**Reflexivity at Work: Making Sense of
Mannheim's, Garfinkel's, Gouldner's, and Bourdieu's Sociology**

by

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Abstract

Various uses of the concept and practice of reflexivity are widespread within contemporary sociological literature. Much of the writing about reflexivity is about the very nature of sociology as a discipline, how it ought to be practiced, and what kind of goals it ought to pursue. This dissertation investigates the link between reflexivity and the what, how and why of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, Alvin Gouldner's reflexive sociology, and Pierre Bourdieu's reflexive sociology. This dissertation puts reflexivity to work by using it as a lens to 'make sense' of their sociology. It does so by constructing thematic accounts around the history, nature and role of reflexivity within each of their respective sociologies. Several common themes emerge from this in-depth engagement with their work: these authors were all concerned, not only with the nature of the discipline, but also sought to reform it in particular ways; their sociology displayed historical and philosophical sensibilities; they all wrote about the constitutive nature of language and to a certain extent the role of education; they all discussed the role that must be played by sociologists themselves; and all of them offered a clear vision of what goals sociology ought to pursue. These insights are then brought together for the purposes of promoting a concept-practice of reflexivity as humility whose end goal is a responsible, productive, and value-committed sociology.

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For serenity

Introduction

My dissertation puts reflexivity to work by using it as a lens to ‘make sense’ of Mannheim’s, Garfinkel’s, Gouldner’s and Bourdieu’s sociology. It does so by constructing thematic accounts around the history, nature, and role of reflexivity within each of these authors’ sociology. My dissertation then brings together insights from these accounts about the nature of sociology, epistemology and ontology, language, the theory-practice divide, and the ultimate goals of sociology, for the purposes of promoting a concept-practice of reflexivity as humility, whose end goal is a responsible, productive, and progressive-oriented sociology.

While reflexivity was first coined as a new term for introspection and self-awareness in the 1640s (Tauber 2005), its popularity has grown only recently. The concept-practice of reflexivity is now widespread within contemporary sociological literature. According to the database *Sociological Abstracts*, between 1972 and 1985 anywhere from one to nine articles were published annually with the term reflexivity in either the title or abstract. This number rose to twenty articles annually between 1986 and 1991, averaged thirty-five articles annually between 1992 and 1996, seventy articles annually between 1997 and 2005, and continued to increase to one hundred and ten articles annually between 2006 and 2012. While the boundaries are not always clear cut, much of the literature on reflexivity seems to cluster around eight different streams: Mannheim and his sociology of knowledge, Garfinkel and his ethnomethodology, Gouldner and his reflexive sociology, Bourdieu and his reflexive sociology, along with ethnography, feminist analysis, sociology of scientific knowledge, and Beck, Giddens and Lash’s reflexive modernization thesis. Several commentators have described

reflexivity as the defining characteristic of modern society (Hendrickson 2004), postmodernism (Lawson 1985; Outhwaite 1999), radical constructivism (Délanty 1997), the center of intellectual life (Ritzer 1999), and have identified its popularity as linked to uncertainty concerning knowledge (Holland 1999; Smart 1999).

While there is little agreement about what constitutes reflexivity, which is variously identified as a state, a process, an attitude, a quality, a critical approach, and a methodology, much of the writing about reflexivity from authors such as Ulrich Beck (1992; 1994a; 1994b), Anthony Giddens (1992; 1994a; 1994b), Scott Lash (1993; 1994a; 1994b), Margaret Archer (1998; 2003; 2007), Donna Haraway (1991), Sandra Harding (1993), Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1992), Steve Woolgar (1985), Bruno Latour (1988), and George Marcus (1994) is about the very nature of sociology as a discipline, how it ought to be practiced, and what kind of goals it ought to pursue. As such, researching reflexivity leads to a direct engagement with the very nature of sociology, with its methodological, epistemological, and ontological foundations. Gerard Délanty and Piet Strydom, in *Philosophies of Social Science* (2003), frame their discussion of classical and contemporary philosophy of social science through the lenses of reflexivity, connected simultaneously to methodology, epistemology, and ontology.

Karl Mannheim, Harold Garfinkel, Alvin Gouldner and Pierre Bourdieu are all identified as major influences in the literature on reflexivity as well as the sociological literature more broadly. This dissertation investigates the link between reflexivity and the what, how, and why of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, Gouldner's reflexive sociology, and Bourdieu's reflexive sociology. While their uses of reflexivity vary, each author placed reflexivity at the center of his interest in sociology and linked reflexivity to both the nature and foundations of

sociology. These authors were not content with simply practicing sociology; instead, all were interested in reforming sociology and in offering their own vision of what sociology ought to be. For each, reflexivity played a different but crucial role in this endeavor. Their reflexivity is intrinsically tied to methodological, epistemological, and ontological issues.

This dissertation puts reflexivity to work by using it as a lens to ‘make sense’ of Mannheim’s, Garfinkel’s, Gouldner’s, and Bourdieu’s sociology. I treat each author’s entire published works as a self-contained field, except for Bourdieu where I constituted a field out of a sub-set of his work. I then proceeded to make sense of that field through the single gaze of the concept-practice of reflexivity. I do this by constructing thematic accounts around the history, nature, and role of reflexivity within each author’s sociology. This takes the form of three tightly connected and yet discrete inquiries: What within the author’s work led them to the development of their notion of reflexivity? What for them constitutes the nature of reflexivity? And finally, what role or purpose does the idea or practice of reflexivity play within the context of each author’s ongoing sociological project? The final products of these inquiries are neither critical nor evaluative assessments, but rather interpretive accounts ‘making sense’ of their entire sociology through reflexivity. I seek to understand the parts (reflexivity chief among them) from the whole (their entire sociological career) and the whole from the parts.

I do not construct these accounts around the history, nature, and role of concept-practice of reflexivity within these authors’ sociology from an Archimedean point of view. I am not an impartial intellectual historian who holds no preconceived notion about what reflexivity is or is not, one who simply describes the authors’ works as they ‘truly are’. I began this research with a definition of reflexivity that is one where the author

acknowledges her own limitations and that recognition is reflected within their work.

This definition stems from a reading of Mannheim's writings on the perspectival nature of all knowledge, and from a humanist reading of Niklas Luhmann's theory of distinction, where no accounts can escape that they are accounts from particular locations. And yet I was never interested in reflexivity for its own sake.

For me, reflexivity was from the beginning the most promising thread to follow in order to figure out my own sociological practice. This interest emerged principally because I see reflexivity as playing an important role in the process of knowledge making. I seek to understand the (social) world around me. I am inclined to believe that there are no absolutes and no singular privileged position from which knowledge is gained. This led me to the sociology of knowledge as a tradition that emphasizes the social character of knowledge. What is generated as knowledge and what is taken as knowledge reflect the values and the sociological features of a particular society. The definition of reflexivity I took from a reading of Mannheim and Luhmann informed not only my choice of the topic of reflexivity as the potential key to unlocking the way to an anti-foundational approach to sociology, but also my subsequent readings of Mannheim's, Garfinkel's, Gouldner's and Bourdieu's sociology. So although I started with a definition, my understanding of reflexivity broadened to include other and more varied formulations of the concept and practice from an engagement with these authors' work.

Several common themes emerge from this in-depth engagement with their work: these authors each offered a vision for the practice of sociology; they engaged directly with matters of epistemology and ontology; they wrote about the constitutive nature of language and to a certain extent the role of education; they discussed the divide between

theory and practice, between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge and the role that must be played by sociologists themselves; and finally, all offered a clear vision of what goals sociology ought to pursue. By taking a pragmatic approach to these authors' work, these insights can be combined to form the basis for an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic inspired sociology. It not a question of the ultimate commensurability of their sociologies, but rather how insights garnered from their sociologies can be put to 'work' in a responsible, productive, and value-committed sociology.

I take from Mannheim a reflexivity that is an adaptation of the *golden rule* to do unto yourself what you do unto others, a self-exemplifying reflexivity, a reflexivity about accounts that needs to apply its analysis to itself. I take from Garfinkel a reflexivity that is a constitutive reflexivity, one which is characteristic of lived interactions and their context in everyday life, one which explains social order. From Gouldner I take a reflexivity that promotes self-awareness, a reflexivity of the researchers who probe their own personal commitments. Finally, I take from Bourdieu a reflexivity about various aspects of the scholastic fallacy, about the gap between theory and practice, a reflexivity of the tools of practice and the field of the academic and sociologist, a reflexivity of the 'doxa' that accompanies 'skhole'. Taken this way, these reflexivity are not mutually exclusive, but instead highlight some of the important differences about how each author understands and uses reflexivity. Reflexivity, as advocated by Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu, is a productive tool that helps to understand that there are various types of contexts and factors that influence all knowledge-production activities. Together they form a part of a broader typology constructed from the various conceptions

and uses of reflexivity found in the sociological literature that can co-exist and operate on different levels within one sociological practice.

Within an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic inspired sociology, these reflexivities ought to be understood as reflexivity as humility instead of reflexivity as transparency. Reflexivity as transparency suggests that it is possible clearly to identify the presuppositions underlying the conduct of research, and that if we turn our gaze toward them, we can somehow control if not eliminate their effects. Reflexivity as humility instead acknowledges the existence of several kinds of limitations, some of which are known, and some of which are not, but does not claim those limitations can be fully understood or overcome. Whilst the reflexivity mobilized through self-confessional unearthing of biases and limitations supports a positivist social science, the reflexivity mobilized through an acknowledgment of the inevitable contingency and uncertainty associated with all forms of knowledge production supports an anti-foundational social science.

What is required is a sociology that must take responsibility for the construction of its own accounts. There is a vast sociological literature advocating for this type of responsible sociology (Woolgar and Pawluck 1985; Watson 1987; Steier 1991a; Denzin 1997; Rose 1997; Lohan 2000; Bonner 2001; Doucet 2008). This involves paying greater attention to matters of justification and to the various types of criteria used to adjudicate competing claims (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006). Justifications work as long as they are acknowledged as legitimate in the particular context in which they appear. This adjudication cannot be done solely at the individual level but must be done at the communal level.

Reflexivity and sociology respectively do not have one finite meaning, but are constituted by how they are put into action. They are tools that take their form in the pursuit of specific objectives. This is exemplified in the work of Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu. The Archimedean point of view cannot be recaptured through processes of reflexivity. Reflexivity as humility is a recognition of this fact; one must take responsibility for one's own accounts and justify those accounts for the work that they do. Much of the writing about reflexivity is about the very nature of sociology as a discipline, how it ought to be practiced, and what kind of goals it ought to pursue. This dissertation puts reflexivity to work to 'make sense' of Mannheim's, Garfinkel's, Gouldner's, and Bourdieu's sociology in order to promote a responsible, productive, and value-committed sociology.

Methodological Discussion

There are numerous approaches that have affinities with the work that I seek to accomplish and I searched for a methodology that would 'best fit' the type of investigation I had in mind. I considered the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim 1936; Stark 1958; De Gree 1941), the history of ideas (Roucek 1944; Berlin 1958; Lovejoy 1960; Boas 1969; Wiener 1973; Capek 1973; King 1983; Oakley 1984; Kelley 1990), genealogy (Foucault 1966; 1969; 1977), actor network theory (Callon 1980, Callon 1986; Latour 1986; Ward 1992), and historical ontology (Canguilhem 1991; Daston 1992; Hacking 2002). Part of my interest is in mapping out the relationship between the term reflexivity and the idea of reflexivity through the ways in which reflexivity is put to work. In so doing, I am following in the footsteps of Ian Hacking, and John Austin before him, who saw that the most fruitful history of a concept was not to uncover its elements,

but to investigate the principles that caused it to be useful or problematic. How is reflexivity being ‘put to use’? What types of ‘problems’ are authors addressing with the use of reflexivity within the theoretical and methodological realm?

And yet these approaches do not fit completely since my dissertation is so heavily focused on understanding how reflexivity is ‘put to use’ by specific authors through an in-depth engagement with their written work for the purposes of ‘making sense’ of their sociological programs. Since my dissertation is an interpretive exercise that seeks to ‘make sense’ of uses of reflexivity, gleaned from an in-depth textual engagement with my four authors’ works, it is closer to the hermeneutical approach. Following hermeneutics, it is neither a descriptive nor an evaluative or critical engagement, but a reconstitution of meaning from the authors’ published words. This dissertation is my account, I hope a well-informed, interesting, and useful one, of the authors’ sociology through the history, nature, and role of the concept-practice of reflexivity. It is simultaneously an attempt to capture something about the authenticity of these authors’ sociological thought and practice, while constructing a coherent narrative that serves my purpose.

The process I employ for this dissertation was worked out during the course of my first comprehensive on Pierre Bourdieu, and is heavily anchored in deep and repetitive textual analysis. It involves a series of five readings of some of my source material, each time with both a broader lens and simultaneously a more specific focus: Broader in that each subsequent reading is done through the lenses of other readings, including the rest of a given author’s work, the writings of the other three major authors, the broader sociological literature on reflexivity, and ultimately the secondary literature on the particular author. More specific focus means that each reading was done with an increasingly narrowing intent of situating passages and my notes within a particular

theme, and of using them for increasingly specific purposes. These five readings of (or what I think of as encounters with) my literature allowed me continually to engage with my research material in light of my insights, thoughts, and narrative formed from reading everything else. I can confidently say that I read Mannheim with Bourdieu, Gouldner and Garfinkel in mind, and read each of these authors with the feminist analysis, sociology of scientific knowledge, reflexive modernization thesis, and ethnography literature in mind, and vice versa. It was a time-consuming process, but one that allowed for a certain type of interpenetration of these works and a process of mutual constitution of understandings of each of these fields that I think enhances the kind of story I can tell.

This dissertation represents an engagement with six hundred articles and books. I have read thirty-five thousand pages, written extensive notes during this process, and kept passages from all material that I found relevant and interesting from the works, to the tune of ten thousand pages. I then typed all of the passages and notes from those books and articles and made further notes on my thoughts. I coded and edited those notes for themes, around seven thousand five hundred pages in total; thirty-five hundred came from my four main authors and four thousand from the literature on reflexivity more broadly. Using these codes, I divided my notes into sections and clusters to arrive at the narrative of my dissertation. I reorganized all of those notes into their particular sections and chapters. I then wrote ‘around’ and ‘through’ those notes and assembled them into a linear story. The last part of the process was to edit and polish individual chapters and the overall main narrative. My bibliography was built in four steps: 1) Preliminary literature review of reflexivity; 2) A slice of Bourdieu’s work along with all of the published material from Garfinkel and Gouldner, and in Mannheim’s case, everything that had been translated into English; 3) Full literature review of reflexivity to contextualize my

authors' contributions to the reflexivity literature; and 4) Full literature review of my authors to contextualize my contribution to these authors' literature. So while my dissertation is about these four key authors, through their work and the broader secondary literature I engage with the work of Mead, Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Dilthey, Scheler, Parsons, Hegel, Bachelard, and Schutz, among others, in terms of how their works are linked to reflexivity.

Beyond reading, the heart of this approach is a thematic narrative construction. Themes are not all created equal. Some are only a line or two, a simple footnote, while others are expanded over several pages. It is fair to say, however, that on average I prefer to avoid having a theme cover more than three or four pages of material without subdividing it into further smaller themes. All of these themes together, which were always subject to change, are what formed the skeleton of my dissertation. Organizing and ordering these themes in a single narrative was the hardest part of this process, along with making decisions surrounding what fits under which theme. The themes emerged from my various readings of the source material. Ideas the authors flagged as important. Ideas I found to be recurrent to the author's work. Ideas connected to reflexivity. My dissertation is, ultimately, about these two hundred and sixty themes organized in a coherent narrative. I took these themes, wrote them individually on cue cards, and organized them by shuffling the cue cards back and forth until I felt I could tell a coherent and communicable story. The litmus test for me is that this story is understandable by third parties when they hear it from beginning to end. Many themes were eventually discarded because they were deemed superfluous to the main story being told, while others were added that had not previously emerged. This process enables a concentration on the concept of reflexivity while at the same time allows me to offer an analysis of the context

of the author's overall work in which reflexivity emerged. Rather than offer any pretence of this being a descriptive exercise, the above description should make clear that this is an overtly and fully interpretive exercise.

Speaking of interpretation, I want to note some methodological issues before I offer an outline of my dissertation. The process I employ atomizes authors' work into parts which I then carefully and methodically re-assemble into coherent narratives. My focus is not on situating entire articles and books within the scope of the authors' work, but rather is purposely to organize the author's ideas in such a way as to 'make sense' of their entire career from the single gaze of reflexivity, interpreting the parts from the whole and the whole from the parts. One of the things my methodology obscures is non-written elements of an author's contributions, such as graphs, photos, diagrams, and other spatial elements. I do keep track of what is in the main text and what is in footnotes, but the rest is mostly swept away in the particular process I employed. Also much of my work involved reading translations, namely of Mannheim and Bourdieu, but also of other German and French authors. Insofar as there are differences between reading originals and translations, and there are, it must be noted that for these authors I have relied on the translations. I will come back to this issue when discussing Mannheim's work and how the context of the translations is significantly different than the context of the original writings. Finally, I had to decide to what extent each of my four substantive chapters needed to have symmetry in its narrative and to be similarly organized. Ultimately I elected to attempt to construct a story around the same three questions of what is the history, nature, and role of reflexivity within each author's sociology, but to let the specific form of the answer be dictated by the themes emerging out of each author's individual work.

Dissertation Outline

My dissertation is organized through the six following chapters: a literature review on reflexivity, followed by separate substantive chapters on Karl Mannheim, Harold Garfinkel, Alvin Gouldner, and Pierre Bourdieu, and then finally a discussion chapter. The first chapter is my review of some of the sociological literature on reflexivity to highlight, on the one hand, the popularity of the concept and practice, and, on the other, how discussions of reflexivity are linked to the nature of sociology as a discipline, how it ought to be practiced, and what goals sociology should pursue. The goal of the literature review is to situate the contributions of this dissertation in relation to the literature on reflexivity, the literatures on my four key authors, and the literature on the nature of sociology.

The second chapter discusses some of the key features necessary to understand the development, nature, and implications of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and his use of reflexivity in the sociological literature. Mannheim was first and foremost interested in offering an interpretation of the social world, one that was a more thorough and in-depth synthesis than pre-existing explanations. This chapter is organized into four sections. Section one lays out the context necessary to understand the development of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Following brief biographical details, I discuss a few of Mannheim's theoretical influences such as Marxism and historicism, followed by his vision of the history of society and sociology through the process of what he calls distantiation. Next I discuss Mannheim's career-long interest in studying *weltanschauung*, or global outlooks, along with its main mechanism, what he calls the documentary method. This is a type of epistemological inquiry, one that embodies a

particular vision of sociological knowledge and the types of sociology that ought to be practiced. The section concludes with a description of two in-depth empirical studies on the nature of historicism and conservatism where this vision is put into practice.

The third chapter discusses the context, nature, and role of reflexivity in Harold Garfinkel's work. Garfinkel had a profound influence on the use and understanding of reflexivity in the sociological literature, specifically through his development of ethnomethodology. To appreciate the nature of this distinctive program called ethnomethodology, this chapter considers the essential role of reflexivity within ethnomethodology as well as its implications for the sociological literature. This chapter is organized in five sections. Section one lays out the background and context necessary to understand the nature and role of Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and his use and understanding of reflexivity. The second section discusses some of the key tools Garfinkel deployed in his attempts to study social order directly. The third section of this chapter focuses on how Garfinkel, with the help of these various insights, proposed to study social order and the phenomenon of common sense. The fourth section turns its attention to the role played by ethnomethodology and Garfinkel's use and understanding of reflexivity. The fifth and final section of this chapter discusses the implications stemming from Garfinkel's work, for sociology, but also for broader ontological and epistemological concerns.

Chapter four discusses the origin, nature and role of Alvin Gouldner's program of reflexive sociology through an analysis of his use of reflexivity in his complete body of published works. The context in which reflexivity emerged as a concern, query, and answer for Gouldner is presented in order to better understand the nature and role of this concept. This review focuses on a set of two relationships that I believe are central to

Gouldner's view and engagement with sociology: the relationship between society and social theory, and the relationship between social theory and social theorists.

The fifth chapter discusses the emergence, nature, and role of reflexivity to better understand Bourdieu's reflexive sociology. This chapter is organized in four sections. In the first section, I discuss Bourdieu's theoretical influences, starting with his early philosophical training and his early structuralist tendencies. In the second section, I emphasize how Bourdieu was first and foremost concerned with the progress and the limits of social scientific work. This manifests itself in his attempt at reconciling the objectivism-subjectivism divide by pointing to the limitations of each, while simultaneously offering an explanation of the congruence between the two. Stemming from these concerns, section three discusses Bourdieu's focus on the intellectual field, along with notions of doxa, heterodoxy, and orthodoxy, to point out the limitations of the point of view of intellectuals. This insight rests on what I believe is the central distinction Bourdieu promoted: that between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge, or between theory and practice. Bourdieu called the failure of intellectuals to recognize this important distinction the scholastic fallacy. Reflexivity is thus introduced and developed to overcome several limitations Bourdieu identified as preventing productive scientific work. Finally, section four covers the process through which Bourdieu placed reflexivity at the center of his vision for sociology, a reflexive sociology.

The sixth and final chapter discusses several elements that I have extracted from these authors' work to form the basis of a sociological practice. These elements include: the vision each author holds for the discipline of sociology; the historical and philosophical sensibilities displayed in their respective work; a discussion of language and education; the nature of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge and the role

to be played by sociologists; and the ultimate goal each of their programs seeks to achieve. This discussion chapter highlights these various insights from these authors, along with their work on reflexivity, for the purposes of promoting a responsible, productive, and progressive-oriented sociology and a concept-practice of reflexivity as humility. In so doing, it also discusses issues of commensurability, justification and adjudication.

Reflexivity at a Glance: What does the literature say?

The concept and practice of reflexivity is widely used and debated within the sociological literature. Currently over one hundred articles per year are published with the term reflexivity in the title or abstract. While there seems to be widespread agreement in the literature about the virtues of reflexivity in both theory and research practice, there is little substantial agreement as to what composes reflexivity. Reflexivity is what Atkinson (1999) describes as a polyvalent term. Advocates of reflexivity often embrace one type of reflexivity but not others, and call their work reflexive. This leads to other proponents of reflexivity pointing out the 'limited reflexivity' an author embodies. That process is never-ending but needs to be addressed in the context of 'what does it mean to be reflexive?' The answer provided is different depending on who is being asked. The concept is defined varyingly as a state, a process, an attitude, a quality, a critical approach, and a methodology, among others.

The most oft-used and critiqued versions of reflexivity are from Karl Mannheim, Alvin Gouldner, Harold Garfinkel, and Pierre Bourdieu whom I will discuss in more detail shortly. Others include Ulrich Beck (1992; 1994a; 1994b) and his reflexive modernization thesis, Anthony Giddens (1992; 1994a; 1994b) and his analysis of self-identity as increasingly reflexively organized, Scott Lash (1993; 1994a; 1994b) and his aesthetic reflexivity, and Margaret Archer's morphogenetic approach (1998; 2003; 2007). Reflexivity is at the center of discussions within feminist scholarship through Donna Haraway (1991) and her reflexivity that recognizes radical historical contingency and is critical of the goddess-trick; Sandra Harding (1993) and her promotion of 'strong objectivity' constituted by 'strong reflexivity'; and Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1992) who

put reflexivity at the center of their fractured foundationalism. Discussions of reflexivity also define the field of the sociology of scientific knowledge, for example in the work of Steve Woolgar (1985) on reflexivity and ontological gerrymandering, Bruno Latour (1988) on meta-reflexivity and infra-reflexivity, and ethnography with George Marcus (1994), whose postmodern version of reflexivity advocated for messy texts to disrupt the value-free objectivist mode of discourse.

A handful of authors have produced histories and typologies of reflexivity. I will discuss some of these works here to give a sense of what has been written and how previous authors have tried to make sense of the various ways that reflexivity has been used. One of the broadest attempts at exploring reflexivity to date is a multi-volume series by Barry Sandywell (1996). Sandywell has a specific definition of reflexivity in mind and traces its origin and development from Ancient Greece through the Enlightenment period. He does this by looking at reflexivity in the following ways: rhetorics of representation, generic reflection and its relationship with reflexivity, reflexivity and consciousness and the life-world, reflection as speculative thought, the reflexive self, being-in-the-world as incarnate reflexivity, praxical reflexivity, phronetic reflexivity, genealogical self-reflexivity, transactional reflexivity, and dialogical reflexivity. Sandywell defines reflexivity as an approach that interrogates interpretive systems. Reflexive inquiries study the historicity of sense-making activities, and his goal is a fully reflexive ontology of human experience. Sandywell believes that recognizing the radically reflexive nature of human life in the world will occasion a reformation of the contemporary human sciences. Reflexivity is a collective project in which individuals and groups transgress their inherited epistemologies in order to gain knowledge of the

conditions and historical possibilities of their being in the world. There is no single reflexive theory and reflexivity is interminable.

Tim May (1998; 2000) is another prolific writer investigating and exploring reflexivity. His work on reflexivity draws on Mannheim, Garfinkel, Bourdieu, Giddens, Archer, Bhaskar and others. He advocates understanding reflexivity as having two dimensions, endogenous and referential. Endogenous reflexivity refers to the way in which the actions of members of a community contribute to social reality itself. Referential reflexivity refers to the knowledge gained via an encounter with ways of life and ways of viewing the social world that are different from our own. May's series of studies are attempts at showing the applicability of this distinction and its usefulness. He is interested in the relationship between reflexivity within actions and reflexivity upon actions, and sees endogenous reflexivity as reflexivity too heavily focused on the process of social research, compared to referential reflexivity, which involves an examination of the limitations of our knowledge. May discusses reflexivity as the key to bridging the gap between practical and discursive knowledge by speaking of an epistemology of production (endogenous) and an epistemology of reception (referential). He argues that referential reflexivity acts as not only a check upon endogenous reflexivity but also as a means to evaluate it.

Hilary Lawson's monograph *Reflexivity: The Post-Modern Predicament* (1985) is an additional contribution to the history of reflexivity. In this work he discusses the origins of the postmodern crisis as reflexivity. Reflexivity gets its full force through recognition of the importance of language, threatening facts, reality and truth, but also fiction, myth and falsity. Lawson argues that reflexivity is at the very core of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida's work and that, for each of them, reflexivity is all encompassing

and inescapable. Lawson traces the history, nature and role of reflexivity within these three authors. Lawson argues that Nietzsche is the first philosopher to put reflexivity as the propelling force of his work. Reflexivity unsettles our most deep-rooted convictions, which denies the fixity of meaning. The Will to Power is a perpetual reflexive overturning of itself. For Heidegger, an awareness of reflexivity means that the texts he writes are reticent about the very subject of which they wish to speak. Reflexivity is about overcoming the certainty of knowledge, and thus becomes about asking questions rather than providing answers. Reflexivity is at the center of Being. For Derrida, reflexivity begins with language and is the key to deconstruction. Derrida invokes reflexivity at the heart of his views on writing and presence. The concept of *différance* reflexively incorporates in itself the denial that it is itself. Lawson finds that reflexivity is the motor that determines the character of Derrida's theory, and Lawson himself believes that the power of reflexivity needs to be harnessed since it cannot be avoided.

Frederick Steier (1991b) also writes about the crucial role language plays in the deployment of reflexivity. He discusses the distinction between short circuit reflexivity, where we act 'instinctively' and long circuit reflexivity, where we act 'contemplatively'. For the researcher, both have a role to play, but Steier argues that what is needed is active questioning of the assumptions that make small circuit reflexivity in action possible. Frederick Steier (1991a) relies on Mead's definition of reflexivity as bending back on itself, and wants us to start thinking about research as constituted by processes of social reflexivity. He sees reflexivity as attempting to de-privilege the research class while participating in it, asking "why do research for which you must deny responsibility for what you have 'found'?" (1991a: 10)

In *Reflexivity: One Step Up* (2000), Dick Pels offers a typology of reflexivity where he reviews a selection of existing work on reflexivity, namely that of Gouldner, Bourdieu, Giddens, Latour, Mannheim, Garfinkel, and Harding. Pels examines their reflexivity for circularity and, in the end, proposes his own model of circular reflexivity that breaks with transcendent objectivity and instills weakness at the heart of representation, inspired but distinguished from these authors. He prefers the normative reflexivity of Gouldner in the pursuit of a moral sociology to the agnostic reflexivity that he sees Woolgar and others embracing within the new literary form movement. Pels argues for a three-ring model of reflexivity, where the outer ring is about traditional sociological variables of class, gender, and race, the middle ring intellectual fields and interests acknowledged by Bourdieu, and the inner ring, autobiographical reflexivity.

Karl Maton (2003) offers his own typology of how reflexivity is deployed in current academic literature. He characterizes most reflexive research as sociological, individualistic, and narcissistic. Maton contrasts what he categorizes as the mainstream uses of reflexivity with Bourdieu's epistemic reflexivity, which he sees as an attempt to formulate an alternative reflexivity that is epistemological, collective, and objective. Believing that Bourdieu fails to deliver on some of these counts by lacking a supra-subjective, non-social basis for transcending the effects of fields, Maton proposes a notion of epistemic capital that relies on social realist notions of a world independent of actors as a first constructive step toward this epistemological, collective, and objective form of reflexivity.

Ray Holland (1999) presents an additional typology where he links the popularity of reflexivity to growing flexibility and uncertainty concerning knowledge. Holland believes that all humans possess reflexivity and is thus against the characterization of

others as not reflexive. Instead, he prefers to speak of levels of reflexivity. Reflexivity one is embodied by Mead and is tied to the nature of the self. Reflexivity two is attached to the language of perspectives, embodied by the work of Bourdieu and Gouldner. Reflexivity three moves from individual processes to societal conditions; Holland sees this reflexivity in experimental ethnography. Finally, reflexivity four is what Holland calls transdisciplinary reflexivity. Holland writes about the link between positioning and reflexivity in terms of how human reflexivity defines personal existence and is the basis on which people form social units, and how reflexivity offers the promise to break out of thought style, which limits awareness and thereby movement.

