

The August 1990 (Vol. 24) issue of the *Journal of Educational Thought* included an article entitled "Adult Education as Socialization: Implications for Personal and Social Change" by John R. Minnis. It was subsequently brought to our attention that the article is strikingly similar to one entitled "Socialisation, Social Change and Ideology in Adult Education" by Denis O'Sullivan, University College, Cork, Ireland which appeared in *Adult Education*, Vol. 52, 1980, pp. 318-323, a publication of the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, England and Wales. With the permission of NIACE, the Editorial Board of JET has decided, given the special circumstances involved, to republish Professor O'Sullivan's article below.

Socialisation, social change and ideology in adult education

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The process of education inevitably involves the adoption and possibly transmission of certain implicit or explicit values. The author examines the rôle of adult education in upholding or challenging social and cultural ideologies.

In this article I hope to outline some concepts from adult socialisation theory and demonstrate their utility for the way we think about adult education, particularly in relation to social change and ideology. The article has been occasioned by the author's attempt to grapple with the problem of value-imposition in relation to a social studies course he has been teaching for a number of years.

The basic childhood socialisation model of learning to fulfil the requirements of the rôles a person is likely to occupy in adult life, be they in society at large or in particular contexts, is well known. Ideologically, socialisation has been all too frequently dismissed in recent theorising as a conservative concept derived from a consensus view of society. It is argued, *inter alia*, that socialisation focuses on the individual's adjustment to society, to the exclusion of any analysis of the ideological basis of what one is being asked to adjust to. Here the point will be argued that far from excluding such a perspective, concepts from socialisation theory, properly used, can significantly contribute to the analysis of ideology in adult education.

The content of rôle socialisation

Brim (1966) has attempted to outline some probable changes in the content of socialisation as the individual progresses from childhood to adulthood. Central to his analysis is the process of rôle socialisation which he regards as the most important aspect of adult socialisation. He identifies the three things people require to perform satisfactorily in a rôle: they must know what is expected of them (knowledge), they must be able to meet these requirements (ability) and they must desire to produce the behaviour (motivation). Each of these concepts can, in turn, be extended by distinguishing between their behavioural and value dimensions, thus yielding the following typology:

	Behaviour	Values
Knowledge	A	B
Ability	C	D
Motivation	E	F

Cells A and B indicate that the individual knows what behaviour is expected and what the end or object of this behaviour is; C and D indicate that the individual is able to carry out the behaviour and to hold supportive values, while E and F suggest motivation to behave appropriately and to pursue the socially desired objectives. Brim's suggestion concerning adult socialisation, that the predominant concern is with the behavioural rather than with the value cells, could also be said to reflect the practice of adult education. This emphasis is partly due to the voluntary nature of adult education: one assumes that those who enrol for literacy, pre-marriage and parent education courses, for instance, are sufficiently convinced of the value of the behaviour being formed and encouraged. One of the effects of self-selection in adult education is that it can allow the participants, both staff and students, to work within a value context that is both implicit and taken-for-granted. The implications of this are elaborated below.

Constructing and maintaining reality

The sense in which adult socialisation involves the maintenance and reaffirmation of earlier socialisation is developed in Berger and Luckmann (1973). Socialisation, in their scheme, refers to the process by which the individual 'takes over' the world in which others live and by which he or she internalises its meanings and sense of social structure. Whatever the success of primary socialisation, society must develop procedures of reality-maintenance to ensure that the reality as apprehended in individual consciousness is congruent with what is institutionally defined. This need is particularly obvious in the modern pluralist society where so many alternative definitions of social reality compete for recognition and internalisation.

The two types of reality-maintenance mentioned by Berger and Luckmann are relevant to adult education. Routine maintenance is accomplished by the daily

flow of life, as the place of work, leisure and family is reaffirmed. Crisis maintenance involves a more explicit approach and is demanded whenever there is a danger of the institutionalised reality being undermined — it may be necessary to discredit the conveyors of the alternative reality, to limit social contact or exposure, or to provide educational courses. It could be argued that much of adult education involves routine maintenance of reality in that the assumptions and objectives underlying many courses exist against the 'background of a world that is silently taken-for-granted' (Berger and Luckmann, p. 172). However, reality-maintenance is likely to be most pronounced in social study courses which fail to transcend their cultural location by omitting to analyse this background of a taken-for-granted world. It is in this sense that many courses which claim social neutrality and proclaim the intention of 'telling it as it is rather than as it ought to be' are implicitly ideological in their maintenance of the institutionalised reality.

More obvious is the rôle of adult education when it is invoked in crisis maintenance. Threats to established definitions of good music, responsible worker behaviour, or what it means to be a member of a particular religion, nation or politico-economic system, tend, in reaction, to heighten the advocacy of a range of courses on aesthetic, social, economic and political topics. Though more obvious than routine maintenance, crisis maintenance is less striking than re-socialisation, as in courses for immigrants, for instance, where meanings and definitions of childhood socialisation are sometimes required to be unlearned and replaced with those of the new culture.

Cultural violence, misrecognition and legitimation

A further process by which a congruence is maintained between subjective and institutionalised definitions of reality is to be found in Bourdieu (1977). He outlines a theory of cultural violence which he defines as the imposition of an arbitrary cultural system by an arbitrary power. While there are many influences on Bourdieu's thinking, a central theme is derived from a Marxist analysis of culture — the contention that the ruling ideas of any age are those of the ruling class. Bourdieu extends this by arguing that the position of the ruling class is strengthened by the failure to recognise the underlying power relations in the transmission (imposition) of this culture. As an agent of this transmission, the educational system is seen to contribute its own peculiar force to this misrecognition, thus adding to the legitimacy (in Weber's sense meaning morally charged, rightful or natural status) of the ideas.

While Bourdieu doesn't deal specifically with it, adult education, as viewed in terms of reality-maintenance, would seem essential for the continued success of the cultural imposition he speaks of. Indeed, in his all-too-elegant system there is a striking failure to consider the implications of either inadequate cultural imposition or of competing cultural or sub-cultural systems. If Bourdieu's

thinking were to be extended to include such predictable threats to the arbitrary culture of the dominant class it would be easy to see adult education as a potential remedial device: an ethnocentric (in the sense of being unreflective and culture bound) social studies course in the guise of a neutral sociology would confirm the misrecognition of the power relations and social interests involved in the unexplored meanings. Thus, according to Bourdieu's scheme the more successfully we proclaim the neutrality of cultural transmission or reaffirmation in adult education the more entrenched is this misrecognition and the more effective the legitimation of the cultural system.

Adult education and social change

The issue of the social functions of adult education has given rise to sharply diverging viewpoints. On the one hand, there are those who claim that a significant function of adult education is to promote social change or to service the needs of bodies already set on such a course (e.g. Lovett, 1975), while on the other there are those who repudiate social change as an aim, arguing that the knowledge transmitted in adult education is in itself 'morally, socially and politically neutral' (Paterson, 1973). By conceptually refining what we mean by socialisation in adult education, these concepts from Brim, Berger and Luckmann and Bourdieu provide a basis for discussion among such opposing viewpoints.

A useful approach is to extend Brim's typology by incorporating an awareness of the socially-located nature of this content and of the social interests involved. For instance, Cells A and B, knowing about the rôle-prescriptions, and the values which underpin them, of particular positions in society, is a very important feature of any adult education course involving social analysis. Yet to fail to analyse the interests involved in these values and in what the indigenous culture defines as appropriate worker, family or citizen behaviour is to adopt an ethnocentric stance, as defined above, and in the sense that it serves to maintain a particular view of society must be considered implicitly ideological. I would interpret Cell D, not as an emotional conditioning supportive of particular behaviour but rather as the cultivation of an openness of mind, as an assault on prejudices, stereotypes and rationalisations, be they favourable to either left or right. It is unlikely that conventional adult education courses will contribute much in this regard, which is, at its deepest level, the domain of encounter groups and therapy. The most I feel that can be hoped for is that students will come to appreciate the social location of their beliefs and values and come to some level of realisation of how their consciousness has been formed. As an activity of adult education, I would see in Cells E and F the basis of much that is problematic in the debate on social change. While it is one thing to encourage students to adopt the rôle of 'cultural stranger', to stand outside the culture as it were, and to work towards the objective of being emotionally capable of adhering to a cognitively-deduced position, it constitutes a serious ideological

departure to attempt to use adult education, however implicitly, as a motivating device in relation to either action or objectives, particularly in so far as they impinge on the social and political context. And while it might be possible to neutralise, to some extent, knowledge and ability socialisation through reflection, I doubt if it is possible for motivation to action and much less motivation to objectives to coexist with an emotional and cognitive detachment. Whereas knowledge and ability form part of an incremental learning process, motivation involves a choice between alternatives: one can continuously extend one's knowledge of the cultural relativity of, for instance, sex rôle behaviour, and one can develop the ability to behave appropriately as male or female in contrasting cultures but motivation to act and to feel as a male necessarily involves a corresponding motivation not to act as a female.

In discussing the function of adult education in social change the failure to distinguish between facilitating social reflection on the one hand and motivation to act and feel on the other has been heightened by the uncritical application of Freire's writings to Western adult education. While activities encompassed in our interpretation of Cells A, B, C and D, generating an understanding of one's cultural location and freeing people from emotional dependence on those who have power over them, appear at the basis of Freire's philosophy of education, his approach to motivation is more ambivalent. Freire repeatedly rejects attempts to direct the actions of workers by imposing programmes from above, no matter how well-intentioned, as an anti-dialogical process involving cultural invasion. Yet to speak of oppressed and oppressor, his labelling of his pedagogy as radical, his assumption that reflection will demonstrate the need for action, betrays a view of reality inconsistent with his contention that the revolutionary's rôle is 'to liberate, and be liberated, with the people — not to win them over' (Freire, 1972, p. 67). Is there any real place in this scheme for those who conclude after exposure to conscientisation programmes that they are neither oppressed nor dehumanised? Whatever the validity of Freire's assumptions in the context in which he is writing, they become much more a matter of debate in Western society where capitalism as we now know it is acceptable to those who view it in contractual rather than in exploitative terms. It is not at all obvious to my mind that the reflection that I have argued for will lead to either conservatism or radicalism: to suggest otherwise would be to prejudge society and the course participants. Yet a feature of the application of Freire's theories to Western adult education has been the support of a belief that analysis of one's social and economic condition is necessarily an ideologically radical exercise.

Conclusion

I have argued that concepts from adult socialisation theory, by helping to clarify different varieties of personal change, can contribute to our understanding of the problem of ideology in adult education. Brim's conceptualisation of the content of rôle socialisation highlights the recognition that much of adult

education takes place in a context in which the values underpinning rôle-behaviour are taken for granted. Thus, if we incorporate Berger and Luckmann's view of socialisation, many traditional courses can be said to contribute to the maintenance of institutionalised norms, though this would be more pronounced where courses proclaimed as social analysis fail to transcend their cultural location. The contention that an adult education which fails to encourage reflection on the social and cultural context is, in its own manner, ideological, in that it serves to maintain the status quo, assumes further force in Bourdieu's linking of the misrecognition of the power relations in cultural imposition with the entrenchment of the culture in one's consciousness. In the debate on the social functions of adult education these writers have also much to contribute, as for instance in the conceptual clarification and extension of the writings of Paulo Freire touched on above.

An implicit theme in this article and one that needs further attention and development is the existence of strata of ideology in adult education thought and practice. Examples might include the changing normative justifications underpinning the transition from routine to crisis strategies of reality-maintenance and from imparting knowledge to motivation. And even within motivation, while we have drawn attention to motivation in relation to socially and politically relevant areas, the very act of publicising adult education provision, encouraging participants to learn/create/enjoy/develop/pass their leisure hours in adult education is itself an attempt at motivation based on implicit definitions of human nature and human activity. I doubt if it is possible for the provision of adult education to be value-free and see little future for a debate in black-and-white terms. What we urgently need to explore are the varieties and degrees of ideology in adult education and having made them explicit allow them open for debate among all those involved in the experience of adult education.

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