sociological problems, points out the fundamental concern of phenomenological sociology i.e. explaining how meaning is contextually determined. He writes: "This is the basic idea behind all phenomenological theories of meaning and is in complete opposition to the building-block theory of meaning to be found in all absolutist theories of society, language, etc. (which theory views the meanings of such things as independent of the contexts in which they occur and as coming in self-contained wholes (blocks) that can be put together (cemented) by accord with certain rules to produce the whole meanings imputed to any such concrete event)."[24] It should not be overlooked that one of the serious problems that this position raises is to explain how members come

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[22]Filmer, p. 79.
[23]Jack Douglas, ed., *Understanding Everyday Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).
[24]Douglas, pp. 37-38.

to define and understand a context. It is very well to say that meaning is contextually determined but this makes context problemaitc. How do we come to recognize, define and agree that any situation of interaction is some meaningful and meaning-giving context? One would argue from this that a sense or knowledge of structure still must be the basis of interaction and the creation of communication, and that the sociologist must concern himself also with discovering the bases of creation of these structures, without necessarily giving them any absolute ontological status.

We mention the work of Piaget in this essay on the sociology of knowledge precisely because it concerns itself with development of cognitive structures, those features of cognition which members bring to their encounters with other people and with things and which we think are necessary if one is to understand the context and use it to create meaning. The entire range of his work in genetic epistemology[25] points to understanding knowledge itself as dependent upon the incorporation of a perceived object into some existing structure or set of structures capable of assimilating that which is perceived.[26] Piaget has divided knowledge into three main categories: innate structures, logico-mathematical knowledge, and physical or external experience.[27] The essence of his position is that knowledge depends on the interaction between experience and structure such that knowledge is the assimilation of experience into existing structures which themselves may be changed as a result. For Piaget, as for the phenomenologists and ethomethodologists, knowledge is not then the simple observation of an external reality but a function of cognitive structure and its power to integrate experience with prior knowledge. His suggestion that knowledge is a reconstruction of reality emphasizes the active nature of the process of knowledge building. There is no doubt in our minds that Piaget's work on cognitive structures is of crucial importance to the sociology of knowledge if we are to understand the basic facts of the way in which cognitive operations are available and function in social interaction to make sense of experience.

The book which has made the greatest impact on the sociology of education using a sociology of knowledge approach has been Michael F. D. Young's *Knowledge and Control*.[28] An edited book, it contains previously published papers by Pierre Bourdieu, Robin Horton, Alan Blum, Ioan Davies, and new papers by Young, Basil Bernstein, Geoffrey Esland, and Nell Keddie. There has been a great deal of discussion in recent years about the schools' hidden curriculum, that which is taught implicity, rather than explicitly, through the structure and organization of the institution itself.[29] More recently still, this notion has been extended to include that which is learned from the structure and organization of knowledge in schools, specifically the knowledge stratification system. It is theorized that knowledge in schools is stratified through its relationship with the larger power structure in the society. Young has written that "the sociological

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[25]*Genetic Epistemology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); *Biology and Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); *Structuralism* (London: Routuedge & Kegan Paul, 1971); *The Principles of Genetic Epistemology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972); and *Psychology and Epistemology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

[26]*Biology and Knowledge*, p. 25.

[27]*Biology and Knowledge*, p. 4.

[28]*Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971).

[29]Robert Dreeben, *On What is Learned in Schools* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968).

assumption is that the most explicit relation between the dominant institutional order and the organization of knowledge will be on the dimension of stratification; moves therefore to 'destratify' or give equal value to different kinds of knowledge, or 'restratify' (moves to legitimize other criteria of evaluation), by posing a threat to the power structure of that 'order,' will be resisted."[30] Bernstein, in his examination of the organization of knowledge, the division and classification of subjects, suggests the conceptualization of knowledge codes, systems of the ordering of school subjects, as a way of thinking about and analyzing knowledge stratification and its consequences.[31] Blum points out the contribution of Marx (who wrote very little about education specifically) to this perspective. In his opinion one of Marx's "most important contribuions" was his argument that knowledge is not a disembodied, free-floating set of forms but is intimately tied to the interests of those who produce or control it, this theory based on the ontological position that it is man's practical activities which precede he theoretical.[32] Therefore the differential social valuing of knowledge is made relative to class interests as it is both socially generated and controlled. Most of the papers in this volume approach this theme from one or another perspective within the sociology of knowledge.