Other histories and typologies have been written for specific sub-fields of sociology. The most thorough history of reflexivity in the sociology of scientific knowledge is Malcolm Ashmore's doctoral dissertation, *The Reflexive Thesis: Wrighting Sociology of Scientific Knowledge* (1989). Jonathan Potter (1991) compliments Ashmore for encouraging people to address reflexivity, and describes the book based on his dissertation as the definitive work on reflexivity. The defining characteristic of Ashmore's dissertation is that he does not treat reflexivity as a problem to be dealt with. His thesis is an inquiry into the possibilities of a reflexive sociology, including an interest in the form in which his work is presented. He traces the history of reflexivity in the sociology of scientific knowledge, starting with the etymology of the word reflexivity, 'to bend again' or 'to bend back', offers a typology of various approaches to reflexivity, and then presents his own vision of a sustainable reflexive practice. Ashmore centers his engagement with reflexivity over the *tu quoque* ('you too') argument and how various authors have approached this, either by rejecting it or ignoring it. His own position is that a solution is unnecessary and instead one should embrace a reflexivity of reflexivity or

treat reflexive self-reference as a topic. This means simultaneously engaging in analysis and meta-analysis. For Ashmore this translates into on the one hand legitimizing the sociology of scientific knowledge itself as a subject of study, and, on the other, his dissertation being a self-exemplifying account of reflexivity.

Norman Denzin's monograph *Interpretive Ethnography* (1997) offers the most thorough typology of reflexivity in ethnography. Here, Denzin identifies six styles of reflexivity. First, there is subjectivist reflexivity, associated with self-critique and personal quest. Denzin draws on Marcus to refute some of the criticism surrounding this style of reflexivity and argues for recognition of its contributions in highlighting the subjective nature of all knowledge. Second, Denzin identifies methodological reflexivity, which attempts to sustain methodological objectivity by using the researcher's objective position as a tool for producing a reflexive text. The third style is intertextual reflexivity, which locates any work within a larger field of discourse while drawing on that discourse. Fourth is standpoint reflexivity, long associated with feminist perspective, which recognizes the situatedness and partiality of all claims to knowledge. The fifth style is what Denzin calls queer reflexivity, which challenges the model of the person as a unified, gendered subject with agency and self-identity. In other words, it questions the autobiographical framing. Finally, the sixth style is feminist-materialist reflexivity, which also problematizes the concept of a subject that can know itself outside of unconscious desire. This style calls for a relentless critique of that form of writing which presumes a unified identity capable of writing about the lives of others without writing about itself. Denzin (1997) argues that these six forms of reflexivity cohabit in every text. Reflexivity is not optional; it is an inevitable part of language. A responsible reflexive text announces its politics and ceaselessly interrogates the realities it invokes. From this, Denzin

discusses the implications for new literary forms and what Marcus calls messy texts. Denzin believes messy texts embody particular ontological, epistemological, and political vision, and that the ultimate goal of all these reflexivity should be what Denzin calls a critical ethnography. This engagement with reflexivity gets to the very heart of debates around realism and postmodernism.

Other authors have offered smaller, more specific taxonomies of reflexivity. For example, Linda Finlay (2002) maps out five different types of reflexivity used in qualitative research: (i) introspection; (ii) intersubjective reflection, which is used to explore the co-constituted nature of research; (iii) mutual collaboration, which involves making research participants into co-researchers; (iv) social critique, where reflexivity is about deconstructing the author's authority; and (v) discursive deconstruction, where reflexivity is about disrupting the presentation of the text. According to Finlay, these types are overlapping and not mutually exclusive. She endorses the multiplicity of types within qualitative methodology and encourages further open discussion among researchers. Linda Perriton (2001) constructs another small typology, which considers five different ways of incorporating reflexivity in research texts. These include 'seemingly accidental', 'benign', 'methodology chapter', 'textual guerrilla warfare' and 'socio-political'.

The link between reflexivity and writing of texts is one that is oft-discussed. Douglas Macbeth (2001) traces the history of reflexivity and writes about the positional and textual reflexivity associated with postmodernism, contrasting them to the constitutive reflexivity found in Garfinkel's work. Positional reflexivity implies a discipline view and articulation of one's analytically situated self. It is linked to post positivist and poststructuralist views, as well as to Gouldner and Mannheim, and has

gained obligatory status within qualitative research. Macbeth argues that positional reflexivity can be seen as seeking special warrant. Textual reflexivity refers to an inquiry into the work of writing representations. This reflexivity is seen as a remedy to erasures and felt absences, much of it grounded in skepticism about realist text, seeking to disrupt the comfort of familiar knowledge representation. Macbeth argues that the reflexive text creates an 'other' that is more realist than most texts are, that is, it enshrines the binary it seeks to overcome. Macbeth proposes Garfinkel's constitutive reflexivity as an alternative to both positional and textual reflexivity, as it does not own a special province or make claims to privilege, a non-skeptic inquiry.

MacBeth is not the only one problematizing certain uses of reflexivity. In one of the most thorough typologies of reflexivity, Michael Lynch's *Against Reflexivity as an Academic Virtue and Source of Privileged Knowledge* (2000) points to a trend where reflexivity is being mobilized by various actors in order to establish their approach as having an epistemological and methodological advantage. Lynch creates a six-fold typology of reflexivity beginning with mechanical reflexivity, which emphasizes the recursive nature of social processes. These processes can come in the form of knee-jerk (habitual) reflexivity, cybernetic conceptions of reflexivity, and reflexivity ad infinitum, which never ends. There is also substantive reflexivity, which is treated as a real phenomenon in the social world at large, such as Giddens, Beck, and Lash's systemic reflexivity and Weber, Mead, and Schutz' reflexive social construction. A third type is methodological reflexivity, for example Descartes' philosophical self-reflection, methodological self-consciousness, methodological self-criticism (such as confessional ethnography), and methodological self-congratulation, such as Bloor's strong programme. Fourth is meta-theoretical reflexivity and includes Bourdieu's reflexive

objectification, Harding's standpoint reflexivity, and Goffman's breaking frame. A fifth type is interpretative reflexivity such as hermeneutical reflexivity and radical referential reflexivity. Finally, there is ethnomethodological reflexivity based on Garfinkel's work. Lynch finds that many of these reflexivities purport to represent a superior approach to sociology by claiming an epistemological, moral, or political privilege. He argues that reflexivity is not intrinsically radical however, and advocates for an ethnomethodological conception of reflexivity that eschews these claims to privilege. Kevin D. Haggerty (2003) endorses this position, describing reflexivity as an effort to foreground the place of the researcher in the process of conducting research and writing as a means to disrupt notions of objectivity. Reflexivity is not a simple tool, but a performance. In the end, Haggerty argues from a similar position as Lynch that reflexivity does not embody privileged insight, and instead makes its own assumptions that need to be questioned.

What is striking about these histories and typologies and my own review of the sociological literature is that these debates and discussions about reflexivity are debates and discussions about the very nature of sociology. Kieran Bonner (2001) argues that reflexivity raises the issue most fundamental for modern social inquiry. Questions about reflexivity are questions about what is sociology; they are questions about how sociology ought to be practiced, and they are questions about what goals sociology should pursue. Tracing reflexivity in the sociological literature is tracing debates about the history of the discipline, its identity crisis, and efforts to reformulate its mission in particular ways. Karl Mannheim, Harold Garfinkel, Alvin Gouldner, and Pierre Bourdieu are four sociologists who developed full-fledged visions of sociology with reflexivity at its core.

Karl Mannheim is one sociologist whose work exemplifies the interconnection between reflexivity and the nature of sociology through his development of his program

of the sociology of knowledge. Several authors (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Dant 1991; Gergen 1998; Hacking 1998) have written about Mannheim's influence on the contemporary sociological landscape. Kurt Wolff (1971) offers a biographical account of his life and situates his academic interests. David McLellan (1995) describes Mannheim as the first and last author to offer a comprehensive theory of ideology or what Werner Stark (1958) calls the study of the political element in thought and the investigation of the social element in thinking. Louis Wirth (1936) describes Mannheim's work as preoccupied with the problem of objectivity in science and the validity of knowledge, or what Gregory Baum (1977) calls his opposition to the idea of value-free social science. Several authors (Kecskemeti 1952; Rempel 1965; Scott 1987; Scott 1998; Panofsky 2003) write about Mannheim's direct engagement with epistemology and his advocacy of relationism as compared to relativism.

David Kettler, Volker Meja and Nico Stehr (1986; 1992) discuss Mannheim's method as a reflexive involvement with his subject matter. Bramstedt and Gerth (1951) describe Mannheim's goal for sociology as a tool for new levels of self-awareness where the objective, as Eros and Stewart (1957) put it, is to synthesize the different perspectives and insights of the social sciences to provide a guide to action, as a compass to a better world. Mannheim's sociology and use of reflexivity are also taken up through hermeneutical lenses. Hans Herbert Kogler (1997) ties Mannheim's sociology of knowledge program to Foucault's ontology of the present. He describes Mannheim's work in terms of hermeneutic reflexivity, as sketching phenomenology of cultural meaning-constitution. Susan Hekman (1986) merges Mannheim's sociology of knowledge with Gadamer's hermeneutics to propose an anti-foundational hermeneutical sociology of knowledge as the basis for a new post-positivist social science. She

describes Mannheim as thinking through the reflexivity of knowledge, as turning the method he uses on himself, something most historicists fail to do. These three elements of Mannheim's theory, his hermeneutic interpretation, his self-reflexivity, and the collective approach to knowledge, constitute the basis of his hermeneutic approach to the sociology of knowledge.

Harold Garfinkel is a second author whose work on reflexivity is oft-referenced, especially within the confines of his ethnomethodology program. Charles Lemert (2002) speaks of the uniqueness of Garfinkel's 1960s project, and that, while not very accessible, this work has had a lasting influence on the field, in particular on understandings of mundane life. John Heritage (1984) and Lucia Ruggerone (1996) describe Garfinkel's work as demonstrating the applicability of Alfred Schutz's principles to sociology, while Beng-Huat Chua (1974) and C.D. Shearing (1973) draw parallels between Garfinkel's work and Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. Several authors (Filmer 1975; Mehan and Wood 1975; Wilson and Zimmerman 1979; Heap 1980; Slack 2000; Harris 2000) write about Garfinkel's contributions to contemporary understanding of reflexivity. His reflexivity is applied to speech (Spurling 1977), and to understanding deviance and social control (Lidz 1978), but is also linked to the study of social order (Hilbert 1992; Warfield Rawls 2002). Garfinkel's reflexivity is at the heart of many contemporary debates about the nature of sociology (Pollner 1991; May 2000b), many of which are within the sociology of scientific knowledge (Woolgar 1988; Ashmore 1989), but are also about uncertainty (Platt 1989), and the possibility of objective knowledge (Kim 1999).

Alvin Gouldner is a third author whose work on reflexivity, specifically his program of reflexive sociology, has been influential within sociological literature. Malcolm Ashmore (1989) describes Gouldner as the most famous advocate of reflexive

sociology, arguing that Gouldner treats reflexivity as a constituent of a grammar of rationality. Ellsworth Fuhrman (1989) speaks of Gouldner's reflexivity as casting sociology as a personal commitment and as analyzing the limits of social theory's understanding of itself. Gouldner's work is credited with turning a critical eye to the role of the observer (Linstead 1994; Wadsworth 2005) since he did not think social science could be value free (Pedraza 2003). Several authors (McLaughlin 2005; Bankston 2008) point to Gouldner's contributions to an analysis of the crisis of sociology. Martyn Hammersley (1999) credits Gouldner for addressing the question of what is sociology in greater detail by extending sociological analysis to sociologists' own beliefs. Gouldner argues for the liberative powers of sociology through his reflexive program (Hagan and Vaughan 1989; Kennedy 1996; Chriss 2000) or what Richard Flacks (1989) calls legitimizing the radical protest within sociology. Gouldner's work on reflexivity has been taken up in various fields such as feminist literature (Johnson 1989; Levesque-Lopman 1989) and critical realism (Steinmetz and Chae 2002). Charles Lemert and Paul Piccone (1982) point out that Gouldner's contributions to a theory of the subject, his vision for a moral sociology, and his focus on the personal reality of the theoretical subject came an entire generation earlier than Foucault, Bourdieu, and Giddens.

A fourth author whose work on reflexivity is heavily engaged with in contemporary sociological literature is Pierre Bourdieu and his reflexive sociology. Bourdieu's contributions are widely acknowledged as a unification of philosophy and science (Panayotopoulos 1999), historicism and rationalism (Fournier 2001), ethnomethodology and structuralist approaches (Robbins 2007). Richard Jenkins (1992) argues that Bourdieu has a pragmatic relationship with other thinkers and credits Bourdieu for helping to fill the gulf between theory and practice, or what some call

critiquing various forms of intellectualism (Karsenti 1995; Burkitt 2002; Everett 2002; Schirato and Webb 2003; Karakayali 2004; Foster 2005). Many authors (Heilborn 1999; Schirato and Webb 2002; Wacquant 2004; Kenway and McLeod 2004) speak of Bourdieu's reflexivity as his most influential contribution to sociology. Several have pointed to Bourdieu's reflexivity as fundamentally tied to his vision of how sociology ought to be practiced. Charles Lemert (1995) comments on how Bourdieu makes self-critique such a fundamental part of his sociology, and Barry Smart (1999) describes how Bourdieu's reflexivity is used for the promotion of better science. Thomas Meisenhelder (1997) sees Bourdieu's reflexive sociology as being interested in the very nature of sociology, as an ontology of the social. Meisenhelder argues that Bourdieu's call for reflexivity is a call to study the scientific field, and that reflexive sociology has an important role to play in the pursuit of this freedom. Bridget Fowler (2000) sees Bourdieu's theory as optimistic and promising rather than determinist and pessimist, and Fowler (2006) argues that Bourdieu's socio-analysis is an emancipator tool. Bourdieu's work has been influential in the study of identity and the self (McNay 1999; Adkins 2003), educational research and policy (Grenfell and James 2004; Lingard, Taylor, and Rawolle 2005), moral encounters (O'Mahoney 2007), taste (Hennion 2007), and reproduction of social hierarchies (Zipin 1999; Leander 2001; Leander 2002), among others.

My contribution is to highlight the connections between the nature of reflexivity and the nature of sociology by 'making sense' of these four authors' sociology through the lens of reflexivity. I do so by constructing accounts of the history of the concept-practice of reflexivity within each authors' work, of what is the nature of reflexivity for each author, and of the role of reflexivity in each author's respective sociology. It is to

this task that I now turn.

Reflexivity at Work: Making Sense of Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge

Introduction

This chapter discusses the context, nature, and role of reflexivity found in Karl Mannheim's work, from his first short article *Review of Lukacs' Theory of the Novel*, written in 1920, to *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education* (1962), a monograph published posthumously. Mannheim is best known as one of the founders of the sociology of knowledge, an area where several different uses of reflexivity play a very important role. This chapter discusses some of the key features necessary to understand the development, nature, and implications of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and his use of reflexivity in sociological literature. Mannheim is, first and foremost, interested in offering an interpretation of the social world, one that is a more thorough and in-depth synthesis than pre-existing explanations.

This chapter is organized into four sections. Section one lays out the context necessary to understand the development of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Following brief biographical details, I discuss a few of Mannheim's theoretical influences such as Marxism and historicism, followed by his vision of the history of society and sociology through the process of what he calls distantiation. Next I discuss Mannheim's career long interest in studying *weltanschauung*, or global outlooks, along with its main mechanism, what he calls the documentary method. This is a type of epistemological inquiry, one that embodies a particular vision of sociological knowledge and the types of sociology that ought to be practiced. The section concludes with a description of two in-depth empirical studies on the nature of historicism and conservatism where this vision is put into practice.

The second section teases out certain implications of these empirical investigations into *weltanschauung*, which refers to the co-existence of various styles of thinking. I then discuss the role of groups, including generations, in Mannheim's conceptual toolbox, along with the notion of power and competition and how this connects with ideology, his principal object of inquiry in the first part of his career. The heart of this second section is a description of Mannheim's move from a particular theory of ideology to a general theory of ideology. This move characterizes and is at the origin of his sociology of knowledge and what he calls its non-evaluative approach. The section ends with a discussion of the key element of Mannheim's development of his sociology of knowledge, reflexivity. More than anything, reflexivity involves the recognition that one's own thought is socially situated.

Once the origin of his sociology of knowledge has been established, the third section discusses the various elements that comprise it. This includes a discussion of the notion of perspective and its central role for Mannheim, the social conditioning of thought, the development of relationism as a counterpart to relativism, its implications for the validity of truth, and the role played by particularization. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge has important epistemological implications that will also be covered here, along with a new conception of objectivity. The sociology of knowledge is foremost about synthesizing various perspectives embodied in different social groups. Given these insights, Mannheim assigns a special role to intellectuals as the most likely group to successfully carry this synthesis through. This section thus ends with a discussion of the origin, nature, and role played by Mannheim's freelance intellectuals.

Once Mannheim establishes his programme of the sociology of knowledge, he then turns his attention in the later part of his career to the most important socio-political

trends happening in Europe, namely the rise of totalitarianism. He seeks to offer a diagnosis of the contemporary social world and what he sees as the solution, the promotion of what he calls democratic planning for freedom. This last section highlights the application of Mannheim's vision for sociology to these particular problems: a description of the sociology of the mind, the role that necessarily must be played by education, and the contribution that sociology ought to make to bettering the world. The fourth and final section covers the later part of Mannheim's career and some of the implications stemming from his work.

Section One: Interpretation and Explanation: Studying the *Weltanschauung*

This first section is about laying out the context of the emergence of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. It begins with brief biographical details, followed by a short discussion of Marxism and historicism as key theoretical influences. I then highlight Mannheim's analysis of the process of distantiation and the role it plays in the formation of contemporary society and with it the birth of sociology. The heart of this section is Mannheim's interest in *weltanschauung* or global outlook and how to map this out scientifically. This involves examining various kinds of meaning, including documentary meaning, which Mannheim suggests can be studied using the documentary method. This line of investigation is directly related to the realm of epistemology and speaks to various types of sociological knowledge. This first section also includes a brief description of two in-depth empirical studies on the nature of historicism and conservatism where Mannheim's vision for sociology is put into practice.

Karl Mannheim was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1893 to a Hungarian father and a German mother. He passed his childhood and began his university studies here. When

he moved to Heidelberg, where he married a fellow student, psychologist Juliska Lang, he was a philosopher specifically interested in epistemology. His dissertation was a structural analysis of epistemology. Some of his most influential teachers were Hungarian Gyorgy Lukacs and Bela Zalai, as well as the German scholars Emil Lask, Heinrich Rickert, and Edmund Husserl. Soon after his arrival in Germany he reoriented his studies to the cultural sociology of Alfred Weber and Emil Lederer as well as the social science of Max Weber, Max Scheler, and Karl Marx. In 1925 he became an unsalaried lecturer in Heidelberg, and then a professor of sociology and economics in Frankfurt in 1929. In 1933 he was dismissed and prohibited from holding any position in Germany by Hitler and so moved to London, where he took up a lecturer position in sociology at the London School of Economics. His final academic position was at the Institute of Education at the University of London where he became professor of education in 1946. Wolff (1971) writes that Mannheim was nominated as director of UNESCO, a position he was unable to accept as he unexpectedly died in January of 1947 at the age of fifty-three.

German cultural influence was predominant throughout the chaotic period of revolution and counter-revolution during and after the First World War. During this time of upheaval, from pre-World War One until right after the end of World War Two, Mannheim spends his career in Europe. At this time there is a profound re-examination of all traditional ideas about realities, all values, all principles. It is a time of radical ideas and radical transformation of societies. While his early career was spent writing on the problems of interpretation, epistemology, and knowledge, by later in his career when he moves to England Mannheim's writings became much more practical and politically

engaged, specifically around the need to develop a planned society and the importance of education and sociology in pursuing that goal.

Although Karl Mannheim's career was cut short, he had written more than fifty essays over a quarter century.¹ He is most recognized today for having spurred a new discipline called the sociology of knowledge in collaboration with Max Scheler.

Mannheim's three major works are *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (1952), and *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940). Karl Mannheim defines the sociology of knowledge as a theory of the social or existential conditioning of thought. Mannheim views all knowledge and ideas as bound to a particular location within social structure and historical process. Thus, thought inevitably reflects a particular perspective, and is situationally relative.

Mannheim is influenced by many theoretical currents, chief among them Marxism and historicism. To Marxism Mannheim owes the notion of essentially determined knowledge and to historicism he owes the doctrine of the perspectivist nature of knowledge. He picks up from Marx an interest in the 'ideological' nature of social thought, although he wants to move beyond the notion that proletarian class-conscious thought alone represented reality as it was. His take on Marx is heavily influenced by Lukacs, who saw Marx as the one who truly grasps Hegel's idea of self-alienation. Furthermore, from Lukacs Mannheim also picks up the general value of sociological method for all fields of social-intellectual history. Mannheim is additionally influenced by phenomenology and its focus on how objects are grasped through different types of

¹ Kettler et al. (1992) write that Mannheim insists repeatedly that since he only writes essays, this exempts him from the requirements for theoretical completeness. To this point, Mannheim makes clear in *Ideology and Utopia* (1929) that repetitions have not been eliminated from his work, because ideas presented in slightly different context disclose them in new light. And he does not resolve all contradictions, because his work contains latent possibilities that offer various points of departure and are only of discomfort to a systematizer who has a finished vision.

attitudes. Finally, at the heart of Mannheim's sociological career is his interest in synthesis, where he draws inspiration from Hegel, from Weber, from Dilthey, from Scheler, and even from the Gestalt school of psychology. For these reasons, Mannheim becomes known as an author who pulls ideas from a variety of sources and seeks to bring them together to get a better understanding of the totality.²

In *An Introduction to Sociology* (1930/2001e) Mannheim argues that sociology has its own subject matter, which is to offer a scientific account of society. It is also a method that can approach all human sciences. And, finally, sociology is a posture of consciousness, a specific attitude. The emergence of sociology stems from the emergence of a new posture of consciousness. Mannheim (2001e) first traces the idea that knowledge arises through a certain attitude through Simmel, then Husserl, and finally Dilthey, whom he credits with the idea that the inquirer in the human sciences must arrive at the historical stage where a given study is important. The 'whole person' must carry human sciences. The 'whole person' must undergo the most profound transformation in order to have access to the sociological way of seeing.

Mannheim characterizes the emergence of the scientific attitude as distantiation from life. Distantiation is possible only when the unambiguous alignment of meanings ceases to be performed without difficulties. The objects of the world are no longer fixed.

² It is important to note that, unlike the rest of my dissertation, almost all of my analysis in this chapter is of English translations of original works published in German several decades earlier. Several commentators (Wolff 1971; Kettler et al. 1992) speak to the difference between the German and the English edition of his work. Some have remarked that certain English translations were rendered more 'empirical' to adjust to the scientific relevance in their new setting, while others charge that the translations are sometimes less subtle and less interesting than the thinking that underlays them. Interestingly enough, on top of translation issues, Kurt Wolff (1971) is quite critical of the editing work done by some of his colleagues, namely Adolph Lowe, Ernest Mannheim, Paul Kecskemeti, J.S. Eros, and W.A.C. Stewart, and especially of Mannheim's writings published posthumously such as *Essays on the Sociology of Culture* (1956), *Systematic Sociology* (1957), and *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education* (1962). Given that some of these are based on unfinished manuscripts, Wolff argues that it is not entirely clear where Mannheim's thought is compared to the editors. He takes issue, for example, with some of the quality of the work that he believes does not befit Mannheim. So while I make even more careful use of these works, these issues have to be noted.

A precondition for sociology then is when the frame of meaning that makes a world into the world is broken into pieces. Mannheim traces this distantiation to the Reformation, where there was first conflict about the validity of the notion that the world could be different. Distantiation is when new interpretations are attempted where previously unambiguous interpretations existed, and different ways of seeing things take shape. These new ways of seeing arise from the social differentiation between groups, which leads to the formation of different meanings. Distantiation inevitably appears in a situation of what Mannheim calls social discontinuity, that is, wherever the old forms of social life no longer suffice.

Perhaps the first consequence of this social instability is a general consciousness of the relativity of moral, aesthetic, and intellectual values. People who live in a well-consolidated society with fixed tradition do not realize the variability and interdependence of social phenomena but instead see everything in isolation. With the social dissolution of society, there is an emergence of a consistent view of the variability of social factors, an understanding of the inescapable interdependence of social factors, and a habit of seeing each factor separately in its correct relation to the totality of a given society. It therefore becomes impossible simply to carry on with action, and social life now becomes a matter of reflection.³

Out of this process of distantiation and differentiation reflexivity emerges. When meaning about the world is no longer unambiguous, there is a need to identify oneself with an allocation of meaning. That is where the act of reflection begins. Mannheim

³ In *German Sociology 1918-1933* (1933/1953e), Mannheim summarizes the significance of German sociology since 1918 as the product of one of the greatest social dissolutions and reorganizations accompanied by the highest form of self-consciousness and of self-criticism. This is part of Mannheim's argument that the genesis of the highest degree of self-criticism and self-consciousness arises at a time of social, political, and economic cataclysm.

writes:

It is an act of life that drives us to reflexivity. I must reflect on the situation that I must make present to myself. Things display a previously unnoticed reflexivity. This is nothing dead, but a searching reflexivity that originates in a necessity of life and expands from these origins to become, in the search, the most vital act of which we are today capable. That is because the reflective act is guided by a desire to take possession of the world. (2001e: 20)

The distantiation from everyday life leads to the emergence of reflexivity, which in turn defines a new attitude. Distantiation then becomes both broader and deeper. There are no contents where a doubt could not arise, where reflexivity could not come into play.

Religion, state, society, morals- they are all subjected to the attitude of distance from life. This distantiation affects not only the objects of the external world, but also the sphere of the self. We can then not only put the world at a distance, but also distance the apparatus of experience and apparatus of thinking. This means that one can experience oneself as something that could well be different than one is. We are only one possibility of ourselves. Mannheim (1930s/1956b) argues that our age is characterized not only by a growing self-awareness, but also by an increased capacity to determine the nature of this consciousness.

Through becoming reflexive, the modern person discovers both society and oneself. So from its very beginning, the scientific attitude arises from a new person and the role played by the social body in the form of our membership in various group entities. Sociology emerges by treating this distantiation and group differentiation as a systemic problem, as the modern form of the search for the renewal of life. The danger associated with reflexivity is the possibility of questioning everything, of inventing problems where none currently exist. This is what Mannheim calls an abuse of reflexivity. Drawing in part from Nietzsche, Mannheim explains that the greatest danger

in becoming reflexive and distanced is that while knowing oneself, one no longer matters to oneself. More broadly put, that objectification can turn something into a matter of indifference.⁴

Mannheim, however, denies that sociology poses this danger. Sociology can perform the distantiation from life whenever life poses the problem and compels distantiation. In those instances, sociology calls into question its relativization and its distantiation and thus becomes the social organ of a humanity that is forming a new world in itself. It becomes a direct organ for a reformation of life. This is quite a formidable role, one that becomes a guiding principle in Mannheim's career and his development of sociology. Mannheim (1932/1953e) sees the goal of sociology as to relate these changes in mental attitudes to changes in social situations. This sociology is based on the capacity for constructive thought dating back to Hegel, the political realism derived from Marx and Lorenz von Stein, and the capacity for interpretation found in the sociological works of Dilthey and Simmel. Together these authors furnish Mannheim with the tools necessary to analyze the experiences found in the present era of disintegration and dissolution. Sociology can prove to be a superior tool in analyzing this increasingly dynamic world because its working hypotheses leave out fewer facts from accounts and fit a greater number of the relevant circumstances than do other hypotheses. This process involves studying social life in its most fundamental pre-scientific totality, involves understanding the interconnectedness of various elements of social life. For Mannheim, the goal of sociology is this move towards synthesis, one that starts with mapping out the global outlook of an epoch, or 'Weltanschauung'.

⁴ Mannheim (2001e) describes Nietzsche as the greatest trailblazer of the sociological attitude to life. That is, he sees what is essential to the sociological attitude and experiences in himself. And he says that whatever is illuminated through this attitude and its associated reflexivity ceases to matter to us.

In *On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung* (1921/1952a) Mannheim explains that the difficult nature of Weltanschauung stems from the fact that the entity it denotes lies outside the province of theory. He credits Dilthey for first recognizing that Weltanschauung is not produced by thinking. Rather, Weltanschauung is defined as something atheoretical, with philosophy merely one of its manifestations. Mannheim writes that:

the plastic arts, music, costumes, mores and customs, rituals, the tempo of living, expressive gestures and demeanor—all these no less than theoretical communications will become a decipherable language, adumbrating the underlying unitary whole of Weltanschauung. (1921/1952a: 39)

A study of Weltanschauung can reveal the pre-existing unity between discursive utterances as well as non-discursive elements. But one of the central problems for sociology is how to best translate atheoretical events into theory. In other words, how does one translate several distinct forms, such as aesthetic, religious, and ethical experience into theoretical awareness?

Mannheim argues that the paradoxical nature of theoretical thought is that it seeks to superimpose a logical, theoretical pattern upon experiences that are already patterned under other categories such as aesthetic or religious. This process of translation, of using theoretical categories, can leave the impression of being inadequate and can distort the authenticity of direct experience, upon which they are superimposed. Mannheim thus asks, why then do we crave theoretical knowledge of something that we already experience directly, unmarred by the intrusion of theoretical interest? He argues that we crave this because, while the aesthetic, religious, and ethical experiences spring from an atheoretical realm, they nonetheless find expression through the most elaborate theoretical exercise. Theorizing, for Mannheim, does not start with science, but instead

takes pre-scientific everyday experience and injects it with bits of theory. The life of the mind oscillates between theoretical and atheoretical poles, continually rearranging the most disparate categories of many different origins. As such, theory finds its proper place, its justification and meaning, even in the realm of immediate, concrete experience, in the realm of the atheoretical.

And yet Weltanschauung is something deeper still, something that does not properly belong to either theoretical or atheoretical fields of meaning. Rather, it belongs to all fields and thus cannot be fully comprehended within any one of them.

