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REVIEW ESSAY

Unlocking pedagogic mazes

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Basil Bernstein: The thinker and the field, Rob Moore, 2013. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge (225 pages). eISBN: 978-0-203-81825-1 (ebk). Price – A \$108.78. pISBN: 978-0-415-57703-8 (hbk) Price – A \$218.95 (booktopia)

In the first instance he [Basil Bernstein] provides an understanding of pedagogy as the agency not merely of reproduction but of interruption: as the space for thinking the 'unthinkable'—the yet to be thought, the possibility of new realities—and this as an intrinsic power of pedagogy, not merely a contingent possibility dependent on circumstance as in the dominant reproduction paradigm. Secondly, in doing so he provides a distinctive 'object' for the sociology of education: the structure of pedagogic discourse itself theorized through the principles of classification and framing and examined in terms of the social distribution of its modalities and their differential class effects. (Moore, 2013a, p. 2)

In this remarkable book, *Basil Bernstein: The thinker and the field*, Rob Moore tackles the complex issues that lie at the heart of the discipline of sociology of education. His particular focus of attention is Bernstein's theory of pedagogy, because he argues different pedagogic discourses are like mazes, with the ultimate mystery of a school subject revealed at the end of the maze. The teacher's task is to guide students through these mazes. But the problem is that teachers and students may have entered the maze through different entrances, and may not even existentially be in the same maze. This book is about unlocking a series of pedagogic mazes to the sociological ideas of Basil Bernstein, particularly his corpus of work dealing with pedagogy. Rob Moore (2013a) argues that pedagogy was the focus of Bernstein's sustained research endeavour, and for Bernstein—'the theory of "pedagogy" is the theory of the social and of being social' (p. 2).

Moore's (2013a) project is a complex one. He engages in multiple tasks simultaneously, firstly exploring the socio-historical influences on Bernstein the

thinker, secondly, examining the cultural and intellectual fields within which Bernstein as a sociologist worked, and thirdly, analysing the distinguished contributions to knowledge made by Bernstein within the disciplinary field. Moore (2013a) engages in an extensive pedagogising project, revisiting the development of key Bernsteinian concepts, and then explaining, unpacking, or elaborating the meaning of: code theory, the structure of pedagogic discourse, and different forms of knowledge—everyday and esoteric. He invites the reader to enter a maze and journey down paths illuminated by explications of the personal, political, religious, and intellectual that imbued and generated Bernstein's scholarly work.

The knower and epistemic community

Bernstein the thinker was a 'deeply political man' (Cox, 2001, cited in Moore, 2013a, p. 16). A lad who grew up in a working class Jewish family living in the East End of London, who attended a Christian school, leaving at the early age of 14. He 'enlisted before the age of consent' in the Royal Air Force and worked as a bomb aimer during World War II to fight against Nazism (Moore, 2013a, p. 16; Sadovnik, 2001, p. 607). He was a member of the British Communist party, and passionately committed to addressing social inequality through education (Moore, 2013a, p. 16). His religious and political views focused his attention on examining the relation between outer social processes (inter-relations) and inner mental processes (intra-relations), between 'the macro and the micro and the mediating influence of social structure' (Moore, 2013a, p. 19).

Basil Bernstein entered the academy as a mature age student, firstly working as a residential family case officer with socially disadvantaged Jewish children, then as a teacher in colleges of further education teaching non-academic, working class students in a range of courses (Moore, 2013a; Sadovnik, 2001). In the 1960s, he first worked as a research assistant in the Linguistics Department at University College, London, and then took up a position in Sociology of Education at the University of London, Institute of Education, where he spent the remainder of his academic career. He developed and maintained long term thought collaborations with colleagues in sociology, linguistics, anthropology, and socio-cultural psychology/psychoanalysis (see Atkinson, Davies & Delamont, 1995; Sadovnik, 1995). As is to be expected, over a long career, Basil Bernstein also had intellectual disagreements and disputes with colleagues, some which endured over many decades. As Moore (2013a) argues, Bernstein rarely wrote with others, but he did think with others, and often discussed the impact that others (colleagues and doctoral students) had on the development of his own research ideas.