Some of the most interesting work in this area has been done by Pierre Bourdieu. He is represented by two papers in Young, each of which use different data in treating the same theory: the importance of the socio-cultural context as a dynamic structure which allows the creation of meaning (knowledge) to take place. In "Intellectual Field and Creative Project" for example, he argues that we can show that the relations between aesthetic production, its producers and its consumers, is the result of an historical process which has seen the intellectual field develop into an autonomous system through a series of changing social epochs each of which manifested conditions which affected this relationship. The main point to be made is simply that the existence of an intellectual field cannot be understood apart from its socio-historical context. This argument in itself is neither new nor startling to students of cultural and intellectual history. For the sociologist it draws attention to the need to study even the so-called independent act of creation as a process and product which has an important social aspect to its formation, its definition and its legitimation. Bourdieu suggests that "the creative project is the place of meeting and sometimes of conflict between the *intrinsic necessity of the work of art* which demands that it be continued, improved and completed, and *social pressures* which direct the work from outside."[33] He also ventures into the realm of the unknown when he argues the relationship between the intellectual's subconscious intellectual choices and his past schooling. The bond of common schooling surpasses the nostalgia of the class reunion when it entails a common approach to the definition and solution of problems. "What individuals owe to the school is above all a fund of commonplaces, not only a common language and style but also common meeting grounds and grounds for agreement, common problems and common methods of tackling them."[34]

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[30]Young, p. 33.
[31]Young.
[32]Young, p. 118.
[33]Young, pp. 166-67.
[34]Young, p. 182.

Bourdieu's second essay in Young, "Systems of Education and Systems of Thought," is mainly an elaboration of this theory of shared commonplaces among the educated classes in society which they owe to the school, summed up in the cultural differences which different types, styles and levels of schooling have both created and reinforced. Referring to his own country, France, Bourdieu observes that he takes as a basic fact that educated people owe their culture to the school. Cultural divisions in society are then traceable to differentiation of schooling, especially at the secondary level and above. He contrasts academic culture to 'popular' culture: the cultural patterns used by the school for its elite expressed in forms of science, art, literature and language, to the less formally intellectual and less literate expressions of popular taste.

In a third paper, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction,"[35] Bourdieu examines this theme empirically, and develops an explicitly structuralist theory of enculturation and socialization. He presents the school as an archetypal structure for the reproduction of cultural and social stratification, insofar as schooling makes, initially at least, the same demands of all children for a level of linguistic and cultural competence which, because a familiarity with many aspects of linguistic styles and cultural styles are learned in the family, children do not have equally to give. The educational systems demand from all children that which it does not explicitly give. By thus implicitly determining aspirations by determining the extent to which they can be academically satisfied the school directly influences subsequent social and occupational roles. Bourdieu suggests that a process of self-elimination of children from the culturally least favored classes takes place by means of an unconscious estimation of objective probabilities of success which the children have learned from their school experience. In a series of tables he points out the relationship between cultural activities and occupations and level of education and the purchase of books, reading of books, and regular theatre, concert and cinema attendance. Level of education, he argues, measures the accumulated effects of family training and subsequent academic opportunity which presupposed this training, specifically the learning of a code for understanding and interpreting cultural artifacts and general environment which schools presuppose. Acquisition of this code requires special education as it is not available through simple and diffuse experiences of everyday existence. This education builds on cultural competence acquired in family upbringing.

Bourdieu's approach to sociology of knowledge, valuable as it is, rests upon many assumptions about the meaning of social class, educational practices, pupil-teacher interaction, pupil motivation and understanding, public statistics, cultural, social and academic structures and pupils' unconscious thoughts, which need considerable explication. One must accept that his work is confined to the French education system, but even so one finds oneself raising one's academic (and especially phenomenological) eyebrow at the sweeping generalizations which are relatively unsupported with evidence and which take for granted the validity of the concepts and data referred to with far too little reflection on the problems associated with them from the perspective of other important work in the sociology of knowledge. We refer again to Douglas' paper "Understanding Everyday Life," in which the hazards of analysis of the sort which Bourdieu has given us are explicitly discussed. From this discussion there are two important

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[35]Richard Brown, ed., *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change* (London: Tavistock, 1973).

criticisms which can be made of Bourdieu: first, it is apparent that he has not sufficiently grounded his generalizations in empirical evidence found in the social meanings attributed by his subjects to their own understanding of their experiences with society, family, culture, school, etc. If Bourdieu wants to explain the reasons or "structure" of social action then he cannot avoid the study of the meaning of actions by the actors themselves, as a balance to the invocation of external forces as an explanation of action. Second, the subjective nature of official statistics, which Bourdieu uses as data, must not be ignored. Statistics often give the illusion of being hard or objective data when in fact the numbers are the quantification of highly interpretive procedures. Douglas makes the point that "Once we follow the 'disembodied numbers' back to their sources to see how them were arrived at and what, therefore, they actually represent, we find that they are based on the most subjective of all possible forms of activity . . . We find, therefore, that the numbers that appear to be hard facts about the social system states are in fact based on officials' commonsense understandings of everyday life. The macroanalyst has merely replaced his own commonsense understandings of everyday life with those of unknown officials."[36] Clearly Bourdieu has made no allowance for this in his analysis and one must at least be skeptical of contemporary sociological analysis which ignores the warnings of phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists completely.

A number of other books using the sociology of knowledge approaches to the sociological study of education have followed hard on the heels of Yung. These include Brown's *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change* (1973) which I have already noted, as well as Earl Hopper's *Readings in the Theory of Educational Systems*[37]; Flude and Ahier's *Educability Schools, and Ideology*[38]; and numerous journal articles both for and against the so-called "new sociology of education." One of the most interesting critiques of this approach appears in Sharp and Green's, *Education and Social Control.*[39] The first two chapters of this micro-study of the actual workings of progressive, "child-centred" education in an English primary school, present the researchers' own theoretical position, as well as their view of the strengths and weaknesses of the phenomenological and ethnomethodological emphasis on understanding everyday life and the commonsense meanings on which it depends. Their own position reveals a basic structuralist understanding of social reality evident in their comment: "we need to develop some conceptualization of the situations that individuals find themselves in, in terms of the structure of opportunities the situations make available to them and the kinds of constraints they impose." One might ask, from the phenomenologist perspective, how such structures can be conceived of as available and constraining without some investigation of the way in which such structures have any existence outside the realm of meaning given them by members. It is difficult to imagine how opportunity structures would have an existence apart from the social context in which they are perceived and defined by members. If by structures Sharp and Green mean a fixed relationship between component parts of a social situation then we must examine the evidence for the existence of such fixed relationships. Certainly, phenomenological sociologists

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[36]Douglas, pp. 6-7.

[37]London: Hutchinson University Library, 1971.

[38]London: Croom Helm, 1974.

[39]Rachel Sharp & Anthony Green, *Education and Social Control: A Study of Progressive Primary Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

and ethnomethodologists approach social situations viewing them as a process rather than fixed structure, with the raw material being the physical world and men's minds, what Sharp and Green call "The relationship between 'consciousness' and 'reality'."[40]

The essence of their critique of the new sociology of education is found in their disagreement with the significance accorded to mind as an independent variable in the creation of our social world. They suggest that always treating consciousness as source rather than as contingent might be to misrepresent the relationship between consciousness and the material world. They say that they "want to be able to ask whether certain kinds of structural arrangements are conducive to the development of certain kinds of consciousness, whether the world view of systems of meaning of the acting subject are limited and shaped by the structural arrangements in which the individual is located . . . The phenomenological framework does not enable us to pose the question of why it is that certain stable institutionalized meanings emerge from practice rather than others or the extent to which the channelling of interpreted meanings is socially structured and related to other significant aspects of social structure."[41] Superficially, these appear to be significant problems within this new approach to sociological enquiry which should not be ignored. It seems to us, however, to misrepresent the basic concerns of this approach, because it assumes the existence of and knowledge of "structural arrangements" and "stable institutionalized meanings" as social facts, something which the phenomenologist makes problematic. In other words, the existence of such social facts as facts has yet to be established! This does not deny the existence of external influence on social meanings. As Douglas himself points out "The greatest problem we face is that of analyzing the complex relations and interdependencies that exist between the situational aspects of social meanings and those aspects that are largely independent of situations."[42] However, social meanings, whether situational or transsituational, remain the focus of investigation because of the premise underlying phenomenology that intentional action is predicted upon meaning, whether this meaning is found solely within the context or found in signs and symbols of a more general significance.

In this essay we have presented a sketch of what we believe to be some of the most important books within and related to the field of the sociology of knowledge which have appeared in the last decade, which would be of interest to those working in education studies. Although theoretical and practical work in this general area has been done by scholars in both Europe and North America, the bulk of work using this approach within the sociology of education has been done in England, where interest in sociology of education has increased greatly in recent years. We would hope that the sociology of knowledge approaches to sociology of education will enjoy a substantial growth in its following in North America as well, as we consider it to be an important tool in gaining further understanding of the process of education and schooling.

Although many sociologists have strong reservations about this new "vogue" we think that there can only be one criterion used to judge its value. This is the

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[40]Sharp & Green, pp. 22 and 23.
[41]Sharp & Green, p. 24.
[42]Douglas, p. 41.

criterion which all science must ultimately employ, the criterion of usefulness. If the knowledge of the social world gained by using these approaches is more shareable, more public, more reproducible, more predictive, than that gained by others, then sociology of knowledge will have proved its own value.

Cet article essait de montrer l'importance de la sociologie des théories de la connaissance et de la recherche, pour faire avancer le champ de la sociologie en général, et de la sociologie de l'éducation dans certains domaines. Les principes de bases de la sociologie de la connaissance critique et de la sociologie positiviste sont discutés; et d'importants écrits de la dernière décade reconsidèrent les approches de l'ethnométhodologie, de la sociologie phénoménologique, et plus précisèment de la sociologie structuraliste de la connaissance.

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Joel Spring. *A Primer of Libertarian Education.* Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1975. $10.95 (cloth), $3.95 (paper).

A Primer of Libertarian Education is less than magnificent failure. A primer is a book for beginners. As such, it should be conceptually lucid, explicating ideas gracefully so that the uninitiated can grasp the essentials without feeling shortchanged and practical, providing historically and socially specific strategies for educational change. *A Primer* does neither.

Spring's task is to mine the libertarian (anarchist) tradition for a critique of modern education. Central to the libertarian tradition is the severe criticism of authoritarian relationships (all authority?), in particular the bourgeois state. This severity has a positive contribution: the critical light is beamed so intensely on the use and misuse of power that the seldom recognized links between the political economy and public schooling are illuminated. However the libertarian analysis, unlike the Marxian,[1] does not accept the "correspondence principle": the school's function in a capitalist society is to produce a labour force equipped with the requisite values and beliefs and the job competencies to work uncritically in milieus that are bureaucratized and hierarchically structured. The social relations of the school correspond to the social relations of the economy. Simplifying the Marxian position, the school is not an autonomous institution, since its historic task is to transform raw youth into alienated labourers. Students are workers in waiting and shifts within the productive apparatus will be reflected, sooner or later, in the school. Where Marxists see the everyday activity of the school as a *necessity,* given the nature of the core capitalist institutions, libertarians see mainly institutional *control,* which is rooted not in the nature of capitalist institutions, but in the individual's submission to Authority. In other words, libertarians tend to posit a presocial individual essence, that once freed from the dominance of the ruler's ideas, will express itself in non-authoritarian "institutions." Thus, Spring's purpose is to scrutinize the social mechanisms that create the submitting, passive individual. And this scrutinization is prerequisite for the creation of the "non-authoritarian person who will not obediently accept the dictates of the political and social system and who will demand greater personal control and choice" (p. 14).

To accomplish this, Spring orchestrates his book in 3 movements: first, he examines Max Stirner's little known (outside libertarian circles) works (*The Ego and His Own* and *The False Principle of Our Education*) to understand how the individual becomes the slave of the state, the church, of abstract ideals; second, he turns to Paulo Freire and Marx to understand the relationship between consciousness and social reality and thirdly, to Wilhelm Reich and A. S. Neill to understand characterological barriers to self-liberation. Spring's reason for proceeding in this fashion: each thinker complements the other. Freire supposedly adds a social dimension to Stirner's extreme individualism and Reich is called upon to save Freire, when it becomes obvious that self and social awareness does not lead automatically to social change.

While an argument could be made against Spring's mode of organizing his book (lack of theoretical coherence), this review will examine the conceptual inadequacies of the "libertarians" (Stirner, Freire and A. S. Neill). To begin with, Spring says that "Stirner's

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[1]For a summary of this position, see Herbert Gintis, "Toward a Political Economy of Education: A Radical Critique of Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society,*" in Alan Gartner et al, *After Deschooling, What?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) and Samuel Bowles, "Unequal Education and the Reproduction of the Social Division of Labor," in Martin Carnoy, ed., *Schooling in a Corporate Society* (New York: David McKay Company, 1972).