Understanding the unity and totality of the concept of Weltanschauung means that we must go not merely beyond the theoretical but beyond any and all cultural objectifications. Even if all cultural objectification of an epoch could be added or inventoried it would still fall short of that unity that Mannheim calls Weltanschauung. Mannheim proposes that in order to study Weltanschauung we need a new departure in a different direction, one that involves transcending each objectification. The totality Mannheim seeks lies beyond cultural objectifications as realized meaning, although it is somehow given through them. Thus, Mannheim is suggesting that Weltanschauung can only be grasped by proxy, embodied by both atheoretical and theoretical expressions.

According to Mannheim (1921/1952a) every cultural product has three distinct and discoverable strata of meaning: objective meaning, expressive meaning, and documentary or evidential meaning. Objective meaning is the stratum of meaning a cultural object conveys when we look at it merely as it is 'itself'. To understand expressive meaning one requires knowing about the intentions of the individual author of the cultural product or expression. Finally, documentary meaning is what reveals the elements that make up the global outlook of an epoch. While objective meaning can be

apparent to all and expressive meaning can be known by the authors themselves and others who inquire, documentary meaning can escape both authors and strangers alike. Incorporation of both objective and expressive meaning is an author's conscious effort in a way that the third dimension of meaning, documentary meaning, is not. It can become an intentional object only for the spectator or consumer of the cultural product or expression. Essentially then, it makes no difference to objective meaning whether it is intended or not, whereas expressing meaning can be understood only as intended, and for documentary meaning, it is not essential whether it is intended by the author or not.

Mannheim argues that these three different types of meaning lead to three different types of interpretations. Objective interpretation is concerned with grasping a self-contained complex of meaning from the work alone. Expressive interpretation requires going beyond the work and requires an analysis of the author's stream of psychic experience. Documentary interpretation also requires going beyond the work, but unlike expressive meaning is founded upon the objective meaning as an integral whole. Therefore, documentary meaning can be found in the fragmentary aspects of a work without considering the work in its entirety. Documentary method of interpretation is about putting the scattered items of documentary meaning together in overarching general concepts that form the *Weltanschauung*.⁵ And unlike the other types of interpretation, documentary interpretation must be performed anew in each period. Documentary meaning is always changing and needs constantly to be reassessed so that documentary interpretations cover the total range of the cultural manifestations of an

⁵ While *Weltanschauung* is the name given by Dilthey and others, Mannheim (1921/1952a) says that this documentary method can also reveal insights about the 'art motive' of an epoch, the 'economic ethos' of an epoch, or the 'spirit' of an epoch. Here Mannheim is borrowing from Riegl, Sombart, and Weber respectively, depending on the cultural fields being explored.

epoch.

Mannheim is interested in what needs to be done to study documentary meaning scientifically. The standard here is not exactness, but is an indication, approximation, or profiling of certain correspondences between scientific knowledge and the pre-theoretical experience. What scientific analysis can do for cultural products is stabilize them, make them endure, and give them a firm profile. So a scientific systematic analysis of documentary meaning would proceed by detaching certain elements of meaning from their concrete setting and fusing them into validly ascertainable objects of higher generality by using appropriate categories and conceptualizations. The goal is to reconstruct the totality of an epoch, representing *Weltanschauung*, by distilling various objectifications of that epoch and offering a theoretical account of it.⁶ Any cultural object seen as the vehicle of documentary meaning will receive an entirely new meaning when it is seen within the content of the global outlook of an epoch. And therein lies the paradox of all theorizing, which is that the whole is derived from the parts that are in turn derived from the whole. The spirit of the epoch is derived from its individual documentary manifestations, which are in turn interpreted on the basis of what we know about the spirit of a given epoch. Consequentially, the part and whole are given simultaneously.

In order to make sense of the documentary meaning of the parts, the scientific study of *Weltanschauung* involves surveying all of the cultural spheres and comparing their various objectifications in order to locate the totality of *Weltanschauung* that lies beyond individual cultural objects. This involves developing concepts that are applicable to every sphere of cultural activity. Moreover, it involves a deep attempt at synthesis, not

⁶ Mannheim (1921/1952a) equates this to the work done in biographies, where the inner world of a subject is reconstructed from its outward manifestations and the fragments of meaning contained in them such as works, actions, records, letters, etc.

only across cultural fields, but also across historical periods. A correct and full interpretation is only attained through grasping the spiritual content that manifests itself through works of an epoch.

Weltanschauung is an interpretive rather than an explanatory theory in the sense that it offers genetic, historical, or causal explanation. It does this by taking some meaningful object already understood in the frame of reference of objective meaning and placing it within a different frame of reference, that of Weltanschauung. By being considered as a 'document' of the latter frame, the object will be illuminated from a new side. There is no causal relation between one document and another. Instead, both can be traced back to the same global unity of Weltanschauung of which they are parts. Interpretation for Mannheim does not mean that causal explanation has no place in the cultural sciences; rather, it refers to a completely different exercise. Interpretation means bringing the distinguished strata of meaning in correlation with another.⁷

This concern with Weltanschauung leads Mannheim to become interested in epistemology. In *Structural Analysis of Epistemology* (1922/1953a) Mannheim seeks to contribute to the logic of philosophy through what he calls an all-embracing theory of systematizations in general. Systematization involves turning a conscious reflection towards the presuppositions implied in the use of concepts. Every concept relies on

⁷ Mannheim (1921/1952a) remarks that Dilthey works in this vein by seeing if certain regularities and problems suggested by the history of philosophy can be used in the examination of other cultural fields. Mannheim finds that while his method of inquiry is careful and accurate, Dilthey's conclusions are scanty and vague. He attributes this to using concepts derived solely from the theoretical field that offer little in their attempt to elucidate atheoretical fields, as well as to Dilthey's use of timeless typology, which is thus unable to deal with dynamic variations within distant epochs and understand the constitutive role of temporality. While Mannheim sees Dilthey as responsible for evolving the theory of interpretation and understanding, he argues in *German Sociology 1918-1933* (1932/1953e) that it is Simmel who knows best how to put this theory into practice. For Mannheim, Simmel was one of the greatest masters of the interpretation of social facts. As early as his first publication *Review of Lukacs' Theory of the Novel* (1971a), Mannheim argues that Lukacs' book moves in the right direction by interpreting the novel, an example of the aesthetic phenomena, from the point of view of the philosophy of history.

certain connections and configurations that reach beyond the isolated concept. As such, systematization is about understanding the meaning of an individual concept as rooted in its broader context. It involves ordering concepts or thoughts into a complete system in strict accordance with a single principle. In order to give a comprehensive interpretation of any cultural object, Mannheim argues that we have to specify its genetic cause, meaning its historical connections and affinities, as well as its systematic origin, meaning its basis in the timeless systematization of the field to which it belongs.

Mannheim (1922/1953a) argues that every theory relies on assumptions that cannot be proven by the theory itself. This is true of epistemology. One of the assumptions involved in any theoretical proposition is that while systematizations always contain erroneous or tentative elements, we have to take for granted that an ultimate, true, and complete systematization exists objectively and independently of our own contributions. This is not a moral or aesthetic judgment, but is in accordance with rules of logic. For example, it is a fact that actual thinking is open to error, that is, that we can distinguish between true and false statements. However, it is imperative to postulate a self-sustaining sphere of validity beyond the factual, otherwise that fact itself would lack that background which alone gives it meaning. The concepts of pure logic are thus independent, not only from those concepts of the science of thinking, but also from those of epistemology.⁸

The implication of this is that since pure logic can be established independently of the theories of knowledge, independently of the concepts that constitute epistemology,

⁸ Mannheim offers an example in *Historicism* (1926/1952b) by arguing that one's whole epistemological orientation depends upon whether one starts out from the ontological object as an ultimate or with a philosophy of consciousness, whether one conceives Reason as the essential element of consciousness with the irrational as a limit, or, rather posits the mystic irrational experience as the central element with the rational representing the periphery.

pure logic is therefore altogether incapable of settling any epistemological issue one way or the other. As a result, Mannheim proposes that the correct procedure is to consider all of the different epistemologies as, in a way, 'equally possible'. Mannheim believes that all epistemologies share an underlying unity, that they are all commensurable. He seeks the systematizations in common between the various theories of knowledge. Mannheim believes that this could lead to a typology of epistemologies that would allow the identification of factors in common as well as those that distinguish them from each other, thus gaining a better understanding of their role and usefulness. Mannheim writes that an inquiry on this basis could be expected to reveal a certain connection between different branches of philosophy, as well as between different theoretical sciences and different non-theoretical fields of creative activity. Mannheim labels this connection 'historico-philosophical contemporaneity', meaning a structural affinity between cultural manifestations of an epoch.

The study of this connection is what Mannheim calls a structural analysis of epistemology. He writes that:

the nature of epistemological systematization will only stand fully revealed if our efforts can discover in the epistemological process of thought a tendency not found anywhere else, and characterizing epistemology in a more profound fashion than the epistemological problem as such does. (1922/1953a: 44)

So Mannheim is interested in studying the form that epistemology takes rather than simply its content, and is concerned with making the presuppositions of epistemologies an object of knowledge.⁹ One discovery in this regard is that each epistemology would itself like to be without any presupposition, while inquiring into the presuppositions of all

⁹ The author of *From Karl Mannheim* (1971), Kurt Wolff, calls this Mannheim's sociology of epistemology.

and every kind of knowledge. Epistemology is defined as looking for all ultimate presuppositions by virtue of which cognition is possible and in striving to determine the value of these ultimate presuppositions. Thus epistemology has both analytical and evaluative tendencies.

Apart from their common features, Mannheim explains that each epistemology defines ultimate presuppositions of knowledge as logical, psychological, or ontological, and it is through these distinctions that Mannheim constructs his typology of epistemologies. Questioning whether the ultimate presuppositions of knowledge are psychological, logical, or ontological means that we are engaged in what Mannheim calls a 'priority contest' among these disciplines. This dispute reveals the hopeless aspirations of all epistemology to do without presuppositions. Logical, ontological, and psychological are examples of systematizations that are universal in the sense that they can absorb no matter what object. Each of these systematizations places its own emphasis on the triad that is formed between the subject or 'knower', the object or 'to-be known', and the knowledge or 'the known'. The solutions available involve the knower achieving knowledge by reproducing what is to be known, the object world, the known is evolved by the unaided effort of the knowing subject, or knowledge arises on the basis of an order pervading the knower and the to-be-known alike. Thus the subject-object correlation constitutes epistemology and all epistemological theory is concerned with the determination of this correlation.

For Mannheim this confirms that epistemology cannot uncover the ultimate presuppositions that constitute its topic by its own method, but instead must rely on other sciences to perform this task. Thus epistemology is itself a systematization, but not a primary systematization unlike those of ontology, logic, and psychology. Mannheim

argues that there are no serious obstacles to conceiving a pure logic, or pure ontology, free of all epistemological premises, but that it is impossible to construct a pure theory of knowledge. Epistemology still has a coherent field of its own due to dealing with questions specific to it, is concerned with a value *sui generis*, and possesses its own fundamental correlation, the subject-object correlation. But it must be concluded that epistemology constructs objects instead of describing them directly.¹⁰

In *The Place of Sociology* (1934/1953f) Mannheim argues that sociology is the basic discipline of social science, one that has a unique set of functions to perform. Its first task is to retrace the variability of social phenomena to those basic elements and basic concepts that make society possible. The second task is to compare the concepts of systematic sociology across different societies in history. The third task of sociology is to enact a comprehensive synthesis of all the facts produced by separate social sciences through the elaboration and comparison of these social structures as wholes.

Mannheim (1922) argues that sociology can be the science of the construction, organization, and transformation of life as it renders itself social. In other words, sociology can be the science of cultural formations embedded within social life, or a cultural sociology. The study of cultural phenomena serves to make sense of the underlying social experiential contexture, which is otherwise known as world-view. Mannheim argues that sociology should investigate the subjective as well as the objective side of culture through phenomenological analysis. This differentiates the knowledge produced by cultural sociology from natural-scientific knowledge. Cultural sociology

¹⁰ In *Politics and Method in Mannheim's 'Ideology and Utopia'* (1987) Alan Scott compares what he sees as Mannheim's cultural critique of epistemology to that of Richard Rorty (1979). He finds much similarity between them despite the fact that Rorty work is far more developed. However, unlike Rorty, Scott interprets Mannheim's work as a quest for reality. Furthermore, Wolff (1971) describes Mannheim's work as embodying the insight that epistemology is not a critical but a justificatory discipline.

wants to involve the individual, not only as a corporeal being, but also as a social subject. The socialized individual is a knowing subject as well as the subject matter of sociology. According to Mannheim, the study of cultural formations is also “a mere extension of consistent sustaining of an attitude which belongs to the ‘everyday experience of life’, that it cannot and should not depart from this basis without the greatest care” (1922: 75). Sociology should acknowledge these two distinctions with natural-scientific enterprise among its presuppositions.

In *Structures of Thinking* (1922) Mannheim identifies three essential tendencies in cultural sociology that depend on the types of sociological concepts employed when relating cultural formations to them by way of world view. There is a general sociology, such as Weber’s, seeking general laws and regularities. There is a pure sociology, founded in phenomenology, investigating the fundamental forms of the social and analyzing objects that confront us as social formations, and then consciousness within which society constitutes itself by means of specific and social acts. And then there is a philosophy-of-history oriented sociology seeking a historical dynamic. Dynamic sociology is one that constructs empirical types in the form of stages. This involves treating temporal elements as hierarchical rather than chronological. This approach to time also involves the recognition that more than one world-view flourishes within one and the same chronological period and even within a single historical entity. A thoroughgoing sociological dynamic investigation will not content itself with asking about the development and transformation undergone by the preponderant world-view, but it will also ask about the disposition of other worldviews that have co-existed and affected the dominant world-view.

Mannheim (1922) distinguishes between natural-scientific knowledge and what

he calls practical-political knowledge.¹¹ In everyday life, learning does not emerge on grounds of analysis, but owes its assurance precisely to a holistic apprehension that first makes analysis possible. While natural-scientific knowledge is completely abstracted from the specific situation of the knowing subject, practical-political knowledge obtains its distinctive character precisely from the fact that it gains knowledge from within situations and acts with situations in view. Mannheim writes “the pre-scientific practical actor consists in perspectivalistically bringing the facts given into an order relevant to himself and to his own situation, by means of the category ‘situation’”. (1922: 158) This leads to an expansion of the definition of knowledge beyond simply scientific knowledge.

Natural-scientific knowledge is the result of one particular worldview, that of rationalism. Rationalism produces knowledge that “involves indifference towards all concrete and particular elements in the object and towards all the sensitivities to knowledge which render the world comprehensible to the subject but which do not at the same time make that comprehension universally communicable.” (1986: 62) This is opposed by romanticism, a worldview that develops methods, modes of knowing, conceptual possibilities, and language adapted to rendering into theory all the forces of life that always elude the Enlightenment.¹² Mannheim (2001e) comments that romanticism believes that reflexivity destroyed existence, and sought in turn to negate its rise. And yet, Mannheim argues that the denial of reflexivity actually perfects reflexivity. Romanticism wanted to rescue these displaced, irrational life forces by taking them up, but it fails to notice that paying attention to them consciously in and of itself served to rationalize them. In *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940) Mannheim

¹¹ These represent different styles of thinking, a topic that I will return to a bit later in the chapter.

¹² Mannheim (1922) links romanticism to the works of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson, Dilthey, Simmel, as well as historicism and the phenomenological school.

argues that reflexivity emerges when individuals are confronted more frequently with situations in which they cannot act habitually and without thinking and in which they must always organize themselves anew. Reflexivity is not a life-extinguishing force, but instead allows individuals to adjust themselves to new situations. If romanticism discovered the knowability of irrational elements, neo-romanticism brings this to the level of double reflection, on the level of methodology. Phenomenology, as the study of attitudes of consciousness, simply extends rationalizing to all of the factors that precede objectification, and out of which objectification first emerges. These factors offer a more complete picture of the world than what can be achieved by previously ignoring some of the irrational elements left out of scientific accounts. This drive towards synthesis, or an understanding of the 'totality', is the driving force behind much of Mannheim's career.

The sociology of knowledge must demonstrate its capacity for actual research in the historical-sociological realm by working out exact criteria for establishing empirical truths and for assuring their control. This requires moving past the stage of engaging in casual intuitions and gross generalities, and towards using the method of imputation to get a clear conception of the perspective of each product of thought, and bringing the perspective into relationship with the currents of thought of which it is a part. These currents of thought must then, in turn, be traced back to the social forces determining them. This involves reconstructing integral styles of thought and perspectives, or from single expressions. Only in doing so will one uncover the underlying unity of outlook of a period, or 'Weltanschauung'. Mannheim seeks to develop an empirical program that can investigate various 'Weltanschauung' meticulously.¹³ His most extensive empirical

¹³ In the essay *German Sociology* (1932/1953e) Mannheim argues that while all sociology ultimately derives from a philosophy of history, this is in contrast to what he calls the constructive power of genuine

studies in this regard are into the development of conservatism in *Conservative Thought* (1927/1953b) and *Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1920s/1986) as well as one of its offshoots, historicism in *Historicism* (1924/1952b).

Mannheim (1927/1953b) chooses to try out his new method by mapping out the development of conservative thought in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century. This choice allows him to focus on the analysis of one period, one country, and one social group for whom he has access to all its published utterances. In the unfinished manuscript *Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1920s/1986) Mannheim argues that while France played a role in providing the most radical elaboration of all the enlightened and rationalistic elements in consciousness and thus was acknowledged as the bearer of 'abstract thought', Germany can be said to have played a complementary role because she turned conservative, organic, and historical thought into a spiritual weapon by giving it inner consistency and a logic of its own. According to Mannheim, Germany developed a counter-movement because it had a long span of time at its disposal, which enabled it to think through the conservative impulses and bring them to fruition.

Mannheim argues that conservatism is both a phenomenon universal to all mankind and a new product of the historical and sociological conditions of his time. The first view, inspired by Weber, Mannheim calls traditionalism, while he labels the second modern conservatism, or conservatism for short. While traditionalism is a dormant tendency that an individual unconsciously possess, conservatism is conscious and

sociological investigations from the purely speculative fantasies of bad social philosophy. While the former is indispensable to any empirical research, the latter is detrimental. To think speculatively means to sit at one's desk and conceive vague and unverifiable ideas about all manners of things.

reflective in that it arises as a counter-movement in intentional opposition to the organized, coherent, 'progressive' movement. Traditionalism becomes conservatism in a society where change occurs through the medium of antagonistic styles of thought, that is, class conflict. According to Mannheim, the sociological background of modern conservatism shows that it is a conscious reaction to progressive forces.

Conservative thought is defined by its qualitative nature, its emphasis on concreteness over abstractness, its acceptance of enduring actuality compared to progressive desire for change, its preference for organic social units rather than agglomerative units such as classes, and its attempt to substitute landed property for the individual as the basis of history. However, the key distinction between conservative and progressive patterns of experience is the different ways of experiencing time. While progressives experience the present as the beginning of the future, the conservative regards it as simply the latest point reached by the past. The conservative experiences the past as being one with the present and hence history tends to be more spatial than temporal, and stresses co-existence rather than succession. Conservatives emphasize the participation of past generations in the present, and regard this present as quite an unimportant developmental phase in history. For conservatives, to see things authentically is to experience events in terms of an attitude derived from social circumstances anchored in the past.¹⁴

This gives way to a more conscious and reflective conservatism when other ways of life and thought appear on the scene; here, conservatism is compelled to take up arms

¹⁴ Or as Mannheim puts it in *The History of the Concept of the State as an Organism: A Sociological Analysis* (1932/1953c), romantic thinkers come to realize that time as it is conceived in history is utterly different from time as it is measured by the clock. The idea of historical time means that not every moment in the course of events is of equal significance.

in the ideological struggle. Mannheim sees this as the first stage of the formation of a definitely conservative ideology, a conservatism that increasingly maintains itself only on the plane of conscious reflection. For modern conservatism to develop a conscious political philosophy opposed to the liberal philosophy of the Enlightenment and to play a dynamic role within the modern struggle of ideas, its basis intention had to exist as an authentic style of experience within certain traditional groups.¹⁵ Living more or less unconsciously as though the old ways of life were still appropriate gives way to a deliberate effort to maintain these older ways of life under the new conditions, and thus they are raised to the level of conscious reflection. Conservative thought therefore saves itself by raising those forms of experience that can no longer be had in an authentic way to the level of conscious manipulation.

Mannheim (1927/1953b) traces the development of conservatism in Germany to Justus Moser, who, while living within the boundaries of tradition, attempts to grasp the nature of this authentic conservatism, albeit without the reflectiveness and introspectiveness that would characterize romantic conservatism. If Moser represents the first stage of the development of conservatism, then Adam Muller represents a second stage when he combines the dynamic experience of practical politics and sociologically-related trends in philosophy to conceive the idea of 'dynamic thinking'. Dynamic thought has its sociological roots in the opposition to bourgeois natural law and hopes to overcome it as a method of thought. Thought is not always the same; thinking varies widely, depending on the living function that it fulfils. All philosophies of life are romantic in origin, because they keep opposition against general concepts alive and

¹⁵ Mannheim (1927/1953b) credits Burke as the first influential author who attacked the French Revolution. He argues that Burke was the initiator of modern antirevolutionary conservatism and of all of those who later on criticized the French Revolution from the conservative side.

because they look for reality in ‘pure experience’, free from conceptual constructions and rationalization. Mannheim argues that “the philosophy of life is never tired of pointing out that whatever passes for ‘real’ in our rationalized world is merely a reflection of the specific categories of Reason of which modern man¹⁶ has made an idol”. (1927/1953b: 162) This philosophy teaches us to avoid shaping our consciousness to the pattern of the theoretical attitude alone, and it consistently splits up and relativizes what we believe to be ‘rational’ and ‘objective’.

The third stage in the development of conservative dynamic thought is represented by the dialectic stage. Hegel, seeking to combine the dynamic element with the concrete problems of the political and historical world, develops the dialectic. This preserves the conservative discovery of movement by turning it into a method of understanding the growth of history. And unlike the romantics, Hegel does not take refuge in internalized experience, but instead holds on to the historical reality, which was then the basic reality for conservatism. With this approach Hegel sets in place the problem of dynamic thinking and the questions concerning truth and a standard of value, something that was absorbed in the synthesis of Marxism. Hegel and Marxism both are able to relativize ‘everyday’, ‘static’, and ‘abstract’ thinking, and to do so on a dynamic basis. But whereas in the philosophy of life the dynamic foundation precedes all theory, for Hegel there exists higher order rationality that for proletarian thought is the class war and the economically determined social process itself.

For Mannheim (1922), Hegel also represents the most powerful of syntheses, combining the methods and contents of bourgeois rationalism with the problem-set of the

¹⁶ Mannheim used gendered language throughout his career. For the purposes of this dissertation, I left that language untouched within the confines of quotes, but have otherwise I have modernized the language

romantic consciousness. Hegel sees his philosophy as the pinnacle of the world-process and as the ultimate synthesis. Hegel, who is the most radical in rendering the conception of thought dynamic, becomes altogether unfaithful to this dynamism when it comes to his own thinking. He pushes his own location and epoch out of the stream of time. But syntheses are relative since they cannot transcend the limitation imposed by existence. This limitation has two parts. First a synthesis can only take into account those elements that have become visible to the epoch, meaning only the methods of thinking, viewpoints, and concepts that have manifested themselves in thought up to then. Second, syntheses are relative because they undertake their function only from a place where they themselves stand, a place that is historically determinate.

This stems from insight Mannheim (1924/1952b) garnered from the most dominant worldview of his time, which incidentally has its origin in conservative thought: historicism. This worldview organizes the work of the cultural sciences and permeates everyday thinking; like other *Weltanschauung*, it is going through a dynamic process of development and systematization. Mannheim seeks to map out the contours of historicism and how it shapes science and scientific methodology, logic, epistemology, and ontology. Historicism is a mode of thought that points to the world as in a state of flux and growth. Like other systems of thought, historicism begins in the unreflective life and then eventually moves into to a reflective stage. Historicism points to the historical nature of Reason and its definitions and categories, explaining that its meanings vary and undergo a process of alteration. The consequences are far-reaching and include historicism being positioned to point out what extra-philosophical and pre-philosophical attitudes of life underpin various theoretical assumptions. It does this by locating all of these assumptions within a temporal process. Historicism, by rejecting absolute and

supra-temporal Reason along with supra-historical truths and values, opens up a new relationship with these concepts that becomes a problem of history and sociology of thought.¹⁷ With historicism it becomes possible to show and assess the positional determination of historical knowledge.

In an attempt to provide a contribution concerning the sociological connectedness of the theory of method, Mannheim shows the emergence of the constitutive problems of methodology in conjunction with the social process as a whole. He also attempts to work out a systematic basis for the sociology of thinking. These efforts mutually presuppose one another. If one studies the thinking of an epoch from a sociological standpoint, one must utilize one of the historically developed methods of thinking. But if one must employ such a method, it is necessary, according to Mannheim, to recognize its rootedness in the total process and to take that rootedness into account. That is just one other form of reflexivity espoused by Mannheim that is at the center of his vision for the practice of sociology.

Section Two: From Theory of Ideology to Sociology of Knowledge Through Reflexivity

The second section teases out certain implications of those empirical investigations for *weltanschauung* that are the co-existence of various styles of thinking. I then discuss the role of groups, including generations, in Mannheim's conceptual toolbox, along with the notions of power and competition and how these notions connect with ideology, his principal object of inquiry in the first part of his career. The heart of

¹⁷ Mannheim (1926/1952b) credits Troeltsch for highlighting that the selection of facts and the objective of historical knowledge are dependent upon the concrete aspirations of contemporary man. This turns the problem of objectivity into something that can be investigated concretely by research. I will discuss Mannheim's re-conception of objectivity later in this chapter.

this second section is a description of Mannheim's move from a particular to a general theory of ideology. This move characterizes and is at the origin of his sociology of knowledge and what he calls its non-evaluative approach. The section ends with a discussion of reflexivity as the key element of Mannheim's development of his sociology of knowledge, emphasizing that, more than anything, reflexivity involves the recognition of one's own thought as socially situated.

Mannheim's empirical investigations into romanticism arose as a response to rationalism, for tracing the development of conservative thought highlighted the distinction between historical knowledge and natural-science knowledge. These two modes of knowledge can be seen most clearly in the duality of the natural sciences and in the historical sciences of culture. They are, as Mannheim argues in *Structures of Thinking* (1922), the most powerful creations of the modern spirit. In the case of the 'exact' sciences, thinking and knowing seem to develop nearly divorced from the social corpus and in accordance with their own dynamics.¹⁸ Historical thinking, for its part, is always rooted in the way in which the historical entity defines its historical and social problems. The historical cultural sciences represent a more refined, elaborate, and consistent knowledge, but this knowledge arises and develops from attitudes related to the experiential knowledge of everyday, which are thus an integral part of the complex of social growth. Historical thinking is thinking connected to existence; it is conjunctive knowledge.¹⁹ Historical knowledge can possess genuineness that goes beyond the mere

¹⁸ Mannheim (1986) points out that this does not mean that natural-science knowledge is not socially unattached, since the exact sciences are bound to the specific stage of social development and to certain constellations and the need of the social whole continues to enter into the makeup of the lines of inquiry and objectives of research in this type of knowledge.

¹⁹ Kettler et al. (1992) defines Mannheim's conjunctive knowledge as qualitative, situational, and as neither belonging to the isolated individual or to universal human faculty. It is knowledge that pertains to

correctness of cognition. The difference between the two conceptions is most evident in the ways in which they conceive of the construction of the epistemological ego. Whereas the natural-scientific mode of thought hypothesizes a static ego, a knowing ego that remains identical for all times and in all epistemological communities of knowledge, the alternate theory invokes a dynamic subject whose cognitive makeup changes with time.

Mannheim's own work is animated by this notion of the dynamic subject. His empirical investigations show the history of different styles of thought as they grow and develop. By style of thought, Mannheim understands not only a set of concepts linked together by a coherent *Weltanschauung*, but also a specific approach to reality that tends to influence the method of thinking and presentation of the facts. A concern with style of thought begins with the assumption that individuals do not create patterns of thoughts by which they conceive the world, but rather take them over from their surrounding groups. Social groups or classes are the 'carriers' of these styles of thought. The word 'style' is used because the patterns of human thought are continually changing in the face of a dynamic, differentiated society. Mannheim is interested in looking at the thinkers of a given period as representatives of different styles of thought. He seeks to describe their different ways of looking at things as if they reflect their group's changing outlook. Through this method Mannheim shows both the inner unity of a style of thought and the slight variations, as groups themselves shift their positions in society. This involves an exhaustive examination of concepts used by thinkers from all different groups existing in a particular epoch. Understanding these styles of thought is key to understanding changes in ideas, for words do not signify the same thing when used by different groups and slight

communities, constitutes communities, and is borne by communities. Conjunctive knowledge is a function of shared experiences.

variations of meaning provide insight into the different trends of thought in a community.

Mannheim characterizes this as being interested in “how men actually think” (1929/1936: 1). By this he does not mean the thinking represented in textbooks on logic, but rather all the various methods and modes of knowing men employ in their everyday. At the heart of his sociology of knowledge then, is to comprehend thought in the concrete setting of a historical-social situation, out of which individually differentiated thought only very gradually emerges. For Mannheim it is not men in general nor is it isolated individuals who think, but rather it is “men in certain groups who have developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterizing their common position” (1929/1936: 3). Mannheim argues in *Ideology and Utopia*, “strictly speaking it is incorrect to say that the single individual thinks. Rather it is more correct to insist that he participates in thinking further what other men have thought before him.” (1929/1936: 3) Every individual is therefore in a two-fold sense predetermined by fact of growing up in a society, where on the one hand he finds a ready-made situation, and on the other he finds preformed patterns of thought and of conduct in this situation.

As Mannheim argues in *Structures of Thinking* (1922), we can know ourselves only to the extent that we enter into existential relationships to others. The precondition of self-knowledge is social existence. Language and concepts play an important role in mediating the relationships between individuals, as language brings articulation and fixation into the stream of conjunctive experience.²⁰ This is part of an approach that

²⁰ Mannheim (1921/1952a) gives the example of the ambiguity of terms, the same words used in different ways in different contexts. While this might be an offence to the analytical mind, it can be a source of rich insights for the synthetically oriented scholar. Ambiguity expresses a relevant experience of pre-scientific language that Mannheim argues is too often ignored.

situates the existence of the group as preceding that of the individual. It is only at a later stage that the individual becomes aware of oneself in her singularity and particularity, and it is only at an even later stage of her self-reflection that she has progressed so far in the process of individuation that she not only cultivates, but especially values, what is individual in oneself.

Thinking is thus not an individual endeavor. Instead, even the most solitary thinker operates on the basis of a more comprehensive design of thinking which somehow commands his life. This comprehensive design of thinking comes from one's conjunctive community, from which valuations of human attitudes and activities are set. Standards are reflected by various aspects of these groups, including classes, as well as the family, the neighborhood, the playground, the working team, the club, and the secret society. Each has its peculiar patterns that compete with one another as well as class in the consciousness of the individual who participates in their activities.²¹ Mannheim finds that the generation is one such group that offers a basis of collective existence out of which different interpretations of the world and different forms of knowledge may arise.

Mannheim (1929/1936) argues that generations emerged as an important category of analysis due to generations influencing the principles of selection, organization, and polarization of theories and points of view that prevail in a given society at a given moment. In his essay *The Problem of Generations* (1927/1952d) Mannheim credits Dilthey once again for adopting the generation as a temporal unit of the history of intellectual evolution in order to replace the purely external units as hours, months, years,

²¹ As Mannheim explains in *A Few Concrete Examples Concerning the Sociological Nature of Human Valuations* (1936/1953g), this speaks to the difference between psychology and sociology. While psychology tends to concentrate on the individual as more or less separate from its social context, sociology observes attitudes and behavior with reference to this social context.

and decades by a concept of measure operating from within. Dilthey also shows that rather than succeeding each other, generations could co-exist. Mannheim, building on Dilthey's work, pursues his own analysis of what he calls the problem of generations. He sees the generation neither as a concrete group in the sense of a community where members know of each other, nor as an organization formed for specific purposes. Rather, a generation is "constituted essentially by a similarity of location of a number of individuals within a social whole" (1927/1952d: 290). Similarity of location is defined by specifying the structure within which location groups emerge in historical-social reality. While class position is based upon the existence of changing economic and power structure in society, generation location is based on the existence of biological rhythm in human existence. Individuals who belong to the same generation share a common location in the historical dimension of the social process.

Consequently, an exposure to a specific range of potential experiences leads to certain characteristic modes of thought, feeling, and behavior. Participation in the same historical and social circumstances at similar stages of life leads to what Mannheim calls a stratification of experience between older generations and younger generations. Members of a generation then develop a certain consciousness that is characteristic of their generation, a consciousness formed by their common experiences.²² Mannheim (1927/1952d) is quick to point out that within any generation there can exist a number of differentiated, antagonistic, generation-units. Because they are oriented towards each other, together they constitute an 'actual' generation. Whether they emerge every year, every thirty years, or every hundred years depends entirely on the trigger action of the

²² In *The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Enquiry into Its Past and Present Role* (1930s/1956b) Mannheim identifies the emergence of group consciousness in attempts to take stock of their position in new situations.

social and cultural process. Nonetheless Mannheim sees generations as a key factor contributing to the genesis of the dynamic of historical development without which it cannot be fully understood. From the very beginning knowledge is a cooperative process of group life in which everyone unfolds knowledge within the framework of a common fate, common activity, and overcoming common difficulties. For Mannheim this is about recognizing the social character of knowing.

Underlying individual insights are the collective historical experiences of groups, such as a generation, that the individual takes for granted. Individuals act with and against one another in diversely organized groups, and while doing so they think with and against one another. These individuals strive in accordance with their groups either to change the surrounding world of nature and society or to attempt to maintain it in its given condition. It is the direction of this will to change or to maintain, of this collective activity, which produces the emergence of their problems, their concepts, and their forms of thought. This means that individuals tend to see the world around them differently. In the essay *The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Enquiry into Its Past and Present Role* (1930s/1956b) Mannheim talks about how the history of the human mind expresses the consecutive tensions and reconciliations of groups, how the human mind is the product of antagonism and competition between conflicting groups. Mannheim (1956a) identifies innovations as arising either from a shift in a collective situation or from a changing relationship between groups or between individuals and their groups. It is such shifts that further new adaptations and new creations.

In *Competition as a Cultural Phenomena* (1928/1952e), Mannheim argues that every historical, ideological, and sociological piece of knowledge is rooted in and carried out by the desire for power and recognition of particular groups who want to make their

interpretation of the world the universal one. Different interpretations of the world, in turn, correspond to the particular positions various groups occupy in their struggle for power. Mannheim finds that while public interpretation can occur on the basis of a consensus of opinion, it comes at other times from the monopoly-position of a particular group, from competition between many groups, or, finally, from concentration around a limited number of points of view stemming from these competing groups.²³ The task of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is to analyze the struggle between competing modes of thought and various theories of knowledge. This leads him to investigate ideology's role in these contests.

Mannheim is interested in how political struggles lead individuals to become aware of the unconscious collective motivations that guide their thought. Political discussions, in this view, are the unmasking of those unconscious motives that bind the group existence to its cultural aspirations and theoretical arguments. They undermine the unitary objective worldview, illuminating the plurality of divergent conceptions of the world and of thought-styles. A disintegration of intellectual unity is possible only when the basic values of the contending groups are worlds apart. This is where Mannheim, in his most famous manuscript *Ideology and Utopia* (1929/1936), makes use of the concepts ideology and utopia to analyze the discovery that in certain situations the collective unconscious of certain groups obscures the real conditions of society, both from itself and from others, and thereby stabilizes them. Whereas ideology is reserved for when thinking becomes so intensively interest-bound to a situation that the group is no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domination, utopia is held for when

²³ Mannheim (1928/1952e) argues that competition is one example among many of extra-theoretical processes that affect the emergence and direction of the development of knowledge. Competition, among other social processes, is a constituent element of every cultural movement or product.

thinking is so strongly interested in the destruction and transformation of a given condition of society that group only sees those elements in the situation which tend to negate it.²⁴

At first, groups who possess this new 'intellectual weapon', the unmasking of the unconscious, have a terrific advantage over their adversaries. It allows them to show that their opponent's ideas are merely distorted reflections of their unconscious interests. For example, in the early stages of its development, the word ideology was used primarily as a weapon by the proletariat against the dominant group. However, Mannheim comments that eventually, the concept reaches the stage where it is being used by all in an effort at reciprocal unmasking, instead of being the property of only one group. For example, the weapon eventually is turned against Marxism itself. However, as the unmasking of thought becomes more prevalent, it leads to a generalized undermining of everyone's confidence in human thought in general. The inevitable consequence of more people adopting skepticism is the disappearance of a unitary intellectual world with fixed values and norms, as well as the hidden unconscious being brought into the daylight of consciousness. The belief in the supra-temporal notion of truth is one possible escape from this; however, Mannheim argues that this notion itself becomes rapidly part of the contest.

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge relies on his distinction between the particular theory of ideology and the total theory of ideology. The particular conception of ideology is implied when the term denotes skepticism of the ideas advanced by our

²⁴ Mannheim (1929) also traces the history of the word ideology, which originally denoted merely the theory of ideas. The ideologists were members of a French philosophical group who rejected metaphysics and sought to base the cultural sciences on anthropological and psychological foundations. The modern conception of ideology came about when Napoleon, unhappy with the opposition of those philosophers to his imperial ambitions, labeled them 'ideologists'. Since that time, the word has taken on a derogatory meaning.

opponents. These distortions range all the way from conscious lies, to half-conscious and unwitting disguises, to calculated attempts to dupe others, to self-deception. This is contrasted with a total conception of ideology that refers to the characteristics and composition of the total structure of the mind of this epoch or of this group. Mannheim deepens that distinction when he points out that, whereas the particular conception of ideology designates an opponent's assertions as ideologies, the total conception calls into question the opponent's total *Weltanschauung*.²⁵ The particular conception of ideology makes its analysis of ideas on a purely psychological level, while the total conception focuses on the thought-system of opponents, their modes of experience and interpretations. While the particular focuses on motivations, the total conception confines itself to an objective description of the structural differences in mind operating in different social settings. While the former assumes that interest is the cause of a given lie or deception, the latter presupposes simply that there is correspondence between a given social situation and a given perspective.

While distrust of one's adversaries is a precursor to the notion of ideology, only when it becomes explicit and methodically recognized can we speak of ideology. And it is only when treat our adversaries' views as the function of the social situation in which they find themselves that we employ a total conception of ideology. But Mannheim's sociology of knowledge rests upon one further distinction: that between a special formulation of the total conception of ideology and what he calls the general form of the total conception of ideology. This last distinction, one that characterizes his sociology of knowledge, rests upon a different type of reflexivity. Mannheim writes "as long as one

²⁵ The total conception of ideology raises a new meaning of 'false consciousness' in the sense that a group's total outlook or *Weltanschauung* may be distorted.

does not call his own position into question but regards it as absolute, while interpreting his opponents' ideas as a mere function of the social positions they occupy the decisive step forward has not been taken yet" (1929/1936: 69). Thus an analyst is using the general form of the total conception of ideology when he has the courage to subject his own point of view to ideological analysis.²⁶ This signifies recognition of what Mannheim (1922) calls the sociological determination of all thought. This recognition is at the heart of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge to which I now turn.

The central problem for the sociology of knowledge and research into ideology is the linkage between thinking and knowing on the one hand, and existence on the other. Not surprisingly, for Mannheim this bridge starts with paying conscious attention to the intellectual context in which the problems of the sociology of knowledge themselves emerge. In *The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge* (1926/1952c) Mannheim identifies four fundamental factors in this regard. The first is the self-transcendence and self-relativization of thought, attached to the notion of the temporal and situational determination of processes of thought. The second factor is the appearance of a new form of relativization, introduced by the 'unmasking' turn of mind. This unmasking does not seek to refute, negate, or call certain ideas into doubt, but rather, aims to disintegrate them as well as the whole world outlook of the social stratum that supports them. The third factor that Mannheim identifies is the emergence of a new system of reference, the social sphere, in which thought can be conceived to be relative. Finally, the fourth factor is what Mannheim calls the aspiration to make this relativization total, not related to specific ideas but rather to the whole system of ideas, to an underlying social reality.

²⁶ For example Mannheim (1929) is critical of socialist thought that unmasks all its adversaries' utopias as ideologies but never raises the determinateness about its own position, never applies the unmasking method to itself, never checks its own desire to be absolute.

Mannheim (1929/1936) credits Marx with the original sociology of knowledge. However, in his work the sociology of knowledge remains indistinguishable from the unmasking of ideologies. With the emergence of the sociology of knowledge there is a move away from undermining ideas by showing their social function, or by branding ideas as falsifications, deceptions, or lies. Rather, there is an increasing awareness that all thinking of a social group is determined by its existence. Not only are our opponents' ideas a function of their position in the world, but now there is also recognition that our own ideas, too, are functions of a social position. Mannheim argues that no one stands in a supra-temporal vacuum of disembodied truths, but instead we all confront 'reality' with ready-made questions and suggested systematizations. New knowledge comes about through incorporating new facts into old frameworks of definitions and categories.

Mannheim argues that a sociology of knowledge based on these insights could be approached in four distinctive ways: positivism, formal apriorism, material apriorism (the modern phenomenological school), and historicism. In *The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge* (1926/1952c) he traces each of these approaches to the sociology of knowledge. First, Mannheim identifies two variants of positivism: a material theory of history belonging to the proletariat, and a 'bourgeois positivist' theory developed by Durkheim and others. Mannheim's critique of the positivist approach is that it hypostatizes one particular concept of empiricism and holds that human knowledge can be complete without metaphysics. He also argues that positivist descriptions of reality are phenomenologically false because they are blind to the fact that perception and knowledge of meaningful objects involves interpretation and understanding. And yet Mannheim acknowledges that it was positivism that first discovered and articulated the problem of a sociology of knowledge. Positivism's legacy is therefore its shifting of the

centre of experience to the economic-social sphere, its 'this-worldly' orientation, and its respect for empirical reality compared to pure speculation.

The second approach to the sociology of knowledge is formal apriorism, which seeks to comprehend thinking in terms of thinking, that is, in an immanent fashion. This approach presupposes that there can be only one truth and that this truth can be expressed in only one form. The task of finding this form becomes the task of the sociology of knowledge. While Mannheim acknowledges this approach's contribution to the initial approach to the problem of the sociology of knowledge, it never engages in detailed historical investigations. Furthermore, to adopt this approach is to render philosophically a-problematic, precisely the most essential problems of a sociology of knowledge, such as the problem of the transmutation of categories and the shift in the hierarchy of value spheres.

The contribution of the third approach to the sociology of knowledge starts with the work of the phenomenologist Max Scheler, who combines the modern phenomenological school with elements of the Catholic tradition. Scheler's contribution is to analyze the sociological from the point of view of timelessness, that is, to analyze the dynamic from that of a static system. While Scheler's work demonstrates that thinking and being are conceived as relative, that social reality is the system of reference in which thought is considered relative, and that a comprehensive view of historical totality is possible, Mannheim is critical of Scheler's attempt to explain the dynamic with the help of a timeless philosophy. Scheler's approach is to establish rules, types, and laws of the social process against which particular historical situations can be specified. Mannheim is critical of Scheler's vision of the essential ultimate as something pre-existent, something floating above history. History cannot be found to be penetrable by a

'leap' out of history, but only by an ever-deeper engagement with in it. Entities are merely realized, and not constituted by, the historic process. While Scheler recognizes the dynamic as particularized in various 'standpoints', he seeks to account for these standpoints in terms of a basic doctrine of eternal values, which Mannheim rejects. Mannheim instead follows the historicists, who claim that entities do not exist apart from the historic process; rather, they come into being exclusively through it. Mannheim lauds Scheler's attempt to incorporate historicist ideas into his theory of timelessness, but ultimately find his static conception of eternity cannot to be reconciled with the 'standpoint' of historicism.

Instead, Mannheim privileges a fourth approach, one founded squarely in historicism. This approach, unlike Scheler's, does not assume a supra-temporal, unchanging system of truths, a position which often amounts to claiming eternal validity for one's own historically and sociologically determined perspective. This approach to the sociology of knowledge starts from the notion of dynamic change of standpoints, and seeks to offer an account of all standpoints co-existing at a given moment, to retrace their historical development. The task of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge consists of working out the role of thinking at various stages of the historical process.²⁷ And yet this working out takes place also from a standpoint, from a partial and perspectival view of what is unfolding. A grand synthesis is not pre-existent for Mannheim as it is for Scheler, but instead derives from synthesis of the finiteness of partial perspectives, which derives from the actual structure of historic thought.²⁸ The historicist approach taken up by

²⁷ It is worth noting that Mannheim (1926/1952c) claims that his sociological approach should be called a sociology of cognition. I will return to this later in the chapter.

²⁸ Mannheim (1926/1952c) also acknowledges Scheler's importance in presenting a comprehensive plan that embraces insights from various disciplines, such as philosophy and sociology. Mannheim himself

Mannheim implies adopting a dynamic conception of truth and knowledge where “the central problem of a sociology of knowledge is the existentially conditioned genesis of the various standpoints which encompass the patterns of thought available to any given epoch.” (1926/1952c: 181)

Studying knowledge and thought through such an approach offers a powerful theory of sociological change of function, defined as a change in meaning of a concept that occurs when it is adopted by a group living in a different social environment. Words take on different meanings when used by different groups whose aspirations and existential configurations vary. These various social strata play a creative role by introducing new intentions in the framework of ideas of older strata, thus producing new ideas and even ‘world postulates’. It is by studying the tensions and aspirations of various groups that one can study the immanent changes of function of a given idea and a theoretical system, changes that are usually preceded by a shift in social reality. Therefore, the task of the sociology of knowledge is to specify the various systematic standpoints, on which the thinking of creative individuals and groups rests, for each temporal cross-section of the historical process. These should not be studied solely as positions in a theoretical debate, but instead explored through their non-theoretical roots. This is why sociologists must start by uncovering the hidden metaphysical premises of all systematic positions. As a theory, the sociology of knowledge seeks to analyze the relationship between knowledge and existence. As historical-sociological research, the sociology of knowledge seeks to trace the forms that this relationship has taken in the intellectual development of humankind.

draws heavily from philosophy and psychology, in addition to sociology, in an attempt to offer a vision of the total.

This leads a new comprehensive scientific programme that goes beyond the history of ideas by tracing not only the changing contents of thought, but also by studying the systematic premises on which ideas are based. The sociology of knowledge advocated by Mannheim is the study of the various centers of systematization that succeed each other in dynamic fashion. This involves examining the problem of how various intellectual standpoints and 'styles of thought' are rooted in underlying historic-social realities as well as attempting to understand their emergence on the basis of the total process. This requires moving beyond the narrow study of 'interest' as the only form of social conditioning of ideas, to speak of what Mannheim calls 'commitment' to *Weltanschauung* as a broader general category to ascertain the relationship between 'styles of thought' and 'intellectual standpoints' on the one hand, and social reality on the other. This approach leads to understanding all knowledge and thought as embedded in social processes, and discovering that antagonistic groups not only combat each other, but also represent conflict through oppositional 'world' postulates.²⁹ The sociology of knowledge highlights that it is not only interests that combat each other, but also world postulates that combat world postulates, as embodied in particular groups and as developed through their thinking. The sociology of knowledge must identify first these various 'world postulates', or systems of *Weltanschauung*, and then find the social groups that champion each; only then can we find out which social strata correspond to them.

This search requires eschewing the evaluation of social groups' thoughts and assertions as guided by their interests, or as outright lies or deceptions. Mannheim's

²⁹ That said, Mannheim (1929) does acknowledge that only empirically can one determine whether the situationally detached type of knowledge is the norm and the situationally conditioned secondary and unimportant, or whether the situationally detached type of knowledge is only a marginal and special case of the situationally conditioned. His own work clearly leads him to adopt the latter perspective.

sociology of knowledge involves the renunciation of every intention to expose or unmask those views with which one is in disagreement. This requires a non-evaluative approach, one that has no moral or denunciatory intent. Instead, it simply raises the question of when and where social structures come to express themselves in thoughts and assertions, and in what sense the former concretely determine the latter. The sociology of knowledge attempts to be free from value judgments in this regard and to understand the narrowness of each individual point of view in terms of the total social process.³⁰

What starts as a theory of ideology, an intellectual armament of a party, is transformed into a method of research in social and intellectual history generally. What was once used to discover the 'situational determination' of adversaries' ideas now, in the sociology of knowledge, extends to the every group's thought, including one's own. The extension of the notion of unmasking weapon to one's own thought accompanies the awareness that all thought is situationally determined. This is the reflexivity that defines Mannheim's program for the sociology of knowledge.³¹³² It is what marks the transition from a theory of ideology to the sociology of knowledge. For Mannheim this starts with treating Marxism as the object of the analysis of ideology, since no *Weltanschauung* or style of thought is immune to its effect. The sociology of knowledge is tasked with solving the problem of the social conditioning of knowledge by recognizing these

³⁰ That is not to say there is not an evaluative component to Mannheim's approach; there is. The selection and accentuation of certain aspects of historical totality is a step towards evaluation and to ontological judgment. Not all thoughts, knowledge, and theories are created equal. Mannheim does believe in the process of adjudication, but not on the basis of eternal standards. I will turn to a discussion of this matter in the third section of this chapter.

³¹ Incidentally this is the reflexivity that David Bloor (1976) uses as one of the four tenets of his strong programme of the sociology of scientific knowledge.

³² For Susan Hekman this marks a break with the historicist tradition, with its assumption that the interpreter occupies an Archimedean point of objectivity, even though that which was interpreted was historically determined. She writes "Mannheim is extending the historicist maxim to interpreter as well as interpreted". (1983: 139)

relations, by drawing them into the horizon of science, and by using them as checks on the conclusions of our research. For example, the more aware one becomes of the presuppositions underlying one's own thinking, the more one is able to acknowledge that our empirical research is inevitably carried out on the basis of certain metaphysical judgments and the expectations that follow from these judgments.

This is in line with more contemporary and popular uses of reflexivity, which seek to bring previously unconscious factors to the level of consciousness in order to better understand, and perhaps even control, their effects. Mannheim's version of this type of reflexivity is discussed in *The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge* (1926/1952c), where he proposes that the sociology of knowledge can be fruitful only if each author openly acknowledges their philosophical and metaphysical premises, and possesses the ability to observe thought both 'from within' in terms of its logical structure, and 'from without' in terms of its social function and conditioning. Pursuing this sociology becomes, for Mannheim, a tool of self-reflection and self-enlargement for the individual. In *Problems of Sociology in Germany* (1929/1971c) he describes that this takes place by radically, and without reservation, calling into question one's own thinking and how it is connected to particular situations. This involves what in *Ideology and Utopia* (1929/1936) Mannheim calls becoming visible to ourselves: seeing the connection between our role, our motivation, and our type and manner of experiencing the world. This process holds genuine opportunity for relative emancipation from social determination, by uncovering "unconscious motivations in order to make those forces which formerly ruled them more and more into objects of conscious rational decision" (1929/1936: 43). The sociology of knowledge is also then the systematization of this

reflexivity.³³

Section Three: Epistemological Implications

Now that I have explored the development of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, culminating with a discussion of reflexivity's central role, I turn my attention to some of the epistemological implications of Mannheim's work. I begin with a discussion of the perspectival nature of all knowledge and the role played by the notion of determination in Mannheim's theoretical approach. This section also describes the development of relationism as a counterpart to relativism and its implications for the validity of truth, the role of particularization, and a new conception of objectivity. The sociology of knowledge is foremost about synthesizing the various perspectives embodied by different social groups. Mannheim's insights allow him to assign intellectuals a special role as the group most likely to successfully carry out this synthesis. This section thus ends on a discussion of the origin, nature, and role played by Mannheim's 'relatively unattached' intellectuals.

Mannheim writes:

one turns from the direct observation of things to the consideration of ways of thinking only when the possibility of the direct and continuous elaboration of concepts concerning things and situations has collapsed in the face of a multiplicity of fundamentally divergent definitions. (1929/1936: 5)

Instead of asking ideology to study these ways of thinking, which have negative connotations, Mannheim (1929/1936) speaks of the 'perspective' of a thinker.

Perspective is the whole mode of conceiving things as determined by a thinker's

³³ In *An Introduction to Sociology* (2001e) Mannheim distinguishes between the persons whose reflexivity fulfills a need of life as the authentic kind and those who merely play at reflexivity but do not embody it. Clearly Mannheim favours the latter.

historical and social setting, the qualitative elements in the structure of thought that go beyond formal logic. The sociology of knowledge seeks to overcome 'talking past one another' by uncovering the sources of partial disagreements, which may not always come to the disputants' attention. This becomes necessary only when discussions proceed from different bases of thought, using similar discourse but in a dissimilar manner. The sociology of knowledge is realized once that which is accepted as absolute within a given group is recognized as partial when it appears in conditions outside the group situation. Mannheim (1929/1936) offers the example of the son of a peasant who grows up in a rural area and whose mode of thinking and speaking, characteristic of his village, is entirely taken for granted until he moves to the big city and gradually this rural mode of living and thinking ceases to be something taken for granted. This individual now consciously sees the distinction between rural and urban modes of thought and ideas. This recognition is the beginning of the approach that the sociology of knowledge seeks to develop in full detail.

The result from this is an approach that believes in the essential perspectivity of all interpretative knowledge, a key insight that Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is built around. This theory of perspectivity is not about removing conscious or unconscious falsifications, but about recognizing that all perspectives are existentially determined.³⁴ In speaking of the existential determination of knowledge, Mannheim does not intend there

³⁴ This theory of perspectivity is present in some of Mannheim's earliest writing, including *Heidelberg Letters: Soul and Culture in Germany* (2001a). In this work, which is written in 1921, he argues that all writing is perspectival; that while it always aspires to be objective and realistic, it does so only and always from a particular position. He writes "to view matters only through the eyes of the cultivated is to look at them from a remarkably narrow angle of vision" (2001a: 82). He offers the example of women who, until recently, with a few exceptions had their lives described by men. Mannheim argues that there is only one solution to this, which is to become conscious of this fact and to acknowledge it freely, thus allowing the reader to add or subtract in line with her own soul and interest. So the perspectival nature of all knowledge and the need for reflexivity are present from the very outset of his career.

to be a mechanical cause-effect sequence, but instead leaves the meaning of 'determination' open. Only empirical investigation will show how strict the correlation is between life-situations and thought-process. This essential perspectivity is the foundation of order for a historical world-view, meaning that particular historical content is only made visible from particular life centers that occur within this history itself. Only the historical process has the possibility of bringing all possible standpoints to the forefront. Mannheim argues in *Structure for Thinking* (1922) that even if one could unite all previous perspectives in a comprehensive construction without once more becoming perspectival, it would only be as a relative totality.

This theory of perspectivity is founded in historicism, which is one of the mightiest heirs of Romantic consciousness, according to Mannheim (1922), as well as both the cause of and solution to relativism. Mannheim draws on the German theologian Ernst Troeltsch to argue that historicism only gives rise to relativism if there is a demand for an absolute supra-temporal standard in terms of which historical reality is to be judged. However, once one recognizes that different standards have developed organically out of the same historical process, that every epoch has its own aspirations and concrete values and the standard is therefore not absolute, but dynamic, then an alternative to relativism appears. The shift from one type of system to another can be explained by a shift from one centre of systematization to another, always determined by a particular 'location' and in this sense representing 'perspectival' knowledge.

Mannheim writes, "Only when we are thoroughly aware of the limited scope of every point of view are we on the road to the sought-for comprehension of the world" (1929/1936: 94). The sociology of knowledge thus rejects relativism and instead embraces what Mannheim calls relationism. Relativism comes about from combining the

historical-sociological insight that all historical thinking is bound up in the concrete life position of the thinker, with an older theory of knowledge that is modeled after static prototypes exemplified by the proposition $2 \times 2 = 4$. This older type of thought leads to the rejection of all those forms of knowledge that are dependent upon the subjective standpoint and the social situation of the knower. Relating individual ideas to the total structure of a given historic-social subject should not be confused with philosophical relativism, which denies the validity of any standards and of the existence of order in the world. Mannheim argues that knowledge arising out of our experience in actual life situations, though not absolute, is knowledge nonetheless. He argues (1928/1953e) that it is not because certain types knowledge are incapable of an absolute interpretation that they are arbitrary and subjective, but that certain truths cannot be grasped or formulated except in the framework of an existential correlation between subject and object.³⁵

Mannheim calls this different approach relationism, which signifies that all of the elements of meaning in a given situation refer to one another and derive their significance from this reciprocal interrelationship in a given frame of thought, even if such a system of meanings is possible and valid only in a given type of historical existence. What Mannheim proposes is that dynamic relationism offers the only possible way out of a world-situation in which we are presented with a multiplicity of conflicting viewpoints, each of which, despite claiming absolute validity, has been shown to be related to a particular position and to be adequate only within that position. In *Problems of Sociology in Germany* (1929/1971c) Mannheim argues that this invites every position for once to call itself into question and to suspend the self-hypostatization that is a habit of thought

³⁵ In the essay *Competition as a Cultural Phenomena* (1928/1953e) Mannheim credits this idea, which he calls 'existential relativity', of certain items of knowledge to the phenomenological school.

self-evident to everybody. He presents a modern theory of knowledge, a relational epistemology, which takes account of the relational as distinct from the merely relative character of all historical knowledge. This epistemology must start with the assumption that spheres of thought exist in which it is impossible to conceive of absolute truth as existing independently of the values and position of the subject and as unrelated to the social context.³⁶ In *German Sociology 1918-1933* (1932/1953e) Mannheim explains that while relativism would mean that there are no objective values and therefore moral obligation cannot exist, relationism stresses that there is a moral obligation but that this obligation is derived from the concrete situation to which it is related. In this approach, values and ideas are constantly related to social situations and social structures. This involves a widening of our concept of truth, which is the key to exploring the fields in which both the nature of the object to be known and that of the knowing subject make only perspectival knowledge possible.

In *Ideology and Utopia* (1929/1936), Mannheim presents what he sees to be three approaches to the question of judging the value of assertions. The first approach says that absolute validity of an assertion is denied when its structural relationship to a given social situation has been shown. Potentially, however, this can lead to the method annihilating the validity of all assertions. The second approach, in contrast, asserts that establishing a relationship between a statement and its assertor tells us nothing concerning the truth-value of the assertion, since how a statement originates does not affect its validity. This is highly incompatible with Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, so he proposes a third possible approach. It differs from the first view in that uncovering the social position of

³⁶ The fact that historical knowledge is relational knowledge does not preclude the possibility of discriminating between what is true and what is false in such knowledge. I will turn to this question, and how Mannheim deals with it, very shortly.

the assertor is said to tell us nothing about the truth-value of an assertion, but merely implies that the assertion might represent a partial view. Furthermore, in contrast to the second approach, Mannheim proposes that a thorough sociological analysis of knowledge offers more than a description of the actual conditions under which an assertion arises; it also delimits, in content as well as in structure, the view to be analyzed. It therefore not only establishes the existence of the relationship, but also particularizes its scope and extent of its validity.

Particularization is a deliberate method that, with the aid of a consistently elaborated analysis of perspectives, measures and delimits the range and degree of comprehension of each of these several points of view through their categorical apparatus and the variety of meanings each presents. The sociology of knowledge can analyze orientations towards certain meanings and values inherent in a given social position as well as the concrete reasons for the different perspectives in the same situation. By doing so, particularization goes beyond description by redefining the scope and limits of implicit perspectives in given assertions.