Basil Bernstein, the complex man, was an enthusiastic, engaged researcher. But he stood apart from the disciplinary field of British sociology of education, and his work at times, received hostile reception within the research community (Moore, 2013a; Sadovnik, 1995; 2001). His legacy lives on in the Basil Bernstein symposium held every two years in different locations around the globe (Lisbon, Portugal, 2000; Cape Town, South Africa, 2002; Cambridge, England, UK, 2004; Newark, New Jersey, USA, 2006; Cardiff, Wales, UK, 2008; Brisbane, Australia, 2010; Aix-en-Provence, France, 2012; Nagoya, Japan, 2014; London, England, UK, 2016).

Often his doctoral students, who also completed much of the empirical work which formed the foundation for his latter theoretical endeavours, explicated, defended and championed his sociological ideas. Indeed, Rob Moore's (2013a) book is an exemplar of such activity. Although, Rob Moore did not complete his doctoral

studies under Bernstein's supervision, he was inspired by Bernstein's lectures as an undergraduate student, and remained in conversation with Bernstein and his ideas over a span of four decades. Basil Bernstein was an ambivalent man—simultaneously passionate about the power of pedagogy for transformational change, modeling powerful pedagogic relations with his own students, spending decades developing a sociology of education (Moore, 1996) and at the same time, melancholy about the possibilities of change. He was a patient man—understanding the time and energy needed to engage with complex ideas, spending endless hours with his own students inducting them into the discipline through delicate, precise elaborations and explications. But at the same time, he was incredibly impatient and frustrated with people who couldn't and wouldn't engage in complex ideas, who chose to extract word bites and add these as bling to research stories. He implored researchers studying pedagogy to understand the *relations within* his theoretical project (internal coherency), as well as the external theoretical orientation, or *relations to* the dynamic, morphing objects of inquiry (see Hasan, 1999).

Inter-social relations and intra-psychic relations

As a Durkheimian scholar, Basil Bernstein 'approached education systems in modern societies as ... the primary sites of symbolic production and control and also as potential sites of change—of thinking the 'unthinkable' (Moore, 2013a, p. 13). At the same time, Bernstein was also heavily influenced by many other theoretical traditions including the work of Marx, Weber, the social interactionists such as Mead, and the sociocultural psychological work of the Russian school which included researchers such as Lev Vygotsky, Alexander Luria, and Aleksei Leontiev. Indeed, in a video talk presented at the first international symposium on his work in 2000, Bernstein talked enthusiastically about the lectures given by Alexander Luria in London in the 1960s and how deeply these impacted on his own research trajectory. Yet there is little explicit reference to Luria's work in his publications, or in the subsequent publications about his work. And while Rob Moore makes reference to the influence of Luria, he does not expand on the nature of this influence, or the corpus of work that has now started to explore the integration of Bernsteinian sociology and psychoanalytic work, particularly that of Lacan, Klein and Freud (see for example, Davis, 2005; Lapping, 2008, A. Moore, 2012; Singh, 1997a). This literature focuses on the relation between social-cultural and intra-psychic processes. In so doing, this work progresses theories of affect, desire, ambivalence, introjection and projection. These theoretical concepts go to the core of the Bernsteinian project, how outer social relations become part of inner psychological and psychic relations, and inner thought processes become part of outer social relations, and thus constitute and change social identities and order. This work follows a different disciplinary trajectory to the work which integrates social-cultural psychological perspectives in the tradition of Vygotsky with Bernsteinian sociology, and is used to analyse interventions and inter-agency work aimed at disrupting educational and social inequality (see Daniels, 2012). Moore (2013a) invites the reader to enter a maze explicating different intellectual strands inherent in Bernsteinian sociology of education, but the strand dealing with socio-psychological and psychoanalytic research seems to end abruptly. This is a path through the Bernsteinian sociological maze well worth further extrapolation and exploration.

The psychoanalytic orientation in Bernstein's work can be traced to a paper published in 1964 in the *British Journal of Sociology* titled: 'Social class, speech systems and psycho-therapy'. This paper clearly reflects Bernstein's early social work

career, and specifically his interest in the relation between outer social processes or social relations (inter-relations) and inner speech or thought processes (intra-relations). In that paper, Bernstein argues that members of the lower working class are likely to experience difficulty engaging with the requirements of the particular speech system of the therapeutic relationship. He argues this has nothing to do with intelligence, but rather to do with the speech systems and modes of interaction that the child has experienced through socialisation in the home/local cultures which have developed dimensions of relevance and learning wholly appropriate to the primary social environment, but 'inappropriate for orientating the individual in special relationships like therapy' (Bernstein, 1964, p. 55). He goes on to ask 'what in the culture is responsible for the speech system?', and clearly announces it is not a 'sub-standard form of English' nor a 'speech system induced by innate intelligence' (Bernstein, 1964, p. 56).

This early work, analysing the specialist mode of communication within the therapeutic relationship, which Bernstein later describes as a form of pedagogic communication, clearly signals Bernstein's long-term research project. He questions the relation between outer forms of communication, forms of symbolic control (inter-social relations) and inner communication (intra-relations, inner mental processes). He asks which factions of the middle class, those in key positions in the field of symbolic control, initiate changes to forms of symbolic control; how new modes of communication are generated; what is communicated via these specialist modes of communication; and who accesses these communication modes and with what consequences. This is an ambitious project which puts pedagogy or pedagogic communication at the centre of the research endeavour.

According to Paul Atkinson (1997), this early Bernsteinian research work generated as much controversy, debate and polarising of positions, as did the latter work on restricted and elaborated codes. Atkinson describes Bernstein as:

... one of Britain's most original of sociologists who made significant contributions to sociology in its classic forms—exploring the division of labour and the distribution of symbolic resources; analysing the semiotic basis of cultural and biographical work; exploring how orders of meaning are constructed and reconstructed through symbolic means; laying bare the regulatory principles of social and cultural reproduction (1997, p. 117).

Rob Moore (2013a, p. 1) holds a similar position, arguing:

Basil Bernstein ... was a thinker of immense originality and creativity. He should stand as one of the most inventive modern thinkers in the social sciences and as amongst the most inventive in British sociology. These qualities of originality, creativity and inventiveness have often been undervalued and poorly acknowledged.

Atkinson calls for the importance of a 'disciplined rapprochement' between different intellectual stands, giving the example of work by some sociologists of language, sociologists of education, and European feminists, who appear to rebut Bernstein's work on gender reproduction, but actually provide 'evidence supportive of the general thrust of his work' (Atkinson, 1997, p. 117; see also Arnot & Reay, 2007). By contrast, Rob Moore (2013a; b) spends considerable energy attempting to rebut work which adopts what he claims is a postmodernist orientation, rather than adopting a 'disciplined rapprochement' position between different intellectual strands. He does this by sketching the development of the intellectual field of the new sociology of education (NSOE) in Britain from the 1970s onwards. This is a bold initiative

involving many years of collaboration with colleagues Johan Muller, Karl Maton and Michael Young (see Maton, 2007; Moore & Muller, 1999; Young, 2000).

There is much to be applauded about research initiatives that trace the development of intellectual fields, and in so doing, attempt to theorise how knowledge ‘grows’ in such fields, and how disciplinary fields evolve and morph over time. But there are also dangers. As Moore (2013a) himself argues, he has taken what he considers to be key moments and key texts and developed his argument on the basis of this empirical data (see, by contrast, Hunter, 1994). Such a historical sketch does not engage in the complex debates within feminist theory, poststructuralisms, postcolonial theory and critical cultural studies (see Arnot & Reay, 2007; Michelson, 2004; Singh, 1997a). There are many points of engagement and connection between these diverse theoretical traditions and the Bernsteinian project, particularly the latter work on pedagogic discourse (see also Tyler, 2001). They do not, as Rob Moore appears to suggest, stand in opposition—one with a relativist knowledge orientation, the other with a social realist knowledge orientation. The book would have benefited from a ‘disciplined rapprochement’ of different theoretical traditions. This would have meant entering the maze at a different starting point, or finding paths to connect the intellectual mazes of different theoretical domains.

Standing apart from the New Sociology of Education (NSOE)

Moore (2013a, 2009) and Atkinson (1985) argue that Bernstein’s focus was the differential distribution and acquisition of cognitively complex forms of knowledge and ways of knowing, transmitted and acquired through specialised modes of pedagogic communication constituted in and through the technologies and apparatus of the modern school. Thus there were two distinctive foci of analysis for Bernstein (2000): the specialised knowledge (esoteric) of schooling as encapsulated in the official school curriculum (curriculum codes), and the specialised modes of communication used to teach students this knowledge (pedagogic codes). As Moore (2009) has previously argued, it is difficult to make and hold apart these analytic distinctions because the categories seep into each other. But there is a danger of not holding them apart. This is the danger that has stalked the disciplinary field of sociology of education leading it in the direction of a sociology *for* education, advocating particular modes of pedagogy and models of curriculum to address educational and social disadvantage.

Moore (2013a, 1996) compares Bernsteinian sociology of education with the NSOE, described as a sociology *for* education which he argues has generated a proliferation of new pedagogies, each claiming that it has the emancipatory potential to empower an oppressed group. According to Moore (2009, 1996), this is because positions within the disciplinary field of NSOE are equated with positions in the practice field, thus the feminist academic/scholar identifies with the feminist teacher, and produces a sociology *for* education with supposed emancipatory potential for marginalised students. It also assumes a reductionist causal relation between changes within schooling and changes outside of schooling. An assumption that the pedagogic relations within schooling are simply social relations that correspond with oppressive social relations outside of schooling negates the complex, specialised nature of pedagogic communication. As Bernstein (2000) argued, pedagogic communication is a specialised technology or apparatus of governance or symbolic control, which has evolved over time-space to produce specialised modes of consciousness and identity (see also Hunter, 1994).

Rob Moore (2013a, 2009) is not the only scholar to question the emancipatory potential of critical and radical pedagogies (see also Luke, 1992; Hunter, 1994; Singh, 2001). But he is one of the few who critiques the epistemological and ontological assumptions within the NSOE which has hatched these so-called ‘radical’ pedagogies and ‘inclusive’ models of curriculum. Following Bernstein (1990), Moore (2013a; b) suggests that the emancipatory potential of a pedagogic modality can only be discerned through an analysis of its generative structure or coding principles (see also Sadovnik, 1995; Singh, 1997b). This is a journey through the maze well worth travelling because it provides new insights into Bernstein’s sociological code theory.

Code theory: Pedagogy modalities and curriculum models

The starting point for Rob Moore (2013a) in understanding pedagogic modalities is revisiting the Bernsteinian concept of code by explicating the terms restricted and elaborated, and shifting the terminology to restricting and elaborating, or condensed and expanded. A restricting code suggests that meanings are condensed and accessible to those who have been inducted, socialised or initiated into the code. This is what is meant by the colloquial term ‘code talk’—people in the know understand the meanings of language and other social and cultural symbols (gesture, fashion statement, graphic, school curriculum). Those who are not familiar with the code have to have the code explained, explicated or elaborated for them. They have to learn how to crack the code. Induction into restricted or condensed codes takes place through specialised modes of pedagogic communication or modalities of pedagogy. For Bernstein, pedagogy is not just confined to formal institutions of schooling, but to all social relations where someone is inducted or socialised into a condensed code through processes of elaboration or explication. Thus, relations between mothers and children can be viewed as pedagogic relations (see also Luke, 1996), as can relations between therapist and client (see also Britzman, 2011), school teacher and student, dissertation supervisor and research student, YouTube demonstrator and learner, sports coach and athlete. This is not to suggest that the knowledge exchanged via these pedagogic relations is similar, or indeed that the modes of pedagogy are identical.

Rob Moore (2013a) uses code theory to explore two aspects of pedagogy: what is taught and how it is taught. The ‘what’ of pedagogy in terms of schooling is what constitutes valid knowledge, that is, the school curriculum, which is encapsulated in a cognitively complex condensed code. The work of teachers is to explicate or elaborate this condensed code and make it accessible to students. As many teachers in schools located in low socio-economic communities will attest, pedagogic work in these schools is hard work. This is because the teachers have to work harder to explicate or elaborate the condensed codes of school curriculum for students attending these schools. Why? According to Moore (2013a), Bernstein offers some answers which are equivalent to terms used in the sociological theories offered by Bourdieu (see Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), but go somewhat further as both descriptive and explanatory devices and orient to a sociology of interruption rather than reproduction. For example, the concepts of habitus and capital developed by Bourdieu receive extensive attention in the sociology of education, yet they do not provide a delicate, precise language to analyse the diverse modes of pedagogy generated by teachers to engage students in school curriculum, nor do they enable an analysis of shifts or changes to pedagogic relations, identities or resources/repertoires over time-space. Bernstein’s (2000, 1996) latter work on the instructional and regulative aspects of

pedagogic discourse, the pedagogic device, and modes of pedagogic identity provide useful resources for a sociology of education in an increasingly globalised, networked, pedagogized society. These theoretical developments by Basil Bernstein were heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault and Manuel Castells.

Concluding comments

Rob Moore takes seriously his task of guiding the reader through a series of mazes to understand the ultimate mystery of the disciplinary subject, sociology of education, generated by sociologist Basil Bernstein. Some of these journeys illuminate significant new insights. Others, which introduce the influence of Luria on Bernsteinian sociology, signal the beginning of a journey, and point to areas needing further explication. And still others which critique the epistemological and ontological assumptions inherent in 'postmodern' theories, including feminisms in education, seem to be travelling in a completely different maze. As Moore (2013a, p. 71) himself suggests, the problem may be that the teacher or guide and the reader are not even existentially in the same maze.

The book is exceptional in its systematic analysis of Bernstein's theory of pedagogy. It is ambitious in developing a theory of knowledge for the sociology of education. But it also has blind spots, namely its assumptions about epistemology and ontology inherent in the poststructural, postcolonial turn in the NSOE. In an early publication, *Towards the Sociology of Truth*, Moore (2009) critiqued standpoint epistemological positions taken by various versions of poststructuralism in education, arguing that these positions continued the project of the NSOE with its focus on the local, particular, situated phenomenological and socially constructed nature of knowledge. The NSOE and its poststructuralist offshoots, Moore (2013a, 2009) argues, fails to distinguish between the fact that knowledge can be simultaneously socially constructed and therefore intricately connected to power relations and also represent common human interests and principles and thus be context independent or transcendent across space and time. The former position denies a hierarchy of knowledges while the latter position suggests that all social orders differentiate between profane (everyday knowledge – knowledge of the thinkable) and esoteric (sacred knowledge – knowledge of the possibility of the unthinkable). Bernstein's central thesis relates to the co-existence of the sacred and the profane within the same individual (and in every moment of any social encounter) and in the modalities of all social orders. And furthermore that the relation between the sacred and profane within the same individual, and in every moment of any social encounter, is regulated by the essential tension and generative power of the specialised rules of pedagogic communication. But is Bernstein's position so very different from that articulated by poststructural, postcolonial theorisations in education? As Michelson (2004) has argued:

I know of no serious educational theorist who opposes teaching learners to be more at home in vertical, textual, and formal categories of thought ... they do typically argue, first, that such categories are not innocent of either history or power and, second, that complex relationships of overlap and complementarity have often been hidden by and through those power-effects (p. 260).

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