Knowledge and Identity
Concepts and applications in Bernstein’s sociology

Edited by
Gabrielle Ivinson, Brian Davies and John Fitz
Knowledge and Identity

What in the digital era is knowledge? Who has knowledge and whose knowledge has value?

Postmodernism has introduced a relativist flavour into educational research such that big questions about the purposes of education have tended to be eclipsed by minutiae. Changes in economic and financial markets induce a sense that we are also experiencing an intellectual credit crunch. Societies can no longer afford to think about the role of education merely in relation to national markets and national citizenship. There is growing recognition that, once again, we need big thinking using big theoretical ideas in working on local problems of employability, sustainability and citizenship.

Drawing on aspects of Bernstein’s work that have attracted an international following for many years, the international contributors to this book raise questions about knowledge production and subjectivity in times dominated by market forces, privatisation and new forms of state regulation. The book is divided into three sections:

• Part 1: Knowledge – extends Bernstein’s sociology of knowledge by revitalising fundamental questions, such as: what is knowledge, how is it produced and what are its functions within education and society in late modernity? It demonstrates that big theory, like big science, provides immense resources for thinking ourselves out of crisis because, in contradistinction to micro theory, we are able to contemplate global transformations in ways which otherwise would remain unthinkable.

• Part 2: Knowledge Production in Post-compulsory Education – consider the new, hybrid forms of knowledge that are emerging in the gap opened up between economic markets and academic institutions across a range of countries. Bernstein said in the 1970s that schools cannot compensate for society but we might now ask: can universities compensate for the economy?

• Part 3: Knowers – adds new conceptual tools to the understanding of subjectivity within Bernstein’s sociology of knowledge and elaborates conceptual developments about pedagogic regulation, consciousness and embodiment.

This book will appeal to sociologists, educationists and higher educators internationally and to students on sociology of education, curriculum and policy studies courses.

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1 From monasteries to markets
Will universities survive?

Gabrielle Ivinson

Introduction
The chapters constituting this volume were all originally papers contributed to the Fifth International Basil Bernstein Symposium at Cardiff University, Wales in July 2008. They reflect the continuing vibrancy of the worldwide work that characterises the application of his ideas to educational policy and practice. Their diversity is evident, while their common thread is continuing devotion, noted in earlier volumes, to ‘putting Bernsteinian concepts to work’ (Moore et al., 2006). They could not possibly reflect the complete range of Fifth Symposium presentations but do illustrate how relevant Bernstein’s concerns are in offering insight to our contemporary troubles. More than a third of the papers offered at the symposium concerned aspects of crisis and change in higher education and almost all, in one way or another, addressed issues of identity and consciousness in relation to knowledge formation, transition and acquisition. This is reflected in the structure of this volume where most of this Introduction is devoted to anatomising aspects of Bernstein’s analysis of the origins of the university and its continuity with contemporary shifts from disciplinarity to trainability and in Part II, ‘Shifting cargo: from singulars to regions and generic knowledge forms’, where a series of empirical studies give accounts of changing knowledge structures in university contexts in teacher education in Greece, Engineering, Physics and Anthropology in Iceland, Media Studies and Journalism in South Africa and contrasting occupational preparation in higher education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Australia. These analyses rest foursquare on fundamental questions explored by Bernstein concerning what knowledge is and how it is produced and made available which are taken up by Maton, Muller and Frandji and Vitale, the contributors to Part I, ‘Knowledge and knowers in late modernity’, each focusing upon big, theoretical issues of what is thinkable in any particular era and its relationship to individual and group subjectivities and identities. Each, indicatively, argues for the greater theoretical, empirical and problem-solving power of Bernstein’s work than that of his contemporary Bourdieu. In turn, Part III, ‘Multiply anchored subjectivities’, focuses on elaborating some recent conceptual
developments about pedagogic regulation, consciousness and embodiment that celebrate both the openness of Bernstein's work to other disciplinary approaches and its anchorage in class inscription. These are illustrated by Lapping's exploration of his use of Kleinian notions of identity, Evans and others' claim that modification of his notion of the 'pedagogic device' provides new and interesting ways of relating biology and culture and Gamble and Hoadley's analysis of classroom pedagogic control that, like the work of Morais and her associates, reminds us that the institutionalisation and operation of personal modalities in our schools will not necessarily secure access for all children to vertical knowledge forms.

The outstanding characteristics of Bernstein's vision of pedagogic processes concern their pervasiveness, connectedness and intimacy of relation to social and cultural hierarchy, power and control. He was very fond of saying that while the differences that marked the natural and social worlds were endless sources of fascination, it was the invidious ranking of the crucial categories of class, gender, race, region and religion that underlay our need to understand 'both the creation, management and legitimation of specialized differences and the creation, management and legitimation of various social inequalities' through schooling and other social agencies and that this involved 'analyzing the complex inter-relations between education, stratification, economy and the various principles and arrangements of the State' (Bernstein, 1981: n.p.). His own view of where the script for doing so should start, 'even where the plot is not worked out and half the characters are missing', lay in Durkheim's representation of the contradictory dynamic 'of the two discourses upon which the medieval university was founded, that of Christianity and that of Greek thought' (Bernstein, 1996: 82).

In a world where universities are required to service society and demonstrate their functional use, Bernstein's sociology allows modern anxieties about shifts in conceptions of knowledge from sacred to secular, content to skills and text to hypermedia to be placed within a long historical trajectory. His work on the origins of knowledge in ancient Greek universities and changes in the classification and framing of formal knowledge across eras places the information revolution of late modernity in context. While contemporary educational policy rhetoric calls for a radical rethinking of school and university curricula by conjuring terms such as 'generic skills', a historical perspective grounds such debates in issues of subjectivity, learning and the limits to the possibilities for knowing in late modernity. Asking what kind of knowledge is needed for the future raises anxieties; knowing futures is an art that we have not yet mastered (Adam and Groves, 2007). Perhaps, instead, our starting point should be rethinking the question, 'what is education for?' Bernstein (2001: 382) points out that education is controlled and increasingly micro-managed by the state. Whereas the last time we had a totally pedagogised society in the medieval period, when the Catholic Church dominated social life, now schools, universities and other state-sponsored institutions increasingly serve the needs of government and
remind us not to ‘confuse opportunity with democracy’ (ibid.). Pedagogic panic has masked moral panic and new discourses of pedagogy, ignoring content and focusing only on competencies, risk its reduction to technology and learning becoming completely decontextualised from the rest of acquirers’ life spans. What Bernstein feared most of all was the ‘socially empty’, neo-liberal notion of ‘trainability’ (ibid.: 366), inscribed in ‘life long learning’ rhetoric as ‘creativity and adaptability’ (ibid.: 368), reminding us that the need for pedagogy to be meaningful as well as relevant provides one of our greatest challenges, requiring us to reintroduce issues about content and epistemology into educational debates. In times of weak global and strong pedagogic states we need to look outside formal to informal, adult or popular education ‘outside of the State [where] there’s a possibility for change and initiative’ (ibid.: 382). It is in the interest of pursuing such themes that I now turn in this Introduction to a brief elaboration of Bernstein and other’s views of pedagogic origins, before returning to outline in more detail the nature of the other contributions contained in this volume, where Muller suggests that discussions within education about epistemology have tended to be limited to scientific knowledge, suggesting that we have not yet worked out the full ramifications of Durkheim’s discussion of the Greek curriculum. The humanities constitute the modern Trivium, and can be characterised as disciplines that develop inner consciousness or sensibility. The sciences are disciplines that investigate the outer world, and analyses of the two, involving changes both in knowledge and pedagogy, have not yet been properly conjoined. Even more importantly, what appears to have been left out of current debates and analysis about the purpose of education is the role it plays in the formation of consciousness. In asking what education is for we need to consider social organisation and knowledge more adequately.

Knowledge that was produced outside the university in guilds and crafts is attracting increasing attention (e.g. Sennett, 2008) and apprenticeship is being reinvented as the way forward in many education policy documents. In this analysis, early forms of community and institutionalised educational practice, such as existed in monasteries and craft workshops, will be used to explore relationships between curriculum, pedagogy and consciousness that help us to think about knowledge and knowers in late modernity.

The classification of formal knowledge

The origins of the university and school curriculum in the West can be traced back to antiquity. The Greek ideal was based on a fierce hierarchy between the sacred and profane. Knowledge belonged to the gods and as mortal beings humans were thought to be incapable of perceiving the truth. Form and not matter was the base of Plato’s hierarchy. The model of pure forms existing outside time and space as abstract ideas was not only a theory of knowledge but also of pedagogy:
This is the right way of approaching and being initiated into the mysteries of love, to begin with examples of beauty in this world, and using them as steps to ascend continually with that absolute beauty as one’s aim, from one instance of physical beauty to two to all, then from physical beauty to moral beauty, and then from moral beauty to the beauty of knowledge, until from knowledge of various kinds one arrives at the supreme knowledge whose sole object is that absolute beauty, and knows at last what absolute beauty is.

(Plato, *Symposium*: 212; cited in Midgley, 1992: 14)

This metaphysical axiom required people to know good from bad. Plato saw all study as stages towards this greater goal of the contemplation of goodness.

The first Latin classification of knowledge, Varro’s canon of the Liberal Arts (115–27 BC), had nine disciplines divided into three groups: theoretical knowledge derived from texts, language and communication known as the Trivium, made up of grammar, logic and rhetoric; practical knowledge divided into geometry, arithmetic, astrology and music known as the Quadrivium; and the mechanical disciplines: medicine and architecture. The final set was dropped from the classification in the fifth century (Ovitt, 1987).

Bernstein developed Durkheim’s work on the Greek curriculum and the classification of formal knowledge into the Trivium and the Quadrivium in which the former was studied first and had higher status than the latter. While Durkheim argued that the distinction amounted to one between the word and the world, Bernstein restated this more forcefully as ‘no world prior to the word’; it was ‘the means of understanding the principles behind the word and its realization’ and ‘the principles of understanding the material world’ (1996: 83). When the Trivium, anchored within antiquity, was recontextualised within the Christian world, the ‘abstract, idealized and essentialist discourse’ of absolute beauty was replaced by the Christian God. However, Christianity held together the two aspects of knowledge in a unity, ‘the word became flesh’ (St John’s Gospel). Following Durkheim, Bernstein articulated that the Christian God was not simply a God to ‘be loved but to be thought about’ (1996: 83).

Bernstein made Durkheim’s distinction between the two forms of knowledge radically more powerful by suggesting that the Trivium not only provides the mechanics of language and reason, ‘but is concerned to constitute a particular kind of consciousness’ and accordingly a particular kind of outer world (Bernstein, 1996: 84). The tension between Greek and Christian discourses lay at the centre of the development of the first universities. Within those that emerged in the twelfth century, the Trivium involved knowledge that aimed to develop a specific kind of interiority: the self constituted according to the Word of God that Bernstein referred to as a specific ‘modality of the self’ – a new, existential self comes into being. Bernstein concluded that the distinction between the Trivium and the Quadrivium reflected a
division between the inner and the outer. The Trivium provided the ground for a self-reflexive form of consciousness or conscience created by intellectual practice whereby the self reflects on actions in the light of Christian theology. Scholarly learning was close to the habits of prayer and meditation inherited from medieval monasteries. A particularly Christian inflection was developed in which self-consciousness was formed through the ability of persons to decentre by contemplating the self and activities from the position of an idealised ‘I’, imagined as an all-knowing God (Bernstein, 1996; del Río and Alvarez, 1995). This form of consciousness has dominated Western cultures throughout modernity when the formal curriculum has traditionally incorporated aspects of the Trivium and Quadrivium, yet the pedagogic subject it projected has been dominated by the regulative discourse of Christianity. For this reason Bernstein’s description of the pedagogic device states that instructional is always embedded in regulative discourse.

Bernstein was interested in the structure of the discourses that combine to constitute pedagogic discourse and practice in any specific time and place. Moral discourse is usually characterised as lay or common sense, with a horizontal structure, and formal or scientific ones as vertical, for example, obeying the law of non-contradiction. The forms of each obey different logics and in many respects pull in different directions, one emphasising similarity, the other difference; moral discourse attempting to unite, allowing people to recognise themselves, while formal discourses differentiate and divide, reifying and objectifying the world, expelling human interest (Devereux, 1967; Ivinson, 2007; Moscovici, 2001). One model of these contradictory elements which all educational institutions have to manage can be found in the precursor of the university, the medieval monastery.

The medieval monastery

The attainment of spiritual perfection was the primary goal of monastic life in self-contained communities set apart from the mundane world in rural locations. Monks were able to withdraw from the economic necessities that dominated life for most people in order to study the scriptures and contemplate. The strict routines of life involved regular periods of prayer, study and spiritual work. Practical life, Opus Manninus was subordinated to Opus Dei (Ovitt, 1987). Even so, bodies had to be fed and the spiritual had to be reconciled with practical life. Labour was recognised as good, preventing idleness and allowing the monk to work on the self as part of attaining spiritual enlightenment. The principles that Benedict of Nursia established in the sixth century, of renunciation, discipline, humility, patience, obedience and fear of judgement, aligned labour and spiritual pursuit into harmonious relationship. In much medieval thinking practical utility could be viewed as essential yet complementary to high-status knowledge, each having its time and place. Many scientific breakthroughs, including the first studies of genetics, were achieved by monks.
Monasticism saw the significance of labour in process and not in product, integrating contemplation through prayer, labour with hands and the study of scripture (soul, body and mind). Later this found resonance in Weber’s notion of the English gentleman inspired to work indirectly on himself by working in the world. Yet, while the virtue of the ‘English gentleman was self restraint and self effacement in the interests of achievement, the virtue of the monk was restraint and self effacement in spite of achievement’ (Ovitt, 1987: 105). This model was extremely successful, with some monasteries becoming so affluent that monks were able to hire craftsmen, builders and farmers to undertake jobs they did not wish to do themselves, a development which increasingly undermined the very ideal that the communal, self-sufficient monastery sought to pursue (ibid.: 106).

Knowledge and social organisation

Bernstein’s sociology of knowledge, unlike philosophical analyses, looks to the structure and patterning of social organisation to explain why some kinds of knowledge are created and achieve and actively retain high status. His analysis refers particularly to social-class groups and differences between them. Drawing on Mary Douglas’s work on grid and group which, in turn, drew on Durkheim and Mauss, he foregrounded dynamic aspects of knowledge production and reproduction by drawing attention to the way groups mobilise and gain and, indeed, lose control. This intense interest is played out in his analysis of the difference between the ancient Judaic and early Christian communities. His analysis suggests that the former was organised around concrete ideas, such as the Law, the latter according to an abstract idea. Some of the themes introduced in the chapter ‘Thoughts on the Trivium and Quadrivium: The Divorce of Knowledge from the Knower’ (Bernstein, 1996: 57–63) echo the distinction between performance and competence forms of knowledge recontextualisation that relate to pedagogic forms within schools. At a high level of abstraction Bernstein was exploring the form and content of ideals instantiated in different kinds of social organisation and specifically the shared ideas that maintain community belonging.

In early Christianity there were many forms of knowing that were not reflected in the curriculum inherited from antiquity, for its lineage was not Roman and Greek but the Jewish people (Küng, 2001: 1). Bernstein (1996: 85) reminds us that important characteristics of the Judaic God are invisibility and temporality. There is no mediation between man and God; God is invisible and perfect, man is relative and imperfect. People relate to an invisible, distant God through ‘holiness’ manifest through

the daily cycles of prayer, ritual and the classifications of the law ... Holiness establishes the unity of God and people through the nature of the social bond. The rules and regulations of the Torah set up the possi-
bility of a perfect society and so provide a template for the Jewish community. There is no dislocation of inner and outer.

(ibid.)

There is a strong social bond on Earth between members and a strong boundary between man and God. We could see this as an early form of a performance-type model of pedagogy.

The history of the early Christian church is not of an elite but ordinary people: fishermen, farmers and crafts people with little political power. In Christianity the boundary between man and God who became man is blurred. Conversion to Christianity involved what Bernstein referred to as 'a revolution of inwardness' based on 'a recognition of Christ ... Christianity takes a point outside the culture and practice of those to be converted as the basis for this conversion and then colonises from within' (1996: 84). Such thinking and feeling outside one's culture and practice requires an abstract orientation which drives a wedge between inner and outer, such that appearance and reality can no longer be trusted to be the same thing. Christianity introduced a new modality of language, 'an interrogative mode ... splits the self from its acts, intention from practice ... No wonder language, communication, became so central to Christianity' (ibid.: 86). Unlike the certainty of Jewish identity, Christianity's perfect text in the story of Jesus, set in unfinished society where Law is replaced by the interrogative mode, introduced existential uncertainly, where membership had to be constantly re-won. Creating community and legitimating membership required ongoing work, echoing a competence-type model of pedagogy.

Some of the effects of this type of social organisation were emancipatory. Küng (2001) suggested that the early Jewish-Christian community marked a radical break with a patriarchal tradition because its social bonds were based on an idea rather than blood. Initially it celebrated equality based on the idea of brother- and sisterhood in God. Küng characterised it as democratic not aristocratic or monarchical, citing considerable evidence of men and women working on the same level of equality as missionaries, leaders, recognised apostles, ministers, teachers, preachers and prophets. These new forms of living 'created a new form of femininity, which freed itself from the reproductive determination of women and was an essential contribution to the history of emancipation' (ibid.: 22).

However, the early Church existed on the margins of society and had no political power. As it developed and became imperial and hierarchical, suppressing original Christian efforts at equalitarianism, a growing renunciation of sex reached a peak when celibacy became associated with salvation, devaluing sexuality and women and losing an early possibility for their emancipation. Gradually, the roles that women had played in the early Church were eroded and even unmarried women were eliminated from the clerical state. Küng argues that the Church, even to this day, is stuck in a mentality forged in the Middle Ages. As in the Roman Empire, the principle of equality
primarily asserted itself in the private domain, while male domination became established in the sacramental sphere. Hostility to women’s sexuality was a phenomenon inherited from Greek antiquity and appropriated by the Christian church around the seventh century onwards and became particularly developed in Christianity, alongside devaluation of education as a Hellenistic ideal which became openly despised, especially for women, making ‘a major contribution towards perceiving women exclusively as body’ (Küng, 2001: 25)

Küng’s account of the early Christian Church can be read as a case of a weak community being colonised by an elite institution, a process paralleling Bernstein’s description of competence-type models of pedagogy in which the idea behind instructional practice has to be spoken about, elaborated, constantly re-imagined and anchored in practice. As Bernstein observed, this is costly in terms of time and effort, yet rarely recognised, accounted for or properly resourced. It implies the labour of ‘cooperation, love, friendship and sense of justice’ that Frandji and Vitale refer to in Chapter 4 of this volume. It remains invisible work yielding invisible and, therefore, low-status knowledge. Some of this informal knowledge specifically developed through craft became institutionalised in the medieval guilds which formed alternative communities in which it was learned. Many scholars, including Bernstein, have turned to craft and apprenticeship modalities to widen debates about learning beyond formal knowledge by investigating communities of practice (e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Sennett, 1998, 2008), recognising that guilds were not add-ons but total pedagogic environments that forged consciousness as well as knowledge.

The Guild House

Bernstein (2001) referred to anxieties about how people were expected to make sense within flexible capitalism in relation to Richard Sennett’s (1998) The Corrosion of Character, characterising the condition of pedagogy within late modernity that requires life-long retraining for short-term jobs as ‘socially empty’, a fear taken up in Wheelahan’s chapter in this volume. In seeking to expose problems relating to the neo-liberal workforce and to suggest what kinds of social conditions are required to support the development of skills and cultivation of meaningful learning, Sennett (2008) analyses pedagogy within the medieval workshops of craft guilds, contrasting apprenticeship then with job training now. He suggests that the workshops of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europe contrasted with those of the medieval monasteries by aligning the sacred and the profane in a different way. Christian retreat was based on the idea that the further people got from materiality and markets, the closer they came to godhead and developing an interiority that was removed from the concerns of mundane human life. In contradistinction ‘the craftsman represents Christ’s appearance to man but not his being’ (ibid.: 55) and the peacefulness of the secluded monastery was
not present in medieval cities. In seven major guilds in Paris at this time, each master by necessity kept order in and out of the house where knowledge was transmitted through a ‘hands-on’ approach from generation to generation. ‘Knowledge capital’ was the source of the guild’s economic power and while workshop masters had to embody authority in order to keep order, its source was in skill, thus deeply interrelating technology and ethics. Apprentices entered into a totally pedagogic relationship with masters which included both formal aspects of learning skill in the workshop and becoming part of their masters’ extended household, sons not by blood but by contract in which masters had to develop their skills in exchange for having their secrets guarded. Christian ideals continued to shape male consciousness and idleness was imagined to be sinful, a sign of sloth. Learning a craft meant becoming a special kind of moral person and its practice had a social and an economic function, including guaranteeing the purity of coins.

Becoming a skilled worker required working through a three-tiered hierarchy. A seven-year apprenticeship was followed by journeyman trading outside the master’s territory for another five to ten years, before transition to master craftsman, becoming the pedagogue deemed skilled enough to take on apprentices. Stability and subordination were followed by movement and entrepreneurship, followed by stability and authority. The social bonds of guilds spread across workshops and trading links creating bases for common recognition. Apprentices reproduced craft skills and were expected to become particular kinds of people in society, reflecting a moral as well as material division of labour. Sennett endorsed the ‘personalized face-to-face authority of knowledge . . . Since there can be no skills without standards it is infinitely preferable that these standards be embodied in a human being rather than in a lifeless, static, code of practice’ (2008: 80).

The emergence of Renaissance artists, recognised for their originality, interiority and subjectivity, was a further development that arose from the community of medieval craftsmen (Wittkower and Wittkower, 1963; cited in Sennett, 2008: 65). The value of originality worked against that of imitation of craft, creating a new hierarchy and the rise of individualism as opposed to community, and initiating a shift that became responsible, in part, for the downfall of the medieval guilds. While Sennett distinguishes craftspeople and artists, Bernstein does so between persons and individuals. It is a new and contemporary form of individualism characterised as the neoliberal person that lies at the heart of Bernstein’s warning that knowledge has finally become divorced from knowers.

Knowledge markets

The latest recontextualisation of knowledge belongs to late modernity and was captured by Bernstein’s phrase ‘the Totally Pedagogised Society’ where the state is better thought of as, in effect, no longer functioning via institutions but acting through capillary movements filtering through all aspects of
life, for example, prescribing parenting skills and anger management. Visions of a radical, post-modern era imagine people released from worldviews imposed by others and accordingly burdened either by their own freedom or by invention. Confidence in grand theories, grand narratives and scientific texts has collapsed, ushering in an era of radical uncertainty, plurality and complexity; there is no centre to the universe, physical world or man (sic). Knowledge is said to have no foundation, matter no essential base and people unknowable to themselves (de Certeau, 1984). Representational systems, such as language, literature and the virtual media are tools we use to make sense. The soap opera is reality and reality TV enlists people’s lived experiences as representation. In this vision, appearance and reality collapse; there is nothing beyond, behind or outside our own representational creations to anchor meaning; we can no longer appeal to God, the Church or science. The technological domination of nature justified by the Enlightenment is seen to be destroying the eco-system on which we depend.

Against this background a new, corrosive understanding of pedagogy has arisen. Bernstein called the idea behind this new pedagogic rhetoric trainability delivered through a new generic pedagogy no longer underpinned by an abstract idea outside the person. In order to cope with the relative, unstable and ever-changing world, people have simply to submit to the ‘ability to be taught’ which does not provide a basis from which to imagine themselves forward. This continuous, psychological reconstruction cannot be achieved by solitary workers but ‘arises out of a particular social order, through relations which the identity enters into with other identities of reciprocal recognition, support and legitimacy, and finally through a negotiated collective purpose’ (Bernstein, 2001: 366). While never crystallising a view of the ontological base of formal knowledge, Bernstein grapples with how the arbitrary becomes visible, recognisable, fixed and maintained; what meaning, for whom, how and where?

These brief scenarios are intended to suggest that forms of recognition are fundamentally tied to communities and, even more importantly, forms of social organisation. Bernstein brings together relations between ideas, social organisation and forms of consciousness. For example, just as weak early Christian communities mobilised around an abstract idea that was spread highly effectively by colonisation from within, they failed to develop strong internal structures such as Laws, and were characterised by a need for constant interrogation and doubt, exhibiting similar dynamics to Bernstein’s description of a competence model in which knowledge is recontextualisation in a form characterised by relatively weak classification and framing. It takes effort and continuing work to hold a community together around an abstract idea. Eventually the Canon Law structures of the Roman Church colonised early Christian communities with enormous consequences for who was and was not recognised, reifying and simplifying the abstract idea, legitimating debate only among ‘experts’ and recontextualising it in the interest of the elite as ideals from the Hellenic era were used to suppress early ideas
of equality, echoing aspects of a performance model in which knowledge is recontextualised according to strong classification and framing.

Markets not monasteries: whither universities?

Knowledge and knowers in late modernity

In Part I our contributors seek to extend Bernstein’s sociology of knowledge by revitalising fundamental questions concerning what knowledge is, how it is produced and its functions within education and society in late modernity. Each develops an aspect of Bernstein’s sociology of knowledge in particular ways. Bernstein kept questions about what was thinkable in any era and what kinds of subjectivities or citizens are produced at the forefront of his work by tracing the classification and framing of knowledge, linking questions about knowledge to questions about knowers. Each of the three chapters in Part I demonstrates that big theory, like big science, provides immense resources for thinking ourselves out of crises because, in contradistinction to micro theory, it enables us to contemplate global transformations in ways which otherwise would remain out of sight.

In attempting to theorise knowledge production in our universities, Maton, Muller and Frandji and Vitale each make reference to Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. In Chapter 2, Maton extends the conceptual language that Bernstein created to analyse knowledge by making his sociology of pedagogy the object of analysis. Maton’s question, ‘How can fields like sociology and education build knowledge over time?’ reflects a specific case of Bernstein’s vast temporal and spatial exploration of knowledge production. Maton compares Bourdieu’s and Bernstein’s knowledge structures and demonstrates that the first is strong on application and the second on theory. Learning Bourdieu’s sociology can be compared to acquiring a craft, Bernstein’s more akin to obeying the law. The former is gained primarily through practice, the ‘gaze’ is acquired through taking time, prolonged practice and typically intimate pedagogical relations to reshape one’s dispositions. Learning Bernstein’s theory is more like studying a text in which concepts have precise meanings that can be specified with increasing levels of abstraction. Maton develops the more finely grained notions of semantic gravity and semantic density to extend Bernstein’s knowledge types into a continuum for describing knowledge specifically within the HE sector. His implicit question about what is produced in universities leads directly to questions about whether their purposes are to produce specific kinds of knowers (learners/citizens) or knowledge.

Muller takes up this question when he explores peer review, the process that governs research and, therefore, the production of knowledge in higher education institutions. In differentiating the academic and research arms of the university at different levels of specificity, he echoes Bernstein’s concern with relationships between ideas and social organisation by rooting his
analysis back in Durkheim’s descriptions of mechanical and organic solidari-
ties. He outlines rituals of labour that differentiate and rituals of community
that create similarity within the academy and points to the academic lust for
recognition, suggesting that the drive to be known as the first to discover
something provides the psychological motivation behind many great discov-
eries, raising questions about the kinds of social organisation that produce a
mentality able to ask the question ‘Am I still famous?’ His empirical work
suggests that professors share something of the mentality of the master
craftsman, exercising *noblesse oblige* when refereeing the work of other aca-
demics, irrespective of status or institution.

In Chapter 4 Frandji and Vitale suggest that Bernstein ‘reflected on,
beyond and against Bourdieu’, finding, in contrast to Maton, a moral imper-
native behind his theoretical work, noting that his fifth volume (1996, 2000)
opens with a framework for a pedagogy of rights. Echoing aspects of Maton’s
more guarded description of Bourdieu’s theory as horizontal, they go further
to suggest that concepts such as habitus and symbolic violence are circular
while the scope and depth of Bernstein’s theory is gained by its ability to
offer increasing degrees of abstraction away from the empirical, allowing
specific examples to connect to patterns identifiable at broader analytical
levels. With reference to the French sociological tradition, they make a
strong case for identifying the green shoots of a sociology of praxis within
Bernstein’s work, arguing that Bernstein’s sociology of education demands
research projects that make abstract, analytic tools available to educational
practitioners. Having learned theoretical tools, academics, like journeymen,
must leave the workshop and put their practice to use, seeking integration
between the two arms of the academy that Muller differentiated as research
and teaching, via social practice across different phases of their careers,
maybe bringing in mid-career research money while later writing and
inducting others into the craft.

Bernstein recognised that knowledge is relational: inwardness is developed
in relation to outwardness. The internal grammar of disciplines relate to the
social practices and power dynamics that create knowledge constituted
through the historical legacies that formed elite communities. To under-
stand shifts in knowledge structures from singulars to regions there is a need
to connect the social organisation of disciplines with disciplinary subjectivi-
ties. Within singulars academics focus on constructing their own identities
according to rules policed by identifiable communities of scholars in disci-
plines. If there is a shift towards regional knowledge and a more outward-
looking gaze we need empirical work that investigates the everyday practices
of academics to identify drivers and resistance. The empirical studies of
higher and further education in Part II contribute to this project, addressing
how boundaries between singulars and regions are created, changed and
institutionalised in academics’ practices and whether the days of relative aca-
demic autonomy and privilege are numbered, anticipating the consequences
of what may be seen largely as academic drift.