Through his relationism and the role played by particularization, Mannheim advocates making the standard to assess validity dynamic by re-defining the correlation between the absolute and the relative according to the new dynamic insight. This avoids relativism that itself claims absolute validity and hence, by its very form, presupposes a principle that its manifest content rejects.³⁷ What Mannheim proposes is a dynamic conception of truth, one that realizes once and for all that the meanings that make up our world, in which people develop, are simply a historically determined and continuously

³⁷ In *Historicism* (1952b) Mannheim also proposes that only through action can one really overcome relativism, only once a mode of thought can answer the question 'what shall we do'?

developing structure, and are in no sense absolute. This does not mean that there is no standard, only that the standard is established within one historical constellation.

Mannheim sees this as a middle ground between a doctrine of absolute validity that admits nothing save eternal truth on the one hand, and a historicism that treats all historical solutions as equivalent and allows the notion of validity to lapse on the other. The function of the findings of the sociology of knowledge through particularization lies in a fashion hitherto not clearly understood, somewhere between irrelevance to the establishment of truth on the one hand, and entire adequacy for determining truth on the other.³⁸

This represents an approach to knowledge which does not presuppose one superhuman, super-temporal sphere of validity as represented by $2 \times 2 = 4$, but instead is based on real factual thinking with which we carry on in this world, treating knowing as the act of living beings. For Mannheim, the nature and structure of the process of dealing with life-situations, the subjects' own make-up, and the peculiarity of the conditions of life such as the place and position of the thinker, all influence the results of thought. Holding on to a super-temporal notion of knowledge and overlooking the human historical element both lead the results of thought to be completely denatured. This implies abandoning the conception of truth, which would set it above existence as something altogether detached from it and pre-existent, or what Mannheim calls in *The Intellectualism Dispute* (1929/1971d) a rejection of intellectualism. This is the rejection of a conception where all possible truths and correct judgments that are thinkable are present and valid simultaneously, of a conception where that which can be thought of at a

³⁸ Paul Kecskemeti, in the preface to the *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (1952), characterizes Mannheim's position as relativist 'gnosticism', whereas history for Mannheim was a royal road to truth rather than a procession of errors.

given point in time as inwardly connected to the thinking historical subject's condition of being, and where the only thinkable thoughts and truths are those that coincide with the point in being one has reached. This represents an epistemology that emphasizes the prevalence of situational determination, an epistemology whose theoretical basis of knowledge is founded on the thesis of the inherently relational structure of human knowledge.

Mannheim explains, "we will not succeed in attaining an adequate psychology and theory of knowledge as a whole as long as our epistemology fails, from the very beginning, to recognize the social character of knowing, and fails to regard individualized thinking only as an exceptional instance" (1929: 29). While the nature of reality as such is a problem that belongs to philosophy, what is to be regarded as real historically and sociologically at a given time is something that concerns the sociology of knowledge. Mannheim proposes to re-conceive the relationship between epistemology and empirical science. He argues that new forms of knowledge grow out of the conditions of collective life and that their emergence does not depend upon previous demonstration by a theory of knowledge that they are possible. The development of theories of scientific knowledge takes place within the preoccupation with empirical data, meaning that revolutions in methodology and epistemology follow from revolutions in the immediate empirical procedures for getting knowledge.

Thus Mannheim's sociology of knowledge stems from an epistemological foundation, and also in turn has its own epistemological implications.³⁹ These implications involve breaking away from the dominant theory of knowledge upon which

³⁹ In *Problems of Sociology in Germany* (1929/1971c) Mannheim also argues that the sociology of knowledge comes upon an ontology that is presupposed by it, but that its relationizing enables philosophical ontology to revise particulars previously posing as absolutes.

the natural sciences are based, knowledge that is quantifiable, largely detachable from the historical-social perspective of the investigator, and set up as the ideal to which all knowledge should aspire. Juxtaposed with this is a more dynamic and flexible epistemology, one that is co-constituted with the data from empirical investigations. This means that epistemology is not seen as a critique of knowledge, but only a new kind of systematization of it. Mannheim's conclusion in *Structural Analysis of Epistemology* (1922/1953a) is that epistemology solves an entirely different problem from the one that it has set itself. Instead of a critique of value, it turns into a theory about how a particular value can be attained and realized.

With this new epistemology stemming from his sociology of knowledge, Mannheim also proposes a new form of objectivity. Mannheim (1927/1953b) distinguishes first between eternal validity and objectivity. Content may be objective if it exists apart from the experience of the individual, yet it need not be timeless content. It may transcend the individual but still be restricted in its validity due to historical change. Both realism and nominalism miss the essence of the objectivity of mental structure. Nominalism never gets to the root of the matter because it dissolves the objective structure into the isolated experiences of individuals, while realism never gets there because by 'objectivity' and 'validity' it is understanding something merely metaphysical, something constant and normative. Between these extremes Mannheim finds a third alternative, which he calls dynamic, a historical structural configuration involving a conceptualizing of objectivity that begins in time and develops and declines through time and is a product of the fate of concrete human groups. It represents objective mental structures, but ones that are dynamic, historically conditioned, and constantly changing.

This new type of objectivity in the social sciences is attainable not through the exclusion of evaluations, but through critical awareness and control of them. It is reflexivity stemming from a form of skepticism that leads to self-criticism, which is key in bringing the various presuppositions contained in scientific and popular discussion to the level of conscious and explicit observations. The goal should not be to hide or apologize for the fact that historical-social knowledge contains traces of the position of the knower, but instead to emphasize how objectivity is possible given the theory of perspectivity. This requires abandoning the ideal that knowledge can be non-perspectival, and instead asking how each perspective can be recognized, particularized, and then synthesized to achieve a new level of objectivity. This abandons the false ideal of a detached, impersonal point of view and replaces it with the notion of an essentially human point of view that is within the limits of a human perspective, a perspective that is constantly striving to enlarge itself.

Under this approach of situationally conditioned thought, objectivity is found in a roundabout way, when what has been correctly but differently perceived by two perspectives must be understood in the light of the differences in structure of these varied modes of perception. An effort must be made to translate the results of one into the other in order to discover a common denominator for these varying perspectivistic insights. Once such a common denominator has been found between the two views, it is possible to separate their necessary differences from the arbitrarily conceived and mistaken elements, which should be considered as errors. For Mannheim the validity of perspective is established through the criteria of 'adaptation'. He explains "a theory then is wrong if in a given practical situation it uses concepts and categories which, if taken seriously, would prevent man from adjusting himself at that historical stage" (1929/1936: 85). The

other criteria determining which of the various perspectives it best is to see which offers evidence of the greatest comprehensiveness and the greatest fruitfulness in dealing with empirical materials. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge pursues the idea of an all-embracing ontology, one based on observations of empirical facts, and that offers a continually broadening basis of knowledge by extending the self and integrating various social vantage points in the process of knowledge.

What Mannheim (1922) proposes is a rejection of monism, according to which there can only be one truth, and he embraces the idea that truth is always bound to an epoch, always bound to historical-social standpoints. Every tendency of thought is thus partial and can only be comprehended in its totality through synthesis. The goal of the sociology of knowledge is constantly to seek to understand and interpret particular insights from an ever more inclusive context. This synthesis cannot be an absolute or permanent one, one that transcends the historical process with the 'eyes of God', since this would mean relapse into the static worldview of intellectualism. The only possible and adequate synthesis is a dynamic one; one that is itself rooted in a particular mode of thought that is reformulated from time to time. This involves acknowledging that we are trying to understand the historical from a standpoint which itself historical. This recognition, this reflexivity, is more likely to escape from the dangers of hypostatizing the finite, which is itself only a partial standpoint.

The origin of this synthesis thus cannot come from a source outside the political arena. Any synthesis will necessarily be bound to a position in the social order, one embodied by the will of a particular social group. Contending groups who attempt at least to unify and reconcile these conflicting currents that they encounter in their limited sphere will always achieve syntheses. Through the history of political thought,

Mannheim finds that the exponents of synthesis have always represented definite social strata, mainly classes who feel threatened from above and below, and who, out of social necessity, seek a middle way out. However, a truly dynamic synthesis, one that carries out the reflexivity and other insights of the sociology of knowledge, cannot “be developed by a class occupying a middle position but only by a relatively classless stratum which is not too firmly situated in the social order” (1929/1936: 137). We thus now turn our attention to a discussion of such a relatively classless stratum: Mannheim’s ‘relatively unattached’ intellectuals.

Mannheim (1929/1936) proposes that in every society there are social groups whose special task it is to provide an interpretation of the world for that society, a group we call the ‘intelligentsia’. This group is characterized by its relative remoteness from the open conflicts of everyday life. This social group embodies a type of thought that does not arise primarily from the struggle with concrete problems of life, nor from experience, but through its own need for systematization, through a contemplative attitude towards the social world. It emerges out of a certain kind of distantiation from life. This distantiation leads to the emergence of doubt, and eventually skepticism, in the taken-for-granted nature of everyday life. Ultimately this leads to a double skepticism, once an individual is confronted by two or more perspectives on the very same object and discovers the multiple criteria of truth.⁴⁰ The intelligentsia is thus a social group whose defining characteristic is that it possesses a multipolarity of views.

In *Ideology and Utopia* (1929/1936) Mannheim describes this social group, based

⁴⁰ In *The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Enquiry into Its Past and Present Role* (1956b), written in the 1930s, Mannheim argues that this leads to the emergence of an epistemology that expresses a shaken faith, not only in one particular truth, but also broadly in truth as such and in the capacity to know. He proposes that a genuine epistemology made its appearance twice in Western history: the first time it originated with the Sophists and Socrates, and the second time, with Descartes.

on Alfred Weber's terminology, as a relatively classless stratum, the 'socially unattached intelligentsia'. In subsequent writing, such as *The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Enquiry into Its Past and Present Role* (1930s/1956b), he emphasizes the 'relatively' unattached nature, and clarifies that this group is not free of class liaisons as some of his critics had read in his work. Rather he means to point out that intellectuals do not react to given issues cohesively, that certain types of intellectuals hold maximum opportunity to test and employ the socially available vistas and to experience their inconsistencies. And, while Mannheim finds intellectuals to be too differentiated to be regarded as a single class, he does identify a unifying sociological bond among all groups of intellectuals, namely education.⁴¹ Participation in a common educational heritage progressively suppresses differences of birth, status, profession, and wealth by contributing to distantiation from life. Knowledge gained from education is the result of dedicated attention, instead of the spontaneous result of practical problems arising in everyday life. This leads to a multipolarity of views because the group of the learned has lost its caste organization as well as its prerogative to formulate authoritative answers to the questions of the time. The modern intellectual can thus embody a dynamic bent, one prepared continually to revise his views in the face of new facts or perspectives.⁴²

⁴¹ In clarifying the characterization of his intellectuals, Mannheim (1956b) offers a critique of the Marxist conception of class as being independent of the perceptions and reactions of the individual. Instead, Mannheim proposes a concept of class that rejects Hegelian realism and is based on actions and individual preferences. Class does not completely absorb and explain all the actions of the concrete person. Mannheim's position is, once again, found in a compromise between realism and nominalism. He agrees with the realists that individual behaviour cannot be fully explained apart from her social relations. However, he rejects the realist position of attributing priority to one particular grouping such as the class, race, or nation, and opposes the interpretation of all the other social groups as derivatives of the one 'real' group. He agrees with the aim of nominalists to comprehend the behaviour and motivations of the person, but opposes their tendency to construe the individual as socially detached. Mannheim sees individuation as the result of an individual becoming identifiable with overlapping and conflicting groups, something that characterizes intellectuals.

⁴² Although Mannheim points out that this may also be a source of shortcoming if the intellectuals believes he has grasped the point of view of others when he merely perceived their utterances.

This does not mean that individual class and status ties completely disappear. However, Mannheim describes this social group as a 'relatively unattached' because it is less rigidly based and defined by one social class than it would have been in the past. Specifically, it is a 'relatively unattached' stratum compared to the situation in the Middle Ages, where membership to those who held a monopoly of the ecclesiastical interpretation of the world was far more closed and cohesive than the intelligentsia in modern time. The intelligentsia draws its members from a broader set of social strata and life-situations, and thus its mode of thought is no longer subject to regulation by a caste-like organization. According to Mannheim, the fundamental questioning of thought begins only after the collapse of the intellectual monopoly of the clergy. Here, the almost unanimously accepted worldview falls apart the moment the socially monopolistic position of its producers is destroyed. In modern times, unlike the priesthood, intellectuals, more than any other group, lack cohesiveness and a common interest. The consequence of this is a 'relatively unattached' stratum that is more open to the influx of individuals from different social classes and of groups with all possible points of view. Only under these conditions can the broad synthesis Mannheim seeks be achieved.

In *An Introduction to Sociology* (1930/2001e), Mannheim argues that the role of intellectuals is continually to reconsider things, to see total situations where others see only particular ones, in order to make the case for self-expansion.⁴³ This requires making the structure of society as transparent as possible. Society's problem is to manage intellectuals' aloofness and estrangement from reality, which stems from their leisure-

⁴³ Mannheim's proposed sociology of intellectuals, as described in *The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Enquiry into Its Past and Present Role* (1956b), involves studying the social background of an intellectual, the particular phase of her career curve, the positions of her generation compared to others, her social habitat, and the type of aggregation in which she performs, among others.

class existence. Their stratum is not above parties and special interests. Intellectuals should then take stock of their limitations and potentialities. For example, Mannheim writes in *German Sociology 1918-1933* (1953e) that every theory is preceded by a subconscious selection of the elements that shall penetrate our problems and theory. Not only is the content of the theory itself influenced by those elements, but social forces also affect the conceptions and logical categories of the mind of different groups, including intellectuals. In *Planned Society and the Problem of Human Personality: A Sociological Analysis* (1953h) Mannheim thus argues for another more common form of reflexivity, where every speaker should first and foremost state their standpoint so that their audience may be better able to discount their partiality. The purpose of intellectuals, then, is to diagnose and prognosticate, to discover choices when they arise, and to understand and locate various points of view. Due to their position, their task is to offer this synthesis and a vision of the totality of society. Intellectuals cannot forget that the purpose of thought is action.

Section Four: Theory as Basis for Social Action

Once Mannheim establishes his programme of the sociology of knowledge, he then turns his later-career attention to the rise of totalitarianism as the most important socio-political trend happening in Europe. He seeks to offer a diagnosis of the contemporary social world and what he sees as the solution: the promotion of what he calls democratic planning for freedom. This last section highlights the application of Mannheim's vision for sociology to these particular problems and includes a description of the sociology of the mind, the role that must necessarily be played by education, and the contribution that sociology ought to make to better the world.

Mannheim turns his attention to the principal issue of the transformation of modern societies in Western Europe. In *The Democratization of Culture* (1956c), Mannheim offers a three-part sociological analysis of democracy in order to understand its transformation. The first principle is that all individuals embody the same ontological principle of human-ness; second is the recognition of the autonomy of the individual; and the third principle of democracy has to do with its way of selecting and controlling its elites. Democratization reduces the gap between elites and rank and file, and usually means a loss of homogeneity in governing elites.⁴⁴⁴⁵ Democracies may start as progressive in attitudes and aspirations, and then over time may become conservative as reactionary currents get the upper hand. Democracies must neutralize some of the antagonistic views of individuals and groups and shape a cohesive whole. Part of that is accomplished by adopting a representative system instead of direct democracy, which is unmanageable on a large scale. Mannheim (1950) argues that the principal function of government is to integrate smaller groups in a whole that is more comprehensive than its parts. How this takes place involves particular theories of power that are aimed at defining ways of distributing and controlling power within society. Power is present whenever and wherever social pressures operate on the individual to induce desired conduct. This leads him to distinguish functional power from arbitrary power.

Power within various democracies takes several shapes. Mannheim writes *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940) while trying to reconcile his experiences

⁴⁴ Although Mannheim (1956b) points out that democratization at first does not produce equality and universal like-mindedness, but instead accentuates group divergencies. This leads to a growth of nationalism rather than cosmopolitanism.

⁴⁵ Mannheim (1956c) even argues that democracy has had an impact on epistemology, demonstrated by Descartes' view of clear and distinct ideas as necessary for true knowledge, as well as Kant's notions of necessity and universal validity as the essential characteristics of scientific judgments. These criteria imply that nothing can be accepted as true unless every human mind can grasp it.

in Germany, where totalitarianism rose against a backdrop of laissez-faire policies, with those in Britain, where liberal democracy functioned mostly undisturbed. He uses his sociological insights and his vision of the totality to understand the mounting crisis in modern society. The required first step is a diagnosis of the shortcomings and causes of current maladjustments in the current system. He argues that the crisis in the contemporary social world started with the collapse of two beliefs, these being the belief in a permanent 'national character' and then the belief in the gradual progress of Reason in history. Mannheim (1940) highlights three factors that impact modern societies greatly: the transition from laissez-faire to a planned society, the transition from a democracy of the few to a mass society, and changes in social techniques. While class conflicts are still important, the patterns that they produce are too changeable to be accepted. Instead, Mannheim identifies these changes as ones whose consequences will endure.

Mannheim (1932/2001i) announces clearly that he favors the superiority of liberal values, the importance of human freedom, the spontaneity left to the individual in his circles, and the superiority of the liberal period, yet he argues that this period is coming to an end. And while he dislikes bureaucratic planning, he comes to terms with the idea that it must now play a role in the pursuit and fostering of freedom. Mannheim argues that there has been a concentration of all kinds of controls (economic, political, psychological, and mechanical) that has gone so far that now the only question is who shall use these means of control and to what end. The problem then is not whether we should plan or not, but whether the planning should be dictatorial or democratic. Laissez-faire is disintegrating and has given rise to totalitarian planning, whether in its Fascist or Communist variant, and then also democratic planning, which is gradually evolving

through the progressive policies of democracies. Mannheim argues that each democracy must develop a certain unified political will by voluntary agreement on the part of the rival social groups, or else risk a form of totalitarian victory.⁴⁶ He also criticizes Marx's ideal of the classless society as unrealistic, and rejects his assumption that good society would emerge spontaneously and maintain its internal balance once certain institutions were removed. Mannheim (1950b) argues that what we have learned from the last decades is that the aim of social progress is not an imaginary society without a governing class, but is the improvement of the economic, social, political, and educational opportunities for people to train themselves for leadership, as well as an improvement of the selection method of the best from various fields of social life.

The manuscript *Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning* (1950) is where Mannheim lays out the principles of a society that is planned yet democratic. Mannheim is concerned with the social implications of the transformation of society that has its roots in the most recent war whose consequences are just now being fully felt. The essentials of democratic planning require a vision of social life in its totality and will require new institutions, new men and women, and new values. Mannheim (1937/1971d) argues that the role of sociology is to clarify the means that society has at its disposal for this sort of planning.⁴⁷ Planning means a conscious attack on the sources of maladjustment in the

⁴⁶ While competition can be eliminated as the organizing principle of the social structure and replaced with planning, Mannheim still believes competition can still be promoted among equals.

⁴⁷ For example, in *On War-Conditioned Changes in Our Psychic Economy* (1940/1953i), Mannheim lays out an interest in combining the insights of psychology and sociology to collect, classify, describe, and diagnose the typical difficulties arising in connection with the adjustment to war conditions. This knowledge would be used to offer greater support, both to the public and to governments, about the most successful forms of adaptations. Many commentators (Kecskemeti 1953; Mannheim 1956; Eros and Stewart 1957; Wolff 1971) have talked about how later in his career Mannheim increasingly includes psychological aspects in his analysis. He turns to Freudian psychoanalysis, for example, in order to clarify some of the decisive factors responsible for social change. Synthesizing results and insights from psychological schools, Mannheim proposes what he calls a sociological psychology in order to analyze the social mechanisms which intervene between the roles individuals play and the ideas they espouse.

social order, on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the whole society and the way in which it works.⁴⁸

Society must have a certain harmony between prevailing valuations, institutions, and education. Mannheim (1950b) favors planning for freedom. Planning for freedom means controlling those fields of social growth that the smooth functioning of society depends on, while at the same time leaving alone areas that contain the greatest opportunity for creative development and individualization. This freedom is not the freedom of laissez-faire, but is the freedom planned for by a society that coordinates the use of social techniques to achieve those aims.⁴⁹ This starts with being concerned with and taking a stand on valuations instead of being disinterested in them. Society needs to manage the sources of disagreement and antagonisms that, if not properly dealt with, lead to chaos. Sociology therefore plays a role in studying the conditions under which disagreement arises and in which the process of group adjustment and value reconciliation fails to function in the context of everyday life. While various groups develop a variety of approaches to valuations, there is a need for a certain amount of coordination and value mediation, which culminates in a collectively agreed upon value policy, without which no society can survive. This also requires inventing new techniques to perform the function of democratic self-regulation on a higher plane of awareness and

⁴⁸ While Mannheim (1950) describes the United States as vacillating between the survival of 'rugged individualism' and piecemeal conceptions of preventive planning, he argues that Britain comes closest to what he envisions as planning for freedom.

⁴⁹ Mannheim (1929) distinguishes between various meanings of freedom, such as the conservative meaning, which is the right of each individual to live according to his or her own individual personality, with the equalitarian and more liberal conception of freedom, which is that all individuals have the same fundamental rights at their disposal. These dueling conceptions of freedom lead to very different positions regarding the role of the state. Mannheim's own view of freedom, laid out for example in *Towards the Sociology of the Mind: an Introduction* (1956a), is not characterized by a situation devoid of determinacy. Instead, we are free to make choices and to out our solutions within the range of given alternatives and available means.

purposeful organization.

Centralization in a planned society is essential only in certain base policy issues. The legitimate use of control, whether through legislation, administration, representation, or participation, is to curb tendencies that, left alone, would breed oppression or chaos. It is in this vein that planning serves freedom. In this sense, the American and French constitutions are examples of planning for freedom, just representative systems constituted the nations' first attempts at the conscious planning of their machinery of government. Planning features include the integration of all social forces, competition in ideas and bargaining, superiority of parliamentary over corporate representation, emotional identification and sense of responsibility, public accountability, assignment of responsibility, flexible policies, constructive use of the opposition, and a resolution to act. Leaders of democratic planning should first visualize and define a clear vision of the principles and objectives of democracy, and then should devise practical ways and means to attain their ends through reforms and mass consensus. Leaders need to be open to working out solutions and testing out alternative policies instead of maintaining unity by embracing a creed.

This planning should be planning for the many as opposed to the few, for social justice and equality rather than privilege, planning not for a classless society, but for one that abolishes the extremes of wealth and poverty, for progress without discarding valuable tradition, for balance between centralization and dispersion of power, and for gradual transformation of society in order to encourage the growth of personality. Mannheim (1950) also suggests discarding the obsolete distinction between state and society since in the modern world everything is political, the state is everywhere, and public responsibility is interwoven throughout the whole fabric of society. Freedom is

about defining its legitimate uses in all spheres.

Planning is a strategy, a process, not a particular set of specific outcomes, but rather the pursuit of methods that are more likely to lead to favorable outcomes. It involves the use of social techniques such as education, propaganda, and administration, where the activities and minds of individuals and groups can be influenced and even coordinated. These techniques are neither good nor bad; they can be used for planning for conformity, as they have in totalitarian regimes such as Germany, Italy, and Russia, or for planning for freedom. To combat the rise of totalitarianism it is no longer sufficient to have a laissez-faire attitude towards planning, but one must master these social techniques and guide them in the right direction. According to Mannheim (1938/1953h) planning was inevitable; what remains to be decided is the kind of planning society wants. Planned freedom can only be achieved by a handling these techniques deliberately and skillfully, so that every kind of influence that can be brought to bear on human beings is theoretically understood. Social scientific study of society should provide empirical grounds where judgments can be made about which sorts of influence to use in a given situation. Mannheim (1940) distinguishes between direct and indirect methods of influencing human behavior. In *Mass Education and Group Analysis* (1950e) Mannheim writes that a successful society economizes the use of prohibitions and repression and distinguishes between humane and harmful prohibitions. Furthermore, it helps individuals make their adjustments in the best possible way as well as those who have failed in their readjustments.

This sort of planning reinforces and leads to the spread of democracy in the sense of fundamental equality. It also leads to abandoning a more individuated conception of freedom in favor of a new and more collective conception of freedom. The new

conception creates the desire to control the effects of social surroundings as much as possible, and stems from the use of social techniques to influence the conduct of social affairs according to a definite plan. This change is resisted until people have been spiritually prepared for it. Democracy itself embodies an underlying belief in the plasticity of individuals. The 'great' person is great not because she is different from others in her primordial substance, but because she has had greater and better opportunities to develop herself. Mannheim argues that democracy cannot exist unless all of its institutions are thoroughly oriented to democratic ends without 'remaking' men. This process faces many resistances, but the best solution is to become fully conscious of these resistances, and to consider how far they can be counteracted. Laissez-faire approaches ignore this and assume that the individual will adjust freely without interference, something that Mannheim, on the heels of his insights and research from his sociology of knowledge, rejects. What are required, instead, are a conscious analysis of both situation and the coordination of social processes. It is to this end that social science has a crucial role to play. Planning for freedom means, with the help of science, finding out what kinds of education and social constellations offer the greatest chance of kindling initiative and the will to determine and shape oneself.

This process requires not only a science of society, but also a complementary sociology of the mind in a systematic attempt to articulate the social character of mental processes.⁵⁰ In *Towards the Sociology of the Mind: an Introduction* (1956a) Mannheim

⁵⁰ Mannheim (1940) lauds pragmatism for linking every act of thought directly to action, whereas only a new type of action can give birth to a new type of thought. Werner Stark in *The Sociology of Knowledge: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the History of Ideas* (1958) describes Mannheim as a pragmatist because, for him, the practice is the judge of theory. Stark finds much in common between Mannheim and Dewey, James, and Peirce. Truth is not established by theory, but it is a practical question. Moreover, Stark mentions that Mannheim has no objection to being classed with those to whom theory means little and practice, everything. Louis Wirth, author of the preface to the English edition of *Ideology and Utopia*

describes the aims of his sociology of the mind as being to produce a social ontology of the mind with a view to its historical character by analyzing the basic constants of sociation that condition continuity, tradition, discontinuity, and the dynamics of thought. It also attempts to elaborate concrete variations of elementary social processes and to identify their corresponding variations in the realm of thought. Finally, the sociology of mind would study the relationship of social motivations to thought structures, the significance of social groupings for the genesis of standpoints, and the role played by social change in the dynamics of thought. As Mannheim discusses in *Planned Society and the Problem of Human Personality: A Sociological Analysis* (1938/1953h), sociology must therefore study the social conditions of individualization and how isolation, division of labor, and the democratic organization of small groups affect personality. The goal of the sociology of the mind is to produce knowledge that will allow society to influence the conscious part of the mind, in order to foster personalities that are geared towards and compatible with a democratic society. Mannheim writes “our task then is to define the ideal of democratic personality as the educational goal of our society”. (1950: 230) Thus, open-mindedness and readiness for cooperation, and a balance between over-conventionalization and over-individualization characterize the democratic personality.

Reformation of democratic society and individuals within it call for a sociological approach to education: An approach that recognizes that education does not mould individuals in the abstract, but in and for a given society, that the ultimate unit is never

(1936) also draws this parallel between Mannheim and American pragmatism. However, Mannheim (1940) himself finds that pragmatism has too narrow a conception of the context of action in which thinking arises. It focuses too much on the action of the individual, instead of seeing the individual as representing only a section of the activity and experience of the whole social group. Mannheim’s social determination of thought takes into account a much broader context for action. Individuals can transcend the relative narrowness of their own horizons once they become aware of their social determination.

the individual but the group, that norms are never ends in and of themselves but are the expression of an interplay between individual and group adjustment, and that education is only one of several social techniques that influence human behavior. Mannheim's sociology of education looks to establish the study of education as a coherent body of facts so that the work done in schools and elsewhere can be built upon scientific foundations. Mannheim (1952f) writes that research is about rescuing more and more factors of the social education of individuals from the realm of 'accident'. This begins with a clarification of what education is and what it aims to be. It involves looking at the ideas being taught, the methods employed to teach those ideas, and the effects of these methods and ideas.

Education has always had as its subject matter the formation of people. What has changed is the form taken by education through time. Mannheim (1962) distinguishes between instruction, the passing on of information, and teaching, which emphasizes the relationship between people and involves follow up to ascertain whether what has been presented was understood and learned. Education embodies the latter because it involves not only supplying certain types of knowledge, but also modifying the nature of the pupil. Education, broadly conceived, deals with adaptable developments of individuals and with a changing and developing society. The task of education, therefore, is not merely to develop people who are adjusted to the present situation, but also people who will be in a position to act as agents of social development to a further stage. Education teaches us to discover our own affairs within the affairs of distant people, and to penetrate another point of view by redefining our own. But the gains of education such that the modern era has made possible are unmistakable. They lie in the expansion of the self through its participation in a multipolar culture, where one individual may live more than his own

life and think more than his own thoughts. This also involves fostering a form of skepticism understood as a state of fruitful uncertainty.

This process takes place through the formal education system with trained educators. The educator should understand the state and its working as a frame-group and the role that structure of social order played in his life. He should be aware of what he brings into the classroom his view of his job, his prejudices, his personal fears and inadequacies, his ambitions, his humanity and affection. The educator should be concerned with the social environment of the learner, the changing role of the classroom with public schools and universities, and the ways in which learning most effectively takes place. Mannheim argues that the task of the school is to show how to learn more efficiently from life, “how to draw correct conclusions from experience, how to become one’s own educator” (1950: 250). Learning takes place when the learner is aware of some obstruction to a need she has, and hence of some dissatisfaction within herself. Learning is when there is a successful adaptive achievement that comes as a result of the response to the blockage or dissatisfaction. If this is retained and can be recalled and used subsequently, then learning has taken place. Mannheim (1962) discusses the two great ‘laws’ about the learning process: the law of frequency and the law of reward, both of which emphasize that learning is a lifelong process. While Mannheim (1950c) gives much attention to adult education, he sees youth as necessary revitalizing agents in society due to their refusal to take the established order for granted and because they have no vested interests in its economic or spiritual order.

But formal education, the institutionalized aspect of education, is not the only area where education takes place. It also takes place through community, the group of people where the individual lives, which implies a broader and more generalized notion of social

education. In *Planned Society and the Problem of Human Personality: A Sociological Analysis* (1953h), Mannheim identifies social education as more powerful in its ability to continually mould our personalities than formal education. This education takes place in the home, the industrial order, the church, the voluntary agencies, the social services, and the mass media, which together form the community influence as a whole.⁵¹ This growing awareness of the significance of the broader social context in which education works is one of the revelations of the sociology of education. Spontaneous adjustments emanating from tradition need to be replaced by conscious processes based on solid sociological work about education. The principal contribution of the sociological approach here is that it situates education within the broader context of society. "The sociological approach looks at education not as an aim in itself but as a part of the social-historical dynamics and of the *Weltanschauung* which corresponds to it." (1962: 161) It is a sociologist's job to help interpret what should be the educational aims of an epoch from the needs of a given society. This is especially true given that it is not only the content of education that vary from one society to another, but also its ideals and its ultimate aims.⁵²

Since the ideals of education change, and since people themselves and their styles of

⁵¹ Mannheim (1971d) even argues that this social education should take place on an international scale where there should be coordination to cultivate a peaceful, cooperative and understanding attitude in all individuals.

⁵² For example, Mannheim (1962) discusses Weber's typology of the three main types of education throughout history: charismatic education, education for culture, and specialist education. Charismatic education is dominant in periods where religion reaches its highest point and is meant to stir up certain innate latent powers and awaken religious intuition. Education for culture is about transferring some values and developing some style of thought. Finally, specialist education is about transferring special knowledge or skills specific to a given job within the division of labor. Mannheim argues that a study of these three educational ideals would determine whether these techniques could be used at different stages of individual development. Although, in *The Contemporary Tasks of Sociology: Cultivation and the Curriculum* (2001h), Mannheim makes it clear that he believes it is the role of universities to provide not just a specialist education, but also a cultivational education, so that the individuals can understand themselves fully through their own context.

thought take different forms and evolve with the changing Weltanschauung, it becomes important for sociology to pursue a better understanding of these styles of thought and the changing nature of education through the sociology of knowledge. An important role then for sociology is to synthesize different trends operating in different social layers. This involves harmonizing antagonistic elements such as individualization and cooperation, change and tradition, self-control and self-expression, action and reflection, and many others. This synthesis requires a general sociological diagnosis of our time to understand the totality of the social world and how best to equip individuals and groups with the ability to adjust to this changing social world. The role of sociology is to bring these elements to the level of awareness so that they can then be consciously altered. It is through this conscious awareness of previously hidden forces that genuine freedom can be achieved.

Two fundamental kinds of thinking exist: scientific theory and practical thinking. Sociologists must work out in detail the discrepancy between theory and practice. Science is 'delocalized' thought in that it invites the individual to doubt whatever comes to her as part of tradition. It tears thought out of the context in which it was valid through the authority of tradition.⁵³ While scientific theory has attained more precision about social phenomena, the practical thinker is often times more apt to offer a synthetic observation. The scientific frame of reference implies a mode of thought that begins with the setting of immediate goals. The tacit goal present in most sociological thought is a search for laws and generalizations. This involves remoteness from the world and isolating individual objects, and is about abstracting the particulars from immediate

⁵³ Mannheim (1950) writes that one of the consequences of this delocalization is that we tend to trust more what can more easily be translated from one mental idiom into another, such as formal statements of mathematics.

concrete circumstances in order to produce general principles. It is one thing to aim for a schematically ordered bird's eye view; it is quite another to seek a concrete orientation for action. This represents a discrepancy between science and practice where the practical person is much closer to the subject matter than the theorist.

The scientific enterprise experiences what Mannheim (1940) calls a double removal from reality when the field is highly specialized, where subject matters are broken up into parts and studied through a heightened division of labor. Mannheim argues that social sciences need to orient themselves towards planning. In contrast to the abstractness of thought at the level of inventing thinking, planned thinking is concrete because it starts with the context of things. Mannheim proposes that the goal is to 'grasp a situation', to be 'master of a situation', for it is in concrete situations that one integrates the otherwise disconnected elements of knowledge. The goal is to foster awareness, which here means the readiness to see the whole situation in which one finds oneself, and to not only orientate one's action on immediate tasks and purposes but to base them on a more comprehensive vision. Mannheim's awareness here is an awareness of the total situation, one that emerges from the synthesis of different aspects of partial group experiences that have been confronted and integrated. This is distinguished from class consciousness, which is a form of partial awareness from the perspective of a single group. In this vein, over-specialization can lead to a lack of awareness because it can fail to grasp the whole without the adequate synthesis.

In *Systematic Sociology* (1957) Mannheim argues that sociology is the central discipline of the social science, the one that is best suited to unify the results from the separate disciplines into a whole. The special task of sociological thinkers is to understand the principia media of each historical period. This principia media must be

discovered with reference to their context, be studied in their mutual relationships, and our practical activities must strive to exert some influence on them. An epoch is dominated not merely by a single principium medium but by a whole series of them. A number of mutually related principia media, however, produce a structure, in which concrete patterns of factors are bound up with one another in a multidimensional way, be it economic, political, and ideological. Existing reality consists of the mutual relationship between many such spheres and the concrete principia media at work in them. Without an understanding of the totality, one risks using one principia media to explain changes that are due to another principle, for example exaggerating the role of economic elements. While there is danger of dogmatizing various principia media, the opposite danger, of giving them all equal weight without attempting to relate them to one another is also present. The goal of sociology is to develop a rich network of principia media and understand how they interact with each other in order to get a more accurate picture of social change. Planning involves the discovery of those key positions from which the ultimate principia media of the social process can be bent to do one's will.

The role of sociology is to talk about the themes of greatest relevance and urgency in a manner such that one communicates everything knowable needed to judge the materials realistically, while also presenting all possible alternative judgments in their proper contexts. This involves recognizing the existential connectedness of social-scientific knowledge, thus escaping the dangers of scholasticizing one particular worldview. Sociology needs to combat orthodoxy, which signifies the acceptance of a given perspective as absolute and the treatment of things that become newly visible only insofar as they can be fitted into the preexisting framework. Orthodoxy is about the fear of uncertainty in the face of change or in the face of different valuations that threatens

existing beliefs. Orthodoxy prevents self-expansion, and runs counter to an understanding of the totality. Instead, Mannheim (1950) proposes that sociology helps assuage this uncertainty by helping to learn how to live in a changing society, how to think in terms of an open system, and how to balance ourselves when everything is 'on the move'. Sociology is about making conscious the principles on which society's institutions have always unconsciously molded the character of people, and with the help of systematically gathered knowledge, to reorganize these institutions.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the context, nature, and role of reflexivity found in Karl Mannheim's work through an examination of his entire published academic career. Reflexivity first appears through what Mannheim calls the phenomenon of distantiation. He traces the historical emergence of distantiation and how reflexivity emerges through doubt, skepticism, and individuals facing unusual situations where habitual action is not possible. Mannheim is interested in scientifically studying *Weltanschauung*, or the global outlook of an epoch. The method he develops to accomplish this is the documentary method of interpretation. This is the method he uses to trace the intellectual history of conservatism in German society, which is widely considered his most important empirical contribution to the discipline of sociology.

Conservatism represents one of many styles of thought, styles of thought that are embodied by various groups in competition. Mannheim appropriates Marx and others' theory of ideology pertaining to the social situatedness of thought and extends that maxim to all thought, including one's own. This marks the shift from a theory of ideology to the non-evaluative sociology of knowledge, Mannheim's most significant

contribution to sociology. This marks the second and deeper meaning of reflexivity present in his work, which involves applying the unmasking tools to one's own thought. The implications of this are the essential perspectival nature of all knowledge. Mannheim defends himself from accusations that his program embraces relativism, and instead speaks of relationism and a dynamic notion of truth. This implies a new and different conception of objectivity as a standard for social scientists, one very much based on his notion of reflexivity. The goal here is synthesis of these various partial viewpoints into the closest approximate to the whole, and, in the most controversial element of his sociology, Mannheim assigns the role of chief synthesizer to his 'relatively unattached' intellectuals.

Mannheim then spends most of the later part of his career putting these theoretical insights and his sociology of knowledge into practice. He turns his attention to the crisis of his time, the political and social upheaval in Europe through the middle part of the twentieth century, and argues that modern society needs to abandon laissez-faire and embrace what he calls democratic planning for freedom. This involves a re-making of individuals, and the coordination of various institutions in society, including the education system, towards that purpose. Mannheim views sociology as having an important and special role to fulfill in synthesizing the insights of various social sciences into a coherent totality. He sees the sociology's role as not to make decisions, but to expand the vision within which decisions are made. Sociology does this by making us aware of the determinants that have dominated us, bringing them from the realm of unconscious into that of the controllable, calculated, and objectified. Once comprehensive knowledge of various determinants is known, choices and decisions are

more informed. In this way, theory and sociology can be the basis for a guide for social action and can help open a road to freedom.

Reflexivity at Work: Making Sense of Harold Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the context, nature, and role of reflexivity found in Harold Garfinkel's work, from *Color Trouble*, his first article published in 1940, to *Towards a Sociological Theory of Information*, a monograph of collected writings edited in collaboration with Anne Rawls and published in 2008, Garfinkel had a profound influence on the use and understanding of reflexivity in sociological literature, most specifically seen through his multiple-decade development of ethnomethodology. To appreciate the nature of this distinctive program, this chapter considers the essential role of reflexivity within ethnomethodology as well as its implications for the sociological literature.

Summarizing Garfinkel's writings is inherently challenging. John Heritage, author of the influential book *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*, speaks to the difficulty of giving an account of Garfinkel's work. This is partly due to the nature of the work itself, published solely through essays on a diversity of substantive topics and written in a difficult prose style, which Heritage characterizes as "resisting the reader's best endeavours, only to yield, at the last, forceful and unexpected insights which somehow remain obstinately open-ended and difficult to place" (1984: 1). However, the difficulty is also due to how much the role of theory is left off-stage and how much Garfinkel's work resists assimilation to any extant sociological framework. And yet, as many authors have pointed out (Rawls 2002; Lemert 2002; Hilbert 1992; Mehan and Wood 1975b; Wilson and Zimmerman 1979), the phenomena of interest to Garfinkel are essential to understanding how society works. This chapter is an attempt to provide an account of

Garfinkel's work through the prism of his ethnomethodological program and through a focus on his conception of reflexivity.

This chapter is organized in five sections. Section one lays out the background and context necessary to understand the nature and role of Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and use and understanding of reflexivity. I begin with a discussion of his early academic career with a focus on key theoretical influences that played an important role on the development of his approach and thought. This entails highlighting the key concerns present in his PhD dissertation, which announced many of the key features of his future vision for the practice of sociology. This section also discusses the importance Garfinkel gave to gathering empirical data and some of the insights he garnered from his work on jurors, on successful degradation ceremonies, on sex composition and the case of Agnes, and on the study of queues. All of these studies are part of Garfinkel's ongoing concern with the study of social order, a concern that would remain constant throughout his career.

Once the concern with social order is established, the second section of this chapter discusses some of the key tools Garfinkel deploys in his attempts to study social order directly. Specifically, Garfinkel's views on objectivity and subjectivity, his rejection of correspondence theory of reality in favor of a coherence theory of reality, and his embracing of phenomenology and the application of its insights to the sociological study of social order are considered. This involves a discussion of the concepts of experience, cognitive styles, epoché, noesis-noema, invariance and attention, all directly or indirectly influenced by Husserl, Parsons, and Schutz to varying degrees. A review of these concepts, and what Garfinkel finds useful about them, will lead to a particular theory of the subject and theory of action, culminating with his distinguishing between

various types of rationalities. Garfinkel endorses the existence of the distinction between a scientific attitude and a natural attitude, developed by Schutz, and their differing relationship with time. All of these elements are key in Garfinkel's development of ethnomethodology as a way to study social order.

The third section of this chapter focuses on how Garfinkel, with the help of these various insights, proposes to study social order and the phenomenon of common sense. The section will lay out his discussion of Mannheim's documentary method and how it studies fact production, and Garfinkel's use of the breaching experiment as a way of identifying what he calls stable features of concerted actions. All of this is leading up to Garfinkel's direct discussions surrounding what ethnomethodology is and the various tasks Garfinkel sets out for his program. These tasks center on the notion that activities are locally witnessed and accountable and that these accounts have an essential reflexivity, a reflexivity that is ignored by many of the traditional sociological pursuits Garfinkel seeks to differentiate his program from. This section ends with an analysis of reflexivity as a key element that defines and sets apart Garfinkel's ethnomethodology. So while section one and two give necessary insight into the history and context of Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and reflexivity, the third section more directly focuses on what the nature of the 'what' of his program and his use and understanding of reflexivity.

The fourth section turns its attention to the role played by ethnomethodology and Garfinkel's use and understanding of reflexivity. This is done in part by looking at how Garfinkel frames his work as the true legitimate heir to Durkheim's sociological legacy, and as an incommensurable break from what Garfinkel calls formal analytics, which are embodied by mainstream sociological pursuits. The section covers the unique approach touted by Garfinkel and the role played by indexical expressions, language, glossing

practices and ad hocing, many of which Garfinkel feels are ignored or improperly handled by formal sociology in the study of social order. Thus, this section highlights the distinctive vision and aim of Garfinkel's program and what he calls ethnomethodology's indifference.

The fifth and final section of this chapter discusses the implications stemming from Garfinkel's work, for sociology, but also for broader ontological and epistemological concerns. The discussion culminates with Garfinkel's vision for what science truly is: a legitimacy exercise. The section and chapter ends with a discussion of Garfinkel's own legacy in terms of ethnomethodology and reflexivity and considers his impact on theories of organization, the sociology of communication, his sociological theory of information, conversational analysis, and most famously, the sociology of scientific knowledge.

Section One: Setting the Context

The first section of this chapter is dedicated to laying out the context behind Garfinkel's career-long interest in the study of social order. The chapter begins with a discussion of his early academic career with a focus on various key theoretical influences that played an important role in the development of his program of ethnomethodology, many of them already present in his PhD dissertation. This section also discusses the role played by empirical work in Garfinkel's approach and the insights he garnered from his work on jurors, on successful degradation ceremonies, on sex composition, and on the study of queues. All of these studies illustrate Garfinkel's concern with what he sees as the principal task of sociology: the description of social order.

Harold Garfinkel was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1917, attended Business School at the University of Newark, and completed a Masters degree on interracial homicide in Sociology in 1942 at the University of North Carolina, before finishing his PhD in the department of Social Relations at Harvard University in 1952. Garfinkel taught at Princeton University while still a PhD student, but soon after his graduation joined the University of California Los Angeles where he spent his entire career. Garfinkel did not write any monographs during his career, but instead was the author of over thirty articles and research reports. The four books published under his name were collections of these articles, reports and other previously unpublished material. While he retired in 1987, he continued to work at UCLA as an emeritus professor until he passed away in 2011.

Throughout his career Garfinkel (1949; 1952; 1967; 1978; 1983; 2002) identifies many different authors as having played a critical role in the development of his own thought and methodological approach. This starts with Edmund Husserl and his phenomenological approach, with its accompanying series of conceptual tools, and continues with the two most crucial influences, Alfred Schutz and his adaptation of these phenomenological insights to the social sciences and Talcott Parsons and his interest in the study of social order. Above and beyond those three, Garfinkel acknowledges his debt to Kenneth Burke and his theory of action, Max Weber and his work on rationality, Aron Gurwitsch and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and their writing on the study of perception, along with Emile Durkheim and his proposition that sociology ought to be concerned with the study of social facts. As we shall see, Garfinkel's work and career can very

much be seen as a continuation and further application of the insights and interests of these various important authors⁵⁴.

Garfinkel's first published article *Color Trouble* in 1940 considers the issue of racial prejudices and preconceptions⁵⁵, which was followed by his masters' research on inter- and intra-racial homicides. Here, he looked at types of trials, indictments, convictions, and sentences as categorized by race of offender and victim, research that was published in *Social Forces* in 1949. In *Research Notes on Inter- and Intra-racial Homicides* (1949), Garfinkel actually puts Husserl's concept of attitude to work in analyzing how offenders get involved in a system of procedures of definition and redefinition of social identities and circumstances.

Garfinkel's PhD thesis *The Perception of the Other: A Study in Social Order* (1952) was concerned with the conditions under which a person makes continuous sense of the world around him. Garfinkel found that there are several competing theories of social order that constitute the phenomenon in different ways. In the first part of his thesis he compared Parsons and Schutz' theoretical work in terms of how they articulated a frame of reference, the concept of the actor, the concept of action, the concept of an order of objects, and the concept of a social relationship. In the second part of his thesis

⁵⁴ Garfinkel (2002) also credits other influences whom I will not review in more detail in this chapter such as Howard Odum, Guy Johnson, and Margaret Hagood for introducing him to professional sociology at the University of North Carolina, Louis Katsoff for exposing him to phenomenology and analytic philosophy in the social sciences, Sigmund Kock and Alisdair MacIntyre for guidance on gestalt psychology and field theory, along with his teachers from Harvard above such as Parsons, Frederick Mosteller, Samuel Stouffer, Jerome Bruner, Gordon Allport, Robert Freed Bales, and Pitirim Sorokin.

⁵⁵ There are several dates associated with the publication of *Color Trouble* because it has appeared in multiple locations. Keith Doubt in *Garfinkel Before Ethnomethodology* (1989) traces that history from the first publication in *Opportunity*, 'a journal of Negro life' in 1940, to its publication in *The Best Short Stories* in 1941 before it ultimately appeared in Bucklin Moon's edited collection of essays and short stories called *Primer for White Folks* (1945).

Garfinkel sought to offer a set of constructs and vocabulary of conditions under which an organization of experience is possible.

Garfinkel compared, and ultimately chose between, Parsons and Schutz' theories of social order by subjecting them to experimental test. This marked the beginning of a career-long focus on conducting meticulous empirical work for the purposes of observing, describing, and analyzing social order. Many of these empirical studies appeared in Garfinkel's most famous work, his 1967 *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, which comprises articles written over a twelve-year period based on his application of insights from Parsons, Schutz, Gurwitsch, and Husserl.

Once he completed his MA and PhD work, one of the first empirical studies Garfinkel pursued was the study of jury deliberations. This interest stemmed, at least in part, from his work on the various functions of trials he observed during his master's work published in *Research Notes on Inter- and Intra-Racial Homicides* (1949). In looking at juror deliberations, Garfinkel studies how jurors make decisions, how they come to an agreement amongst themselves as to what actually happened. Garfinkel writes that "they decide 'the facts,' among alternative claims about speeds of travel or extent of injury, jurors decide which may be correctly used as the basis for further inferences and action. They do this by consulting the consistency of alternative claims with common sense models". (1967d: 106) It is how these claims stack up against common sense that leads to a determination that this is what really happened. And yet, Garfinkel finds that in interviews, jurors mask the extent to which that was the case. Instead, jurors talk about how their decision was based on procedures depicted in the official line, how they arrived at this decision through carefully following the rules of

decision-making, and stress that they understood expectations from the beginning rather than as something they picked up as part of the process.

Essentially, Garfinkel finds that jurors did not actually have an understanding of the conditions that defined a correct decision until after the decision had been made.

“Only in retrospect did they decide what they did that made their decisions correct ones. When the outcome was in hand they went back to find the ‘why,’ the things that led up to the outcome, and then in order to give their decisions some order, which namely, is the ‘officialness’ of the decision”. (1967d: 114)

Garfinkel draws on Cassirer’s ‘law of continuity’ and ‘law of new emphasis’ to describe how an actor’s own actions are first order determinants of the sense that situations have. He ultimately finds that the sophisticated juror is less a replica of the judge and better conceived as a lay person who can alter the grounds of his decisions based on changes to the jury’s structure and operations. This study on jury deliberations would offer a wealth of insights toward Garfinkel’s understanding of what social order looks like in particular everyday settings. In fact, in *Ethnomethodology’s Program: Working Out Durkheim’s Aphorism* (2002), Garfinkel credits his study of audiotaped jury deliberations in the federal district court in Wichita, Kansas with Saul Mendlovitz with being the beginning of his Ethnomethodology program. It is following his study of the work of jurors that Garfinkel suggests at the 1953 annual meetings of the American Sociological Association that Ethnomethodology ought to be recognized as its own distinctive pursuit.

In addition to his work on jurors, Garfinkel also studies the process by which an individual’s total identity is lowered through what he calls ‘status degradation ceremonies.’ Garfinkel (1956) cites Max Scheler as arguing that all societies provide the sufficient features to induce shame, which makes the structural conditions of status degradation universal to all societies. The question Garfinkel investigates is “what

program of communicative tactics will get the work of status degradation done?” (1956: 421). Garfinkel finds that moral indignation serves to affect the ritual destruction of the person denounced and in doing so reinforces group solidarity⁵⁶. The transformation of identities is the destruction of one social object and the constitution of another. This takes place through a set of processes that includes removing the event and perpetrator from the realm of their everyday character, regarding the denouncer as acting on behalf of the group and in the name of the values that have been transgressed, and situating the perpetrator as falling outside the group. These are the conditions that must be fulfilled for a successful denunciation to take place. Garfinkel concludes that “factors conditioning the effectiveness of degradation tactics are provided in the organization and operation of the system of action within which the degradation occurs” (1956: 424).

This is only one way in which society exerts control over the transfer of persons from one status to another. Garfinkel also investigates how these controls were particularly restrictive and rigorously enforced where sexual statuses are concerned. Sex composition is highly dichotomized between the ‘natural’ entities of male and female and provides very few, if any, legitimate paths towards change. Garfinkel’s work includes individuals who had several anatomical irregularities but who subscribed to the dominant cultural conception of a dichotomized sex composition. Garfinkel is particularly interested in what he called the ‘passing’, which is “the work of achieving and making secure their rights to live in the elected sex status while providing for the possibility of detection and ruin carried out within the socially structured conditions in which this work occurred” (1956: 118). Garfinkel shows that the experiences of intersexed persons permit

⁵⁶ Garfinkel (1956) points to Kenneth Burke’s *A Grammar of Motive* and specifically to his discussion of the sociological relevance of the relationship between concerns for essence and concerns for origins as a potential inspiration for his own work in this context.

an appreciation of the omnirelevance of sexual statuses to affairs of daily life as an invariant but unnoticed background feature that is otherwise often taken for granted⁵⁷. Garfinkel uses this research to contrast his approach to Goffman's management of impressions, which he characterizes as more episodic in nature. Garfinkel essentially sought to demonstrate "how normal sexuality is accomplished through witnessable displays of talk and conduct, as standing processes of practical recognition, which are done in singular and particular occasions as a matter of course" (1967e: 180). This witnessable quality is a key feature of Garfinkel's approach to the study of social order as an example of how "members produce stable, accountable practical activities, i.e., social structures of everyday activities" (1967e: 185) and is an example of a reflexive accomplishment.

One of the phenomena that Garfinkel was most interested in studying empirically was the queue. An almost universal feature around the world, the queue displays properties of orderliness, and yet Garfinkel finds that it is hardly known to the social sciences' methods and focus. Garfinkel points to the queue as a noteworthy phenomenon for various reasons. The queue exhibits a phenomenon of order in ordinary society immediately and directly, without the need for what he calls generic representational theories. Furthermore, the queue is a widespread phenomenon whose ordinariness is both locally produced and locally recognized. And yet this phenomenon, which Garfinkel sees

⁵⁷ It is noteworthy that Agnes, Garfinkel's most famous case and on which many of his findings are based, was later revealed to not be intersexed as originally believed. Although seen by Dr. Robert J. Stoller, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Dr. Alexander Rosen, a psychologist, and by Garfinkel himself, some years after the study was conducted Agnes confessed that she had been born a male and had taken significant female hormones over an extensive period of time to transform her body into the female form. Garfinkel revealed this in an appendix published in *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967b) while claiming that most of his findings were still valid despite having been fooled by Agnes. In *Harold and Agnes: A Feminist Narrative Undoing* (1990), Norman Denzin discusses some of the implications for Garfinkel arising from the constructed nature of Agnes' narrative.

as distinctive to the social sciences because “it is achieved by a congregation, endogenously, without mediation, in the witnessed coherence and certainty of its details” (2003: 22), is virtually absent from the literature. In his 2003 work *Phenomenal Field Properties of Order in Formatted Queues and Their Neglected Standing in the Current Situation of Inquiry*, Garfinkel argues that the phenomenon of the queue, neglected by the social sciences, is a type of social order which his ethnomethodology program is built around.

These various studies build on the foundation Garfinkel lays out in *The Perception of the Other. A Study in Social Order* (1952), a work that investigates the problem of social order. Although there are many competing theories and Garfinkel found that the problem of social order is always relative to the language that portrays it, he ultimately chooses Schutz’s theory because of its focus on the role played by time. Garfinkel argues that an investigation of social order is above all an investigation of the problems of permanence and change and he is drawn to Schutz’s Husserl-inspired phenomenology and its associated vocabulary to study what people do and why they do it. The problem of social order then gets constituted as “the problem of the conditions of the actor’s make-up under which his actions as part of a system of normative activity maintain the conditions of the actor’s make-up” (1952: 151). Garfinkel spends much of the second half of his dissertation, and ultimately his career, developing and extending Schutz’s phenomenological approach to the sociological study of social order.

Through his dissertation and these and various other empirical studies, Garfinkel soon finds that there exists a locally produced order of things that makes up a massive domain of organizational phenomena. Classic studies of work’s existence rely on the use of this domain while simultaneously ignoring it as an object of study. This domain being

ignored is a produced feature of ordinary society and accompanies ordinary society's locally produced orderliness. Further, Garfinkel writes in *Ethnomethodological Studies of Work* that "the domain is ignored is a systematically produced feature of ordinary society's practical objectivity, its observability, its recognition, its understanding, or its analysis" (1982: 20). It is these characteristics, this witnessability of social order demonstrated in the deliberations of jurors, in the status degradation ceremonies, in his study of 'passing' and sex composition, and in queues that become the Garfinkel's sole professional preoccupation throughout his career. Garfinkel's preoccupation with empirical investigations and not theoretical debates dominates his career, as demonstrated by the content of his publications. Nonetheless, we will now turn to an examination of some of the theoretical tools Garfinkel does make use of in the study of social order.

Section Two: Developing a Phenomenological Toolkit

Now that the concern with social order is established, the second section of this chapter discusses some of the key phenomenological tools that Garfinkel deploys in his attempts to study social order directly. This section begins with a discussion of Garfinkel's views on objectivity and subjectivity and his rejection of correspondence theory of reality in favor of a coherence theory of reality, and how this fits with his embrace of phenomenology and the application of its insights to the sociological study of social order. I then discuss Garfinkel's use and understanding of the concepts of experience, cognitive styles, epoché, noesis-noema, invariance, and attention, work that is all directly or indirectly influenced by Husserl, Parsons, and Schutz to various degrees. A review of these concepts, and what Garfinkel finds useful about them, will lead to a particular theory of the subject and a theory of action, culminating with Garfinkel

distinguishing between various types of rationalities. Garfinkel endorses the existence of the distinction between a scientific attitude and a natural attitude, developed by Schutz, concluding with the central role played by time. A review of key roles these features play in the study of social order completes the foundation of Garfinkel's development of ethnomethodology.

Garfinkel states "every instrument in a rational discipline is the embodiment in miniature of an underlying philosophy of inquiry" (2005: 101). While he did not write extensively about ontological and epistemological matters and the philosophical underpinnings of his approach, his views, all put on paper at the beginning of his career, can be found in *The Perception of the Other. A Study in Social Order* (1952), *Seeing Sociologically: The Routine Grounds of Social Action* (2005), and *Towards a Sociological Theory of Information* (2008). Garfinkel begins by asking "how will we conceive the relationship between the theories that we make about concrete objects and the concrete objects?" (2008: 125), a decision, he claims, that cannot be simply passed off to philosophers.

In these writings, Garfinkel explains why he rejects the correspondence theory of reality in favor of what he calls the congruence theory of reality. A correspondence theory of reality is predicated on the existence of difference between the perceived object of the 'outer world' and the concrete object of the actual world. Here, the function of any conceptual scheme is to render some sort of approximation of what is in reality out there. From this approach stems a view of the world of real objects that is independent of historical conditions. An analytical model, then, is not judged only with reference to its utility for the observer but also with reference to the extent to which it accurately reproduces the reality that is out there. And yet, Garfinkel writes, "this test of accuracy

does not consist of a comparison of what the observer says is out there with what is really out there as it is determined by criteria independent of those employed by the observer (a position that would make the tester akin to an interpreter of God's secret intent) but accuracy is an automatic result of acting with proper regard for the canons of logico-empirical inquiry” (2008: 126). And yet the correspondence between the real world and the product of logical-empirical inquiry is unproblematic. Garfinkel argues that because scientists and actors treat concrete objects in terms of selected features, it means they are dealing with conceptualized objects understood within empirical systems of constructions, and that has a different set of ontological and epistemological implications. Garfinkel asks “what is involved when the observer elects to ‘see sociologically’” (2005: 165).

As a result of these debates, Garfinkel embraces what he calls a ‘congruence’ theory of reality. Here the perceived object of the ‘outer world’ is the concrete object, and the two terms mean precisely the same thing. “Rather than there being a world of real objects cut this way and that, the cake is constituted in the very act of cutting” (2008: 128). There is no approximated reality since the world is just as it appears; there is nothing behind it. With this approach, the view is that the facts approximate the theory and not that the theory approximates the facts. From this perspective, the ways in which something is of interest to a witness is all of the ways in which that thing is real⁵⁸. The concreteness is found in the object constituted as a unity of meanings and not in the sensory characters through which the object is apprehended. An actual object is thus a meaningfully unified set of experiences. That is, the object appears only through its

⁵⁸ Garfinkel (2008) draws on William James here to argue that every world is real only while it is attended to, and that reality lapses with attention.

schema. The schema of specifications is, in fact, precisely the object itself.

Unlike correspondence theory then, the question for congruence theory focuses not on what the objective world is and what objective knowledge is, but rather, what the varieties of objective worlds are and what the varieties of objective knowledge are. Here, talk surrounds a pluralism of worlds, multiple realities. Garfinkel rejects the naturalistic conception of objectivity that “refers to the fact that an intended object can be intended in the same way more than once and regardless of the mode of awareness” (2005: 141) and is seen as a reflection of nature’s uniformities. Instead, through the congruence theory of reality, an empirical law is a statement of the unities of observer experiences. Garfinkel understands the world as intersubjective, one that offers a texture of meaning which we must interpret in order to find our bearings within it. This leads to rejecting what Garfinkel sees as the false duality between subjective and objective data, and instead understands that the complete objective character of a statement is found in what the other actors make of said statement. The question of whether or not a world is objective is not, in this view, a question that philosophers must decide for an experiencer. Garfinkel argues that “the objective character for the actor of the thing that is experienced is found in the unity of meanings that a set of possibilities hold” (2008: 137). Thus, as every experience is an experience of something, every world is an objective world. In this framework subjectivity is equated with meaninglessness. “A world experienced subjectively is a world experienced without meaning, and hence without objects, without objectivity, and without interest” (2008: 137).

From this, the implication for social science is that in order to portray the actor’s actions we need to know how things look to him, to understand what significances he attaches to the things of his world or worlds. Hence, it means rejecting any notions

regarding how the world 'really' is, which for Garfinkel also means rejecting ontology designed to measure the actor's deviation from 'true reality' and 'true objectivity'. Instead, we must empirically study what makes up the actor's ontological assumptions. This is not to say that the world is witnessed by him alone and in his own time. Rather, Garfinkel stresses that the continuity of the actor's experiences rests squarely on a view that he holds of a world that is interpersonally constituted and maintained. According to congruence theory, a theory serves the function of organizing possibilities of experience to present the experiencer with one out of many possible objective worlds. Congruence theory allows Garfinkel to problematize what correspondence theory of reality assumes: the properties of rationality in the social world.

Adopting a congruence theory of reality and seeing the problem of social order as relative to the theory in which it is constituted thus raises the question of what mechanism of adjudication to select. Garfinkel argues that, under the view of theories as conventions, choices are made on the basis of aesthetics, pragmatic purposes, authority, allegiance, revelation and so forth. Given this, he asks whether there is a principle of selection that permits us to overcome the apparent 'arbitrary' grounds for preferring one scheme to another.⁵⁹ Garfinkel proposes that the selection process should consist of identifying the general analytical problems with reference to which a theory of order would have to furnish a decision. Then,

the decisions that any theory made could then be examined for the interpretive and investigative consequences that eventuate. Questions of acceptance, revision, or discard would then be decided on the basis of how closely the investigator felt it advisable to approximate the ideals of rational consistency and experiential fit, an order of questions that are easily decided on the basis of how much work one needs to get out of a theory in order to get a given order of tasks accomplished

⁵⁹ Garfinkel argues (1952) that as 'scientists-at-work' we do act as if we were in fact using such a principle even while we experience trouble in effecting a selection.

(1952: 30).

While Garfinkel did not write extensively about phenomenology, his work is certainly a phenomenologically inspired sociology. For Garfinkel (2008) the term phenomenology refers simply to the rules that are found operating in any perspective, whether scientific, religious, aesthetic, or practical, and whereby certain areas of experience are regarded with a neutral attitude and made non-relevant while others are accorded importance and seen as relevant matters of fact. For him, every philosophy, every theory, every attitude toward the world has its relevant phenomenology. As such, there are many phenomenologies to choose from. This is discussed explicitly in his dissertation *The Perception of the Other. A Study in Social Order* (1952) where he compares two main phenomenological attitudes, the neo-Kantian phenomenology he sees as prevalent in social science at the time, as found in the work of Cassirer, Lewin, Freud, Mead, Weber, and Parsons, and the Husserlian phenomenology represented in Schutz's work.⁶⁰

Garfinkel draws several distinctions between Parsons and Schutz, two important influences in his intellectual development, before ultimately picking Schutz as the best fit for his own ambition⁶¹. He argues that while Parsons asks 'how can we believe our eyes?', Schutz asks 'how do we believe our eyes?', a distinction Garfinkel views as considerable. While for Parsons, the empirical construct stands to the object as a sort of

⁶⁰ While it seldom comes up again in his published writings, during the course of the 1968 Purdue Symposium on ethnomethodology where Garfinkel explains and discusses his program with a number of sociologists, both supporters and skeptics, he describes his work as phenomenological and existential philosophical studies of ordinary activities.

⁶¹ While Garfinkel's biggest influence is Husserlian phenomenology as embodied by Schutz, he does acknowledge the important role on the development of his thought played by Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Gurwitsch. He writes in *Temporal Order in Laboratory Work* (1983) that part of his focus on the irreducible embodiment of the activities exhibiting a worldly 'reasoning' has its origin in the writings of Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1968) and Heidegger (1962, 1967). Also, in *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working Out Durkheim's Aphorism* (2002) Garfinkel claims that he deliberately misreads Gurwitsch and Merleau-Ponty to appropriate their policies, methods and themes of gestalt phenomena towards his purpose.

specification abstracted from the concrete object in accordance with the actor's interests, for Schutz the object is itself constituted according to the actor's interests, with nothing left over. This has important implications, according to Garfinkel, because he sees Schutz as eschewing difference between the intended object and the concrete object. The two terms mean the same thing. Meaning is not attached to the actual object, but rather, the object becomes actual through the meanings that together are constitutive of the object, as it becomes meaningful in the moment of recognition. Hence, subject and object are simultaneously constituted as a unified field. This means an abolition of the objective-subjective categories, a divide aiming to represent two worlds different from each other. The most important research implication from Schutz's approach is that researchers avoid discovering in the world that which they themselves have put there, but rather investigate how people "go about the business of constructing, testing, maintaining, altering, validating, questioning, defining the orders that in various degrees and in various ways match each other in contents and organization" (2008: 119).

Garfinkel is interested in what he calls the problem of consistency of experience and its various implications for social scientific work. At its most basic, what does it mean when an individual tells another, 'I understand'?⁶² In his dissertation, *The Perception of the Other. A Study in Social Order* (1952) and his 2005 work *Seeing Sociologically: The Routine Grounds of Social Action*, Garfinkel identifies and discusses several critical meanings of the concept 'organization of experience' such as continuity of

⁶² The origin of the importance of the problem of meaning for Garfinkel emerged out of his time in North Carolina studying Husserl's transcendental phenomenological philosophy and gestalt psychology. Garfinkel partly credits Aron Gurwitsch, where in *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working Out Durkheim's Aphorism* (2002) he writes that Gurwitsch's arguments on the functional significations and their coherence of figural contexture in its empirical perception details laid out in his *Fields of Consciousness* (1978) was often missed as Ethnomethodology's key resource in identifying its concerns to specify "the problem of meaning" with a program of certain positive empirical researches and instruction in sociology's identifying 'problem of social order' (2002: 84).

experience, consistency of experience, and compatibility of experiences with one another.

⁶³⁶⁴ Continuity of experience is defined by the terms of the act components, quality, matter, and meaning essence. Consistency of experience and compatibility of experiences, the second and third concepts, are defined in terms of the 'inner horizon' and the 'outer horizon' respectively. All three criteria are related to the notion of the temporal horizon, because the concept of the finite province of meaning, in answering the question as to how a thing is real, refers back to the elements of cognitive styles, tying meanings to 'mode of time consciousness'.

This phenomenological approach to experience and meaning leads Garfinkel to adopt Schutz's use of cognitive styles and its associated vision of the many co-existing finite provinces of meaning. A cognitive style is defined by a particular epoché, a specific form of sociality, a specific mode of attention to life, a specific form of spontaneity, a specific mode of time consciousness, and a specific way of experiencing the self. It is with reference to a specific cognitive style that Schutz and then Garfinkel say what an object means for the actors, how it is real, in what sense it is objective, what the terms of its existence are.⁶⁵ Several different cognitive styles are identified, such as the provinces of meaning of the everyday, of dreams, of fantasy, of art, of religious experience, of scientific contemplation, of the play world of the child, of the world of the insane, and more. Consistency and compatibility of experiences exist with respect to peculiar cognitive styles but not necessarily between them, which is why the provinces are

⁶³ Garfinkel (2005) also finds value in the writings of Sigmund Freud and Kenneth Burke on this question of the structures of experience.

⁶⁴ Garfinkel also wrote extensively about information as another aspect of the organization of experience, although these writings were not assembled together and published until his the publication of *Towards a Sociological Theory of Information* in 2008 with the collaboration of Anne Warfield Rawls.

⁶⁵ This builds on the work of William James for whom the origin of all reality is subjective; whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real. There are multiple numbers of orders of reality each with its own style of experience which Schutz calls cognitive styles.

considered finite. The passing from one to another can only be performed through a radical modification in the mode of attention to life. The world of working in daily life is the archetype of our experience of reality whereas all other provinces of meaning are considered to be its modifications.

Part of the mission of the social scientist now is empirically to map out these various cognitive styles, as embodied by various social groups, and their associated actions. But Garfinkel argues that the finite province of meaning is not to be sought 'under the skull' or 'by looking through the eyes of the other fellow', for it is not 'in the mind' but, rather, is solely revealed in what Garfinkel calls "every shade of observed behavior" (1952: 345). The implication here is that we cannot rely simply on asking a person to tell us what she sees, but rather we have to be able to observe it ourselves. Garfinkel (2005) is interested in describing the regularities of actions with the use of the terms influence, power, force, and so on, as various designations of a social relationship. He is also interested in studying the relations between the elements of cognitive styles, the nature of the transformations of cognitive style that occurs during communication, the conditions under which these transformations occur, the principles of regularity which describe the kinds of transformations, the relations of cognitive style to conduct (noesis-noema structures), the organizational characteristics of noesis-noema relations, their transformations that are typical to various types of combinations of cognitive styles, and principles of regularity which describe the noesis-noema transformations.

Before we turn to a discussion of noesis-noema, I want to take a few moments to lay out Garfinkel's understanding and use of the phenomenological concept of epoché. The epoché may be defined in terms of a particular set of principles that define the areas of the world as meaningfully relevant to the actor. It involves 'bracketing the world' in

particular ways associated with specific cognitive styles. With each epoché comes a certain set of assumptions and omissions, for the epoché of the natural attitude involves the suspension of doubt that the objects of the world are as they appear according to communally valid canons of judgment, and communally valid principles of relevance. All epochés are modifications of the epoché of the natural attitude and no epoché is general enough completely to reduce or bracket the character of the epoché of the natural attitude. Garfinkel argues that the epoché is not to be equated in meaning with the phenomenon of perceptual selectivity, but rather that phenomenon of perceptual selectivity is deducible from knowledge of the epoché, of the cognitive style in question.⁶⁶

Garfinkel (2005) argues that the key to explain the continuity and organization of experience is through Husserl's theory of the noesis-noema structures. Husserl's noesis-noema doctrine is not an explanatory theory. It is a descriptive statement of an objectivating mental state; a description of a mental state through which the experiencing subject is confronted with an object. Every mental state of this kind must be accounted for by terms of identity and temporality. Unlike the traditional conception of consciousness where emphasis is placed upon temporality, the succession of acts, and the variations of each act by its duration, Husserl's conception of consciousness states that the temporal event in the stream of consciousness must have reference to a sense, an ideal unity. Identity is to be acknowledged as a fact irreducible to any other.

Garfinkel's views on identity constancy as a function of interpreter's experience are linked to this question of the continuity of experience. By constancy, Garfinkel means "the practical lack of change over a time span of n-length in the significances of the

⁶⁶ However, Garfinkel (1952) argues that only in the case of the epoché of transcendental phenomenology would we be provided an epoché that yields a presuppositionless position.

identity's terms for an actor, within a given finite province of meaning" (2005: 127).

Constancy should not be assumed but should be empirically demonstrated. In order to speak of constancy we need to establish identity in terms of the coordinators of time and sameness of meaning. This moves Garfinkel away from the notion of a 'real person' and, instead, asks under what conditions a person's interpreter regards this person as the same. Under this view, identity constancy is the actor having reified a cluster of life's possibilities as being the same person.

When an object is perceived, there is, on the one hand, the act as a real event. The act as an event occurs at a certain point in phenomenal time; it appears, lasts, and disappears never to return. On the other hand, there is what, in the concrete experience, stands before the observer as the thing experienced. Noema is the perception while noesis is the act. It is this noetic-noematic relationship to which Husserl's concept 'intentionality' refers. Here, consciousness is to be defined with reference to a sphere of meaning. To experience an act is the same as to actualize a meaning. Every fact of consciousness must be treated in terms of the relation 'experiencing subject to thing experienced as it is experienced'. No mental state can be accounted for except for the objective sense whereby the experiencing subject, through her act, becomes aware. Now, the implications for Garfinkel and the work that he does is the problem for the investigator, who would describe the properties of the objects that the actor is treating. She would not separate those persons who reify from those who do not, but would instead describe the multitude of ways in which reification is accomplished.

Garfinkel tells us that attention is the basic regulative principle of our conscious life; it defines the realm of our world that is relevant to us. Here, Garfinkel once again draws from Husserl in discussing attention as a modalized intention, as the general

structure that belongs as an integral part to the organization of experience. From this vantage point, to say that one pays attention is to say that one attends, which is the same as the expression 'one intends a field of objects'. To talk about a shift in attention means nothing more than to say that the field has undergone an alteration. The task of the social scientist, Garfinkel (1952) tells us, is to specify the nature of this alteration. That means studying the properties of intentional fields such as transformability and span, and the invariant feature of 'directionality'. Action then is defined as the difference between two intentional fields separated by a temporal interval.

Garfinkel argues that there is a persistent discrepancy between the rational properties of the ideal scientist's knowledge and the layperson's knowledge, yet the rational properties of everyday life are assigned a residual status in most theories of social action. Garfinkel seeks to remedy this by reintroducing as a problem for empirical inquiry the various rational properties of conduct, as well as the conditions of a social system under which various rational behaviors occur.

Garfinkel (2002) defines action as meaningful intentional experience. He does not mean in the sense of a physical activity or psychic functions, but following Schutz, views action as rules of procedures where manifestations of a person's 'spontaneous life', meaning gestures, talk, movement, posture, and so on, are assigned significance by the observer in her task of interpreting an 'other'. The data accumulated are the manifesting signs of spontaneous life into more or less technical representations of the subject's experiences in ways meaningful for him. The data consist of symbolic expressions and the transformations of these expressions. This involves the study of bodily movements that are part of the 'expressional field' and are accessible to interpretation as signs of the communicator's thought. Although the scientist is always interested in interpreting the

subject's action with reference to some analytical scheme, when the goal is to predict the regularities of the subject's flow of experience, she is consistently faced with the problem of testing her model against a batting average of successful predictions. When the subject acts differently than expected, it is the model and not the subject that must be challenged and changed.

Garfinkel (2002) argues that an action has been described when its four elements have been specified. The first is the 'quality' of an act, the noesis by which we refer to the meaning element of judgment, feeling, desire, assertion, denial, hope, fear, affirmation, etc. Second, the quality of the act always has a reference to the 'material' or noema of the act, by which we mean that which is judged, felt, desired, asserted, denied, hoped for, etc. A third element is the 'meaning-essence' of the act by which is meant that the object which is meant is just the way that it is meant. The fourth and last factor is the vividness, the clarity or distinctness with which the content is 'presented'. The terms 'action' and 'behavior' thus designate the empirical data. Garfinkel (2005) argues that all the statements and only the statements that describe behaviors or actions or that are reducible to statements that describe behaviors or actions are to be counted statements of sociologically empirical fact. According to Garfinkel, this means that questions such as 'what is man⁶⁷?' or 'what is society', in their substantive sense, are sociologically unanswerable.

Garfinkel uses the term actor as the agent of an action. He does this to allow the observer to distinguish the difference between oneself and the referents of the action she is intent on studying. The actor is represented once a particular cognitive style and its

⁶⁷ Garfinkel also used gendered language in his career. That language has been modernized except when using direct quotes

noesis-noema structures have been described.⁶⁸ An actor is not a 'concrete entity', not 'the whole person'. Garfinkel's actor does not live in the physical, social or private world, but instead lives in a symbolic world. The purpose is to investigate what the actor 'sees', how he 'sees', and under what conditions he will 'see' in any particular way. For Garfinkel the actor is an experience, a 'reader' of his world, an interpreter, a 'critic'. The world 'exists' for him, which is to say that the objects he encounters and describes as existent, real, and objective are existent, real, and objective in particular ways. It is a world that is conceived as nothing else than reified possibilities of experience. Given the fact that the 'face' of the world looks the same for many actors, the observer's problem is to account for the conditions under which this will or will not be the case. Under this model there are no provisions for such things as basic needs, purposes, drives, basic motivations or basic purposes, but these concepts, and others, are used solely on the basis of the evidence that social scientists encounter with regard to the actor's various modes of experiencing.⁶⁹

Another part of Garfinkel's theory of action is the concept of strategy, which he employs to speak about how an actor cannot present her 'stream of thought' in one instant. Communication is a temporal process. It is a selective ordering process that leads to information being shared 'piece by piece' to others. The cognitive style of the actor

⁶⁸ Garfinkel is partly distinguishing actor from the notion of person. Person is someone you interview. Persons, however, do not act, nor is a group made up of persons. Actors act, and a group is made up of actors. Groups do not 'exist', they are an analytical construct, a scheme of interpretation, a group is meant. A group is a designator of certain interpretive rules of procedures.

⁶⁹ Garfinkel (2002) is quick to point out that this approach does not mean the usual 'seeing things from the actor's point of view' or 'taking the role of the other'. Both of these notions, in his mind, are deeply flawed and are anchored by a transition from dealing with the actor as a theoretical object within the cognitive style of scientific appraisal to bringing under consideration another and different scientific object, namely, the model representative of the self-identified actor. Both are operating within the scientific attitude and cannot, in the literal sense, from that attitude, see things from the natural attitude. I will turn to a more in-depth discussion of those distinguishable cognitive styles in a moment.

affects the 'plan' and style of this presentation. Strategy refers to the total organization of the content and temporal positions of cues which make up a course of action. Garfinkel (2002) writes that this strategy is not necessarily organized consciously. In fact, he argues "so much of communication is repetitive in purpose and circumstance that most strategies drop out of awareness, so that it is only when a regularity is interrupted, as in preparing a term paper, meeting a strange person, talking with a superior, that one gives conscious consideration to such a matter as arrangement" (2002: 185).⁷⁰

Garfinkel (2005) argues that if we ask for the meaning of a person's conduct in the sense of the scientific meaning of the person's conduct, then we must look to the observer to furnish it. Garfinkel points out that Weber's definition of action as behavior with a meaning attached to it would work for him if it is the observer who does the attaching and not the person whose behavior is being observed. It is the observer who experiences the act in reflection, beyond its actuality, the observer who applies categories and procedures to attach 'meaning'.

Garfinkel (1952) distinguishes between the actor as the personal ideal type conceived by the scientist as a dummy and the real person. When describing the actor, the scientist says that she acts rationally if she acts the way she does with a clear scientific knowledge of all the elements relevant to her choice, which is to say that the real actor would act in that manner if she were to view her world as a scientist would view it. If the actor fails to act on the basis of what can be known about the world, she is said to fail to act rationally. Garfinkel argues that the real person acts in a manner according to her conditions and in pursuit of whatever ends, and with recourse to whatever means that, as

⁷⁰ This discussion and use of strategy by Garfinkel has many parallels with Bourdieu's discussion and use of habitus.

she sees it, are sufficient to retain the reasonableness of her endeavor, and that this constitutes a different type of rationality. Action in the outer world is possible in no small part because it does not follow the ideal of scientific rationality but instead follows what is called common sense rationality.

Garfinkel's view is again based on the work of Alfred Schutz who inventoried a whole series of behaviors, which he referred to as 'the rationalities'. Garfinkel discusses many of those uses of the term rationality in *The Rational Properties of Scientific and Common Sense Activities* (1960). These include categorizing and comparing behaviors where a person searches their experience for a situation with which to compare the one he addresses. It also includes a person looking for a 'goodness of fit' between an observation and a theory. Rationality is sometimes used to mean that a person reviews rules of procedures that in the past have yielded practical effects now desired. The term rationality is frequently used to call attention to the fact that a person, in assessing a situation, anticipates the alterations that her actions will produce. The term rationality is also used with the phenomenon strategy where various forms of planning are employed. Rationality can speak to the types of grounds on which a choice will be made as well as to the compatibility of ends-means relationships in certain situations. Rationality can also mean the process of offering semantic clarity and distinctiveness to an observation or description. It is also used to speak about a behavior and definition of a situation's compatibility with scientific knowledge. Finally, rationality frequently refers to a person's feelings that accompany her conduct, for example 'affective neutrality', 'unemotional', 'detached', 'disinterested', and 'impersonal'.

Building on Schutz, Garfinkel argues that extending the features of this behavioral type to incorporate all of the preceding rationalities provides a distinction between the

interests of everyday life and the interests of scientific theorizing. Whereas only some of these rationalities can be said to comprise the 'scientific rationalities', others are more often used by persons whose actions are governed by the 'attitude of daily life'.

Garfinkel's argument is that scientific rationalities are sanctioned ideals only in the case of actions governed by the attitude of scientific theorizing. By contrast, actions governed by the attitude of daily life are marked by the specific absence of these scientific rationalities either as stable properties or as sanctionable ideals. Yet other rationalities can occur in actions governed by either attitude as both stable properties and sanctionable ideals. The distinction is between the rationality, or lack thereof, of the actor in the scientist's theoretical scheme, and the rationality of real persons operating in the everyday world.

Garfinkel proposes that the 'problem of rationality' of everyday action be investigated and established empirically rather than compared to an idealized notion. Instead of using the vision of the ideal scientist as a means for constructing descriptive categories of behavior such as rational, nonrational, irrational, and arational, he suggests instead that we study the actual rationalities a person's behaviors exhibit in the course of managing their practical affairs. Rather than treating the properties of rationality as a methodological principle for interpreting activity, they are to be treated only as empirically problematical material that has to be accounted for in the same way that the more familiar properties of conduct are accounted.⁷¹ This requires paying far more

⁷¹ Garfinkel (1960: 1967e) links this endeavor to Max Weber who is part of a long line of sociologists who have been concerned with the task of describing the conditions of organized social life under which the phenomena of rationality in conduct occurs. Garfinkel lauds Weber for being one of the few distinguishing between substantive and formal forms of rationality in his work, but he sees him as having done so solely on the basis of keen methodological intuition, not on empirical grounds which is what Garfinkel himself sets out to do.

attention to what Garfinkel calls 'routine', what a person must be able to take-for-granted, to take under trust on which a person's ability to act 'rationally' rests.⁷² These trusted, taken for granted, background features of the person's situation, which are also described by Garfinkel as the submerged portion of the iceberg, are referred to as mores and folkways by sociologists and constitute features of social order that require far more attention than they have received.

This distinction between scientific rationality and common sense rationality rests on another distinction between two cognitive styles, what Garfinkel, based on Schutz and Husserl before him, called the 'natural attitude' or 'attitude of daily life', in contrast with the 'scientific attitude'. The basic characteristics, which constitute the specific cognitive style of the world of everyday life, the natural attitude, give full attention to life, the suspension of doubt about the world, that the world, as it is known now, and has been known in the past, will be the same tomorrow. The intention is to bring about a projected state of affairs by direct involvement with the outer world, experiencing the self as a totality, a specific form of sociality of the common intersubjective world of communication and social action. With such a natural attitude, our practical experiences prove the unity of the world as working and the hypothesis of its reality, irrefutable. Here, the actor does not seek to understand the world for the sake of understanding herself, but to understand for the sake of realizing her practical plans. Her engagement with the world is governed by pragmatic purposes. Moreover, the natural attitude has a specific time perspective; it is what Garfinkel calls 'time-bound' in the sense that the stream of experience occurs within a temporal scheme where the inner time of memory and

⁷² Garfinkel (1960; 1967e) links this insight to Durkheim's point that the validity and understandability of the terms of a contract depend upon the unstated terms that the contracting parties took for granted as binding upon their actions.

expectations 'intersects' with the standard time measured by clocks as well as through the bodily movements of the actor. Time plays a crucial role in distinguishing the attitude of daily life and the scientific attitude.⁷³

The scientific attitude, on the other hand, rather than suspending doubt about the world as it is, suspends the belief that the world is just as it appears. Persons using the scientific attitude allow themselves to call the entire world into doubt, including any theories such as ontologies that purport to explain the world. This means a very different relationship with the world, one that is populated by open possibilities and minimizes the taken-for-granted elements that are such a central feature of the attitude of daily life. The world is seen as an object of contemplation, one that requires certain disengagement, focused on providing solutions to problems at hand for the sake of the solution and not for the sake of the pragmatic consequences of the solution. Unlike the attitude of daily life, which has a strong 'emotional coloring', the attitude of scientific theorizing is meant to be the product of procedures through which theorists alienate themselves from the objects of the natural world. Whereas maximizing the perspectival view in natural attitudes leads to continuity of activity, in the scientific attitude it leads to discontinuities in activity. The actor in the scientific attitude suspends her 'subjectivity', the relevance of personal position, by depicting a world by definition.

While remaining in the theoretical attitude, the theoretical thinker cannot originally experience and immediately grasp the world of everyday life. Rather, he has to build up an 'artificial device', a model of life populated not with human beings but instead peopled with dummies. These puppets are creatures of his design, ideal types with

⁷³ The central role played by various meanings of time in Garfinkel's phenomenological toolbox will be explored in more detail shortly.

only typical experiences, typical thoughts, and typical behaviors.⁷⁴ The puppet is not born, does not grow up, and is not free in the sense that his acting could transgress the limits of his creator, the social scientist. He is a model of a conscious mind without the faculty of spontaneity and without a will of its own. The puppet has just the kind of knowledge he needs to perform the job for which he was brought into the scientific world. The puppet lives in a world where the ideal type of social action is constructed in such a way that the typical act is performed with distinct knowledge of all the elements relevant to his choices. The scientific attitude is characterized by this process of typification.

Garfinkel (1960) argues that passing from one attitude to the next produces a radical alteration in the person's structuring of events and their relationships. Adopting the scientific attitude means abandoning the system of relevances that prevail within the practical sphere of the natural attitude. Garfinkel (2005) proposes that the prevailing system of relevances in the province of scientific contemplation originates in the voluntary act of the scientist where he states the problem at hand. The anticipated solution becomes the goal; the demarcation of elements that are actually or may become relevant is also served by the statement of the problem. In this statement the scientist enters a preconstituted world of scientific contemplation provided by the historical tradition of his science. This theoretical universe is itself a finite province of meaning with its peculiar cognitive style and implications existing in regard to present and future problems. The scientists' discretion in stating the problem is closely limited by the

⁷⁴ Garfinkel (1952) is quick to point out that this does not mean all sociologists commit what he calls 'intellectualizing', which is attributing to actual persons interpretations that were arrived by an observer seeking to interpret the behaviour of those persons. But it does mean the world is constructed through the theorizing of these ideal types, a theorizing that lacks the center point of the bodily 'here'.

constitutive principle of this branch of his science. Once the problem has been stated, however, no such latitude remains. The process of inquiry must proceed according to the rules of scientific procedure.

Time plays a central role in Garfinkel's phenomenologically-inspired sociology, and in his dissertation as well as other writings he discusses and elaborates on various key meanings of time. What he calls 'times of experience' includes *durée*, phenomenal or inner time, and standard or interpersonally standard time. By standard time, Garfinkel means the socially-validated schemes of temporal reference, which allow the experiencing person to coordinate his activities with those of fellow men and women. There are a variety of standard times such as historical time, the times of everyday life, and the time of the physical laboratory. Phenomenal time refers to the temporal structures that modify the objects of all covert activity, for example objects of fantasizing, dreaming, planning, problem solving. And then, there is the sense of *durée*, which is the form of time constitutive of action, the one without which there is no unity of meaning. The time of *durée* means that an object is located on a scale of temporal distances, which extends into both past and future.⁷⁵ Each object has, as part of its meaning, a temporal meaning. Therefore, experiencing objects includes not only the specifications of the objects but also of their temporal relationships to each other. While the properties of standard time and *durée* have sequentiality and are radically irreversible, this is not the

⁷⁵ Garfinkel does note a fourth important meaning of time, which he claims is practically the discovery of phenomenologists and is what Gurwitsch referred to as time *uberhaupt*. This conception of time represents an object as occurring simultaneously with all other objects in the world. It therefore erases the distinctions between the trivial and the important, with all counting together at the moment of occurrence. Garfinkel (1952) writes that this time of experience is found in certain pathological states such as acute paranoia and that its properties remain to be studied.

case for phenomenal time. It is not only reversible, but can be accelerated, decelerated, or halted.

Building on the work of Husserl and Schutz, Garfinkel speaks of the role played by our bodily movement in the relationship between *durée* or 'inner time' and 'outer time' or standard time. The actor experiences her bodily movements on two planes simultaneously: (1) Insofar as they are movements in the outer world she regards them as events happening in space and spatial time; (2) However, insofar as these events are experienced within as changes that are occurring, that is, as manifestations of her spontaneity pertaining to her stream of consciousness, these events partake of an 'inner time' or *durée*. Garfinkel calls experiencing the working action a series of events in outer and inner time, unifying both dimensions into a single flow: the vivid present. The vivid present therefore originates in an 'intersection' of *durée* and standard time. Both inner and outer horizons are interwoven with a temporal horizon. The present perception is a link in a chain of successive perceptions, each of which had or will have a presence of its own. Though there may be discontinuities, there is no real break in the temporal background encircling the 'here and now' of the actual experience. The absolutely new is inconceivable. Strangeness exists only with familiarity; novelty only by the standard of the ordinary. And to perceive an object means to locate it within a system of expectations.

Each type of social relationship has its own particular type of time perspective, though each type is derived from the vivid present. Garfinkel distinguishes between this vivid present and what he calls the reflective attitude. Living in the vivid present, with its ongoing working acts directed toward the objects and ends to be brought about, the working self experiences itself as the originator of the ongoing acts, and thus as an

undivided total self. It experiences its bodily movements from within; it is only the working self that realizes itself as a unity. On the other hand, when the self in a reflective attitude turns back to the working acts performed, this unity disappears and is replaced by a form of experience where the self that performed the past act is brought into view.

Garfinkel (1963) continues to build on Schutz's work, comparing the time perspective of daily life to the time perspective found in scientific attitude. In her everyday activities, the person reifies the stream of experience into 'time slices' with the use of a scheme of temporal relationships, which she assumes that she and other persons employ in an equivalent and standardized fashion. These include determinations of the 'inner time' of the stream of experiences she coordinates with a socially employed scheme of temporal determinations. She uses the scheme of standard time as a means of scheduling and coordinating her actions with those of others, of gearing her interests to those of others, and of pacing her actions to those of others. Her interest in standard time is directed to the problems such specifications solve in scheduling and coordinating interaction. She assumes, too, that the scheme of standard time is entirely a public enterprise, a kind of 'one big clock identical for all.' Schutz also describes the assumption of this perspective that as events have occurred in the past, they will occur again in the future as the *et cetera* assumption. This is to be distinguished from the time perspective found in the scientific attitude, where there is no intersection between inner and standard time, rather all theorizing takes place in the time of inner experience. Time in the scientific attitude is not to coordinate activities between more than one person, but is to allow a precise statement of the conditions for repeating a set of experiences. In a sense, the actor in the scientific attitude stands outside a temporal scheme and views it as part of the world that she holds under observation.

Garfinkel spent much of his career putting this phenomenologically-inspired understanding and application of time to good use.⁷⁶ This is particularly evident in his *Temporal Order in Laboratory Work* (1983) where he argues that the foundations of scientific objects, events, or demonstrations are exhibited in the temporal 'building', and 'building-up' of those phenomena in actual courses of activity. Garfinkel maps out what he calls the temporal accountability of laboratory practices through the topics of canonical descriptions of lab methods and actual courses of action, the retrospective-prospective assembly of scientific methods on the basis of results in hand, the 'scientific object' as an icon of laboratory temporality, and transitivity. Through this, Garfinkel demonstrates that when monitored in continuous temporal succession, scientific projects show innumerable false-starts, improvised repairs, and situated inquiries as to 'what's going on here?'.⁷⁷

Time is key to understanding the difference between the prospective and the retrospective character of social action. Beyond the work done by these scientists in a laboratory, this understanding is also illustrated in Garfinkel's early empirical investigations of the work of juries. It is rooted in the difference between everyday activities, conducted in a particular temporal process, and the theoretical reflections on social actions taking place after the fact. This is what Anne Rawls (2002) calls narrative sociology; that is, sociology that retrospectively organizes understanding of social action, which may say little about why or how social action occurred in the first place and/or

⁷⁶ There is more unique to Garfinkel's use and understanding of the concept of time, but this will have to be taken up in some other forum. Garfinkel (2008) does reference, for example, the work of Bateson and his model, where communicants 'punctuate' their experiences with what is called the 'grammar of time', contributing to an understanding of the event as constituted through the time of experience.

⁷⁷ Here Garfinkel makes reference to the work of Holton (1975) and his distinction between the 'time trajectory' of science presented in published discourse, the public side of science, versus the trajectory that occurs in the course of actual research activities, or private science.

made sense to members in the context in which it occurred. Ultimately this sociology then points to two different categories of knowledge arising from these different attitudes: common sense knowledge from the natural attitude, and scientific knowledge as a product of the scientific attitude. Understanding this, this chapter will now turn its attention to the issue of common sense and its crucial role in Garfinkel's ethnomethodology.

Section Three: Study of Social Order, Ethnomethodology and Reflexivity

Garfinkel seeks to study common sense rationality and the social order on which it rests. The third section of this chapter focuses on how Garfinkel, phenomenological toolkit in hand, proposes to study social order and the phenomenon of common sense. The section will lay out his discussion of Karl Mannheim's documentary method and how this method studies fact production, as well as his use of the breaching experiment as a way of identifying what Garfinkel calls stable features of concerted actions. All of this leads up to a direct discussion of what ethnomethodology is and the various tasks Garfinkel sets for his program. These tasks stem from Garfinkel's phenomenological understanding of the social world and focus on the notion that activities are locally witnessed and accountable, and that these accounts have an essential reflexivity, which is ignored by most of the traditional sociological pursuits Garfinkel from which seeks to differentiate his program. This section ends with an analysis of reflexivity as a key element that defines and sets apart Garfinkel's ethnomethodological program, an insight that gets at the core of his vision for how sociology ought to be practiced. Thus, while sections one and two provide necessary insight into the history and context of Garfinkel's

ethnomethodology and reflexivity, the third section more directly focuses on the ‘what’ of his program and his use and understanding of reflexivity.

In *Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities* (1964), Garfinkel argues that the common sense world of everyday life is a matter of abiding interest in every discipline as well as an essential preoccupation in sociology. Garfinkel claims “it makes up sociology’s problematic subject matter, enters the very constitution of the sociological attitude, and exercises an odd and obstinate sovereignty over sociologists’ claims to adequate explanation” (1964: 225). Despite the centrality of the topic, however, Garfinkel finds that the immense literature contains very little data and few methods to detect the essential features of everyday life and relate these features to dimensions of social organization. And although sociologists take socially structured scenes of everyday life as a point of departure, they rarely view the general question of how any such common sense world is possible as a task of sociological inquiry in its own right. Instead, the possibility of the everyday world is either settled by theoretical representation or merely assumed, and the work of mapping out and defining the common sense world of everyday life neglected. What Garfinkel proposes, building on the important work of Alfred Schutz once again, is the ‘rediscovery’ of the socially sanctioned grounds of inference and action that people use in their everyday affairs, of the common sense knowledge of social structures. He argues that the constitution of knowledge cannot be analyzed independently of the contexts in which they are generated.

Garfinkel maps out the contour of this work in a pair of articles. In *Common Sense Knowledge of Social Structures: The Documentary Method of Interpretation in Lay and Professional Fact Finding* (1962), he seeks to describe the work whereby decisions of meaning and fact are managed, and to describe how a body of factual knowledge

surrounding social structures is assembled in common sense situations of choice. In *A Conception of, and Experiments With "Trust" as a Condition of Stable Concerted Actions* (1963) Garfinkel presents Schutz' thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives, which underlies concerted action and consists of two assumptions, the assumption of the interchangeability of standpoints and the assumption of the congruency of relevances. These are part of what is called a commonsense environment, which is defined by the features that all members 'know in common'. Garfinkel discusses Schutz's description of eleven features that together define the commonsense character of an event. These features are constitutive of 'actual events in a real and common world' and are the sanctionable grounds for societal members of events' actions. And while these features inform the user about the appearance of an interpersonal environment, these features are not necessarily recognized at a conscious level. Instead, Garfinkel describes them as features of socially structured environments that are 'seen without being noticed'. The more the setting is institutionally regulated and routinized, the more these 'known in common' features are taken for granted.

The task of sociological inquiry is to locate and define these features that persons may not be aware of. This lack of awareness stems from the attitude of daily life that furnishes a person's perceived environment, defined as an environment of social realities known in common, or what Garfinkel sometimes calls 'common culture' or background expectancies. Garfinkel (1952; 1960a; 1962; 1963; 1964; 2005; 2008) continually credits Alfred Schutz for laying the path for a phenomenologically-inspired sociology, one that focuses on the world of everyday life, on those seen but unnoticed background expectancies. Garfinkel describes Schutz's fundamental work as making it possible to further pursue the tasks of clarifying the nature and operation of these background

expectancies, as well as relating these expectancies to processes of concerted actions and assigning their place in an empirically imaginable society. This requires what Schutz called a 'special motive', which entails the sociologist making the 'seen but unnoticed' problematic.

Garfinkel (1962) discusses Karl Mannheim's description of the 'documentary method of interpretation' to make sense of how members come about their common sense knowledge.⁷⁸ The documentary method involves searching for an identical homologous pattern underlying a vast variety of totally different realizations of meaning. The method consists of treating an actual appearance as 'the document of', as 'pointing to', as 'standing on behalf of' a presupposed underlying pattern. The idea is to derive underlying pattern from its individual documentary evidences and, in turn, interpret the individual documentary evidences on the basis of 'what is known' about the underlying pattern. This could look like determining a respondent's attitude from replies on a questionnaire, learning about bureaucratically organized activities from interviews with office personnel, or finding out about 'real crime' from the crimes known to the police. Garfinkel believes that evidence of this documentary method is not employed only by lay members but can be found in every area of sociological investigation, in what he calls the work of 'fact production'. This comes into play anytime researchers call upon 'reasonableness' in assigning the status of 'findings' to their research results. Garfinkel's claim is that much of 'core sociology' consists of these 'reasonable findings'. Many situations of sociological inquiry are what he calls common sense situations of choice. And yet, textbook and journal discussion of sociological methods rarely give recognition

⁷⁸ Garfinkel was exposed to Mannheim's work after completing his PhD, during the year and a half that he spent at Ohio State University working with Kurt Wolff, a prominent Mannheim scholar.

to the fact that sociological inquiries are carried under the common sense auspices at the points where decisions about the correspondence between observed appearances and intended events are being made. Part of Garfinkel's contribution lies in showing how scientific sociology produces its facts as the product of particular sets of procedural rules that actually govern the use of sociologists' recommended methods and asserted findings as grounds of further inference and inquiries. The problem of evidence consists of the tasks of making this fact intelligible.

Apart from studying the documentary method of interpretation used by lay members, Garfinkel employs various methods to study the persistence and continuity of the features of concerted actions. He argues (1963) that while sociologists commonly select stable features of an organization of activities and ask what variables contribute to their stability, an alternative procedure would be to attempt to 'make trouble' and see how social structures are ordinarily and routinely being maintained. Garfinkel sets as a task to produce what he calls 'senseless events', a term he borrows from Weber (1946), which refers to events that are perceived by group members as atypical, indeterminate, and arbitrary. The severity of the reactions would vary directly based on the strength of member's commitments to the 'common culture'.

Garfinkel seeks with these methods, which he calls breaching experiments, to create anomic states, to produce for a person a situation in which he is unable to grasp what is going on.⁷⁹⁸⁰ In *A Conception of, and Experiments with "Trust" as a Condition of*

⁷⁹ In *Garfinkel Before Ethnomethodology* (1989), Keith Doubt argues that Garfinkel's first publication *Color Trouble* (1948) is one of the best examples of a breaching experiment. He argues that in the short essay Garfinkel's protagonist 'makes trouble' for the social convention that oppresses her and challenges the 'natural' understanding of those practices that are taken for granted.

⁸⁰ While Garfinkel does conduct breaching experiments to map out background expectancies, in *Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities* (1964) he also discusses under what circumstances background expectancies are modified organically. These include a ceremonial transformation of real objects such as in

Stable Concerted Actions (1963), Garfinkel introduces the phenomenon of trust, explaining that those who lack common sense are not only viewed as untrustworthy, but themselves do not trust. Garfinkel defines the trustworthy and trusting person as someone who manages the discrepancies with respect to these attributions in such a way that they maintain a public show of respect for them. In this particular article Garfinkel uses the example of a game because its basis, rules of play, serve each player as a scheme for recognizing and interpreting both other players and one's own behavioural displays as events of game conduct. The basic rules of a game define the situations and normal events of play for persons who seek to act in compliance with them. Actions that occur contrary to those prescribed by the basic rules are specifically senseless, meaning they acquire properties of unpredictability, arbitrariness, and indeterminateness.

What Garfinkel (2005) seeks to do is to establish the conditions under which incongruity can be introduced and confusion created, under which constitutive expectancies are breached. Since constitutive expectancies operate in everyday situations, the operation that produces confusion in one concrete setting holds for any concrete setting. The operativeness of these constitutive expectancies in games or in everyday situations thereby serves as an important condition of stable features of concerted actions. Garfinkel's purpose is to show, through experimental demonstrations, that those events that breach constitutive expectancies multiply the anomie features of the game event environment as well as the disorganized features of the structures of game interaction.

plays, religious conversion, convention going, and scientific inquiry. A second example is instrumental transformations of environments of real objects such as those that occur in extreme fatigue, acute sensory deprivation, brain injuries, and the use of certain type of drugs. A third and fourth example of these circumstances include neonate learning and adult socialization respectively, while other types of modifications, various phenomena that Garfinkel calls 'alienation', include mental illness, old age, or mischief as examples. Finally, there is the modification that consists in the discovery and rationalization of the common sense world through the growth of social science as a social movement.

Furthermore, he aims to show that these effects vary directly with the extent of motivated compliance with the constitutive order of the game; that these effects occur independent of the personality characteristics of players; and that these statements hold not only for game interactions but also for interactions of 'serious life' because the game shares many properties with the attitude of everyday life.⁸¹

Garfinkel (1963) set up four different kinds of breaching experiment demonstrations where each, in its own way, creates confusion. The first type includes breaching the congruence of relevances, where the experimenter insists that the person with whom they are speaking clarify the sense of his commonplace remarks. The second kind involves breaching the interchangeability of standpoints where the experimenter would enter a store for example, select a customer, and treat that customer as a clerk. The third form involves breaching the expectancy that knowledge of a relationship of interaction is a commonly entertained scheme of communication. This expectancy is breached by having the experimenter spend anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour in their own homes acting as if they are boarders, meaning they act in a polite fashion but avoiding to get personal, using formal address, and speaking only when spoken to. The fourth type is breaching the grasp of 'what anyone knows' to be correct grounds of action in a real social world.

These experiments control for forms of spontaneity, epoché, time perspective, self-awareness, mode of attention to life, and form of sociality. From this, they lead

⁸¹ Although this is so, Garfinkel (1963) makes it clear that the game cannot be used as equivalent of everyday life situations and that speaking of norms of everyday situation as 'rules of the game' is a mere figure of speech. That is because games have a peculiar time structure that furnishes the game its entire character as a texture of relevances, where success and failure are clearly decidable, usually with very little subject to reinterpretation. Knowledge of the game is available to all players at all various phases of the game and the circumstances are rarely altered during the course of play, so there is an almost perfect correspondence between the descriptions of game conduct and actual game conduct.

Garfinkel to detect some of the background expectancies that provide commonplace scenes with their familiar, life-as-usual character, and allow him to relate these expectancies to the stable social structures of everyday activities. This is done each time by finding familiar scenes and seeing what could be done to 'make trouble'. Garfinkel discovers that the relationship between the normative regulation of action and the stability of concerted action is based not on the 'intensity of affect' with which the 'rule' is 'invested', or on the respected or sacred status of the rule, but instead is based on the perceived normality of environmental events as this normality is a function of the presuppositions that define the possible events. Through performing these experiments and producing disorganized interaction, Garfinkel finds out about how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained.

Garfinkel uses these methods in his teaching about the nature of social order through what he calls tutorial problems, which are designed to reveal the social construction involved in various social actions, what persons take for granted in the work they do to organize reality. This attempt to stop or problematize this process of social construction reveals members' methods of producing social order. These tutorial problems, just like other forms of breaching experiments, bring the otherwise taken for granted reflexive quality of social action into focus. Before we turn to a specific discussion of this reflexivity, it is time to define ethnomethodology directly, since ethnomethodology is the study of those methods employed by members of society to achieve social order.

It is from all of these phenomenological insights that Garfinkel develops his vision for a practice of sociology that he calls ethnomethodology. He discusses (1968) the origin of the term ethnomethodology at the 1968 Purdue Symposium on

Ethnomethodology,⁸² explaining that it started in 1954 when he worked with Saul Mendlovitz on Fred Stodtbeck's jury project. Garfinkel was asked to listen to tapes of jurors from a bugged jury room in Wichita and, afterwards, to speak to the jurors about how they came to their decisions. The question that Garfinkel investigated is what made them jurors? It is in writing up this material that Garfinkel dreams up the notion underlying the term 'ethnomethodology'. Garfinkel comes up with the actual term from looking at Yale cross-cultural area files with names such as ethnobotany, ethnophysiology, and ethnophysics. Garfinkel understands what jurors are doing as methodology and pairs this with 'ethno', which to Garfinkel seems to refer to the availability of common-sense knowledge to a member of society as common-sense knowledge of the 'whatever'. In *Remarks on Ethnomethodology* Garfinkel links ethnomethodology to ethnoscience, ethnography, and others by stating that these practices share "a methodological stance in giving primacy to explicating the competence or knowledge of members of a culture, the unstated assumptions which determine their interpretation of experience" (1972: 301).

'Ethno' refers to members of a group, 'method' refers to the things members do to create recognizable patterns of social actions, while 'ology' refers to the study of these methods. Garfinkel uses the term to designate the concern with how society gets put together: how it is getting done, how to do it, the social structures of everyday activities.

In *What Is Ethnomethodology* Garfinkel describes this as "the investigation of the rational

⁸² This 1968 symposium was an opportunity for supporters and skeptics of ethnomethodology to discuss whether ethnomethodology constitutes a new approach of doing sociology or whether it an extension of an established tradition; whether ethnomethodologists are a group of scholars with a mutual sense of the problematic, or whether they constitute a strange social movement within sociology; to what degree does ethnomethodology constitute a serious methodological critique of traditional sociological practice; and whether ethnomethodology is a 'disaster' or something to 'get excited about'. The proceedings of this symposium were published.

properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life” (1967c: 11). Ethnomethodology is about treating this accomplishment as the phenomenon of interest. Ethnomethodology itself is not a singular method, but instead refers to the various politics, methods, results, risks, and lunacies with which to locate and accomplish the study of these properties.⁸³ Above and beyond the use of breaching experiments, several methods employed by ethnomethodologists involve complete immersion within a specialized population. This may involve spending many years becoming a competent participant in a particular field, in addition to collecting various sorts of materials. This is done in order to achieve an understanding of the most common tasks and competencies associated with a particular set of social actions.⁸⁴

Garfinkel (1967a) writes that this accomplishment is a commonplace phenomenon for members, and yet, in the unknown ways that the accomplishment is commonplace it is an awesome phenomenon, for in its unknown ways it consists of

‘members’ uses of concerted everyday activities as methods with which to recognize and demonstrate the isolable, typical, uniform, potential repetition, connected appearances, consistency, equivalence, substitutability, directionality, anonymously describable, planful—in short, the rational properties of indexical expressions and indexical actions, and the analyzability of actions in context, given not only that no concept of context in general exists, but that every use of ‘context’ without exception is itself essentially indexical” (1967a: 184).

Ethnomethodology, then, involves learning how members’ actual ordinary activities consist of methods to make practical actions and common sense knowledge analyzable. It

⁸³ For a more in-depth history of the term ‘ethnomethodology’ itself, see the first chapter of John Heritage’s *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology* (1984).

⁸⁴ These methodologies involve acquiring what Garfinkel calls ‘unique adequacy’. Anne Rawls examines the history of this aspect of the ethnomethodological program along with the debates surrounding it in a few places, including the introduction to *Ethnomethodology’s program: Working out Durkheim’s aphorism* (2002) and *Ethnomethodology: The Problems of Unique Adequacy* (2000).

involves discovering the formal properties of commonplace actions ‘from within’ actual settings, as ongoing accomplishments of those settings.

Garfinkel (1967c) argues that there is an indefinitely large domain of appropriate settings that can be located for the study of these accomplishments, from divination to mathematics to sociology. Whether they involve laypersons or professionals, all share a managed accomplishment of organized settings of practical actions. The phenomena are contingent achievements that are available to members sometimes as norms, tasks, troubles, or otherwise from within the context. They cannot be assessed, recognized, categorized, and described by using rules or standards obtained from outside the actual settings. For Garfinkel, ethnomethodology’s great central phenomena is that there are ordinary activities for members that are accountably rational, that this account is observable, and that this is itself a practical on-going accomplishment of the same settings in which members make it happen. Lastly, these ordinary affairs mask for members the processes by which this happens so to be continually confronting members as a *fait accompli*. Garfinkel (1968) proposes that members of society are concerned with and skilled in rigorous procedures, but that this is not apparent until you begin to bring these matters under close study. This can involve looking at conversational utterances, embodied places in a queue, or flasks and beakers being handled by an experimenter. “Painstaking attention to the detailed production of such exhibits then enables the analysis to specify their constitutional properties as orderly structures”. (1983: 207)

Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology is about paying the most commonplace activities of daily life the kind of attention afforded to extraordinary events. His central recommendation is that the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical to members’ procedures for making those

settings 'accountable'. Garfinkel (1967c) labels this the 'reflexive' character of accounting practices and accounts. Accountable means approaching practical activities as detectable, countable, recordable, reportable, and analyzable. Garfinkel uses accounting to talk about the availability of any ordinary arrangement of a set of located practices to a member. The account stems from and can be found in the local situation, not obtained through the Archimedean perspective. Anne Rawls, who edited *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working Out Durkheim's Aphorism* (2002), describes this as a distinction between natural and classical accountability. Whereas natural accountability is accountability to the populational cohort and the scene in which one does something, classical accountability is accountability to the populational cohort where one reports a description of what has been done. Garfinkel and his ethnomethodology attend to the first.⁸⁵

Garfinkel (1967c) argues that there is a feature of member's accounts that for them is of such singular and prevailing relevance that it controls other features. This feature is reflexivity. Reflexivity is seen by several commentators (Shearing 1973; Mehan and Wood 1975; Wilson & Zimmerman 1979; Heap 1980; Platt 1989; Pollner 1991b; Hilbert 1992; McHoul 1994; Czyzewski 1994; Kim 1999) as the key feature of ethnomethodology. Although there does seem to be an agreement that reflexivity is fundamental to ethnomethodology, there are deep disagreements concerning its meaning. One of the major distinctions is between endogenous reflexivity, which speaks to how what members do in, to, and about social reality constitutes social reality, and referential

⁸⁵ Anne Rawls (2002) also explains that according to Garfinkel his work on accounts owes more to a business course at the University of Newark called the 'theory of accounts' than it does to C. Wright Mills and Kenneth Burke, whose theories of accounts he later studied. It is in doing accounting sheets, in understanding the process of placing items in the debit or assets column and needing to be accountable to superiors and other agencies, that Garfinkel first came across the notion of how members' methods are and need to be made accountable.

reflexivity, which conceives of all analysis, including ethnomethodology, as a constitutive process.⁸⁶

The main type of reflexivity associated with ethnomethodology is not reflexivity as self-reflection but is the reflexivity of practical social actions. It refers to the self-explicating, self-organizing character of members' actions. Essentially, people act and their actions affect the world. This affected world appears to people as an autonomous reality. It is external and constraining. Between social actions and this affected world, each is used to elaborate the other. Every act is at once both in a setting and the same time creates the setting in which it appears and from which it derives its meaning. We can then say that this reflexivity characterizes the mutual constitutive nature of action and the setting. Accounts of practical actions are reflexive because descriptions can be parts of what they describe, the reflexivity is circular. This is the reflexivity that ethnomethodology has in mind.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Kyung-Man Kim in *The Management of Temporality: Ethnomethodology as Historical Reconstruction of Practical Action* (1999) speaks to a cleavage between those who endorse referential reflexivity and who view ethnomethodology as a constructivist approach, a group that Kim calls the reflexivists and includes Steve Woolgar, Malcolm Ashmore, and Melvin Pollner, with a group that Kim labels the antireflexivists, which includes Wes Sharrock, Michael Lynch, and Graham Watson. The latter group argues that ethnomethodology was never interested in 'debunking' or 'going beyond' the world of ordinary actors and that ethnomethodology is not a constructivist enterprise. See also Melvin Pollner's *Left of Ethnomethodology: The Rise and Decline of Radical Reflexivity* (1991) for an in-depth discussion of the distinction between endogenous and referential reflexivity in ethnomethodological work. These distinctive formulations of reflexivity and the debates around them, along with some discussed by Mehan and Wood (1975) of reflexivity as a phenomenon, as a theory, as a method, or as a theology will be discussed more thoroughly in a subsequent chapter.

⁸⁷ In *Towards a Phenomenological Sociology: Towards a Solution to the Parsonian Puzzle* (1973), C. D. Shearing traces the origin of Garfinkel's reflexivity to Husserl's theory of the constitution of objects, and, most specifically, his concept of 'outer horizon'. He argues that through this particular use of reflexivity, along with the use of the concept of glossing (to which I will turn shortly), Garfinkel offers a sophisticated theory of constitution that comes to terms with the idea of society as Gestalt. See also Beng-Huat Chua's *On the Commitments of Ethnomethodology* (1974) for a further discussion of the phenomenological origin of Garfinkel's use of reflexivity in Husserl's work, in this case to Husserl's characterization of the natural attitude. And yet Heritage (1984) speaks of Garfinkel's use of reflexivity as a new departure from more traditional phenomenological treatments of reflexivity. While phenomenologists were preoccupied with

An important feature of reflexivity is that it is taken for granted by members. Members gloss over all the work they are involved in to sustain their shared constructed reality. Members take for granted at the outset that others 'know' the settings in which everyone is operating. They treat as the most passing matter of fact that members' accounts, of every sort, in all their modes, with all of their uses, and for every method for their assembly are constituent features of the settings they make observable. What Garfinkel has found is that members are 'not interested' in studying practical actions.⁸⁸ This would involve making observable the reflexive character of their practical activities. For the members, witnessed settings have an accomplished sense, an accomplished facticity, an accomplished objectivity, an accomplished familiarity, and an accomplished accountability. These accomplishments are unproblematic, are known vaguely, and are known only in the doing, which is done skillfully, reliably, uniformly, with enormous standardization, and as an unaccountable matter. This is why Garfinkel refers to accomplishments as the uninteresting reflexivity of accounts, because to be interested in the reflexive character of social action transforms what is otherwise a practical activity into another type of activity. Thus the uninteresting taken-for-granted nature of the reflexivity of accounts helps make an activity what it is. This is why Garfinkel calls it an essential reflexivity.

reflexivity from the perspective of the observer, it is Garfinkel's introduction of it into a theory of action that transforms its significance and the theory of action itself. Heritage argues that "it is via the reflexive properties of actions that the participants ---- regardless of their degree of 'insight' into the matter ---- find themselves in a world whose characteristics they are visibly and descriptably engaged in producing and reproducing" (1984: 110).

⁸⁸ In *Practical Sociological Reasoning: Some Features in the Work of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center* (1967a) Garfinkel looks at how the Suicide Prevention Center (SPC) members know, require, count on, and make use of this reflexivity to produce, accomplish, recognize, or demonstrate the scientific adequacy for all practical purposes of their procedures and findings. Not only do SPC members, like jurors and others, take that reflexivity for granted, but they "recognize, demonstrate, and make observable for each other the rational character of their actual—and this means their occasional—practices while respecting that reflexivity as an unalterable and unavoidable condition of their inquiries" (1967a: 182).

The role of sociology is making accomplishment a topic of practical sociological inquiry, which involves treating the rational properties of practical activities as ‘anthropologically strange’ by treating it as a problematic and by making its reflexivity observable. Ethnomethodology is about locating and examining the occurrence of the reflexivity of the phenomenon. This can take place through various methods, including breaching experiments that disrupt this taken-for-granted reality and thus make this reflexivity observable.⁸⁹ For Garfinkel then, the problem of social order cannot be addressed without examining how people actually produce the order they talk about and take for granted as factual. These methods of order production, or ethnomethods, are observable in what members of a setting do and say, and are thus part of the very setting they organize as factual.⁹⁰ This is why Garfinkel sees ethnomethodology’s chief aim as making reflexivity observable and thus contributing to our understanding of the problem of social order.

Section Four: Ethnomethodology, Reflexivity and Re-specifying Durkheim’s Aphorism

While the third section of this chapter described the contours of ethnomethodology as Garfinkel’s phenomenologically-inspired sociology, its interest in commonsense knowledge, the role of breaching experiments, and, ultimately the central nature of reflexivity in Garfinkel’s work, the fourth section turns its attention to the

⁸⁹ Wilson and Zimmerman in *Ethnomethodology, Sociology and Theory* (1979) discuss several additional ways this reflexivity can be illustrated, including in the field of pattern recognition by computers in translation of language and speech recognition, in the area of modern logic, and perhaps most importantly for sociology, in the guise of technical problems of validity in social research. Wilson and Zimmerman explain that formulation of and response to questionnaires, construction and use of coding categories for observation or content analysis, and collection and interpretation of documents are all highly sensitive to both the immediate context and the large social situation.

⁹⁰ In *Process, System, and Symbol: A New Anthropological Synthesis* (1977), Victor Turner presents the study of reflexivity by ethnomethodologists as being interested in members’ typifications, which are their efforts at relating their uniqueness to the world of meaning generated and transmitted by the group.

implications of Garfinkel's ethnomethodology as the study of essential reflexivity of practical actions of daily life. This is accomplished by looking at how Garfinkel frames his ethnomethodological work as the true legitimate heir to Durkheim's sociological legacy and as a break from what he calls formal analytics, embodied by maintaining sociological pursuits. This section covers the unique approach touted by Garfinkel and the role played by reflexivity in notions of indexical expressions, language, glossing practices, and ad hocing, many of which Garfinkel feels are ignored or improperly handled by formal sociology in the study of social order. In addition, this section highlights the distinctive vision and aim of Garfinkel's program and what he calls ethnomethodology's indifference.

Garfinkel sees his ethnomethodology as a respecifying or restatement of Durkheim's aphorism, where the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental principle.⁹¹ According to Anne Rawls (2002), it is a respecifying because, for ninety years, Durkheim's social facts have been understood as the work produced by the social sciences rather than as logic, meaning, reason, rational action, method, truth, and order, produced as a witnessable and intelligible empirical phenomenon of immortal, ordinary society. Garfinkel and Rawls argue that the phenomena of order, intended by Durkheim as the subject matter of sociology, are in fact the "lived, immediate, unmediated congregational practices of production, display, witness, recognition, intelligibility, and accountability of immortal ordinary society's phenomena of order, its ordinary things, the most ordinary things in the world" (2002: 94). Durkheim regards

⁹¹ While the link between ethnomethodology and Durkheim's work is seldom mentioned explicitly in Garfinkel's writing until the publication of *Ethnomethodology's Program* in 1999, in his 1992 work *The Classical Roots of Ethnomethodology: Durkheim, Weber and Garfinkel*, Richard Hilbert discusses at length the links between Garfinkel's reflexivity and how it recovers the sui generis' quality of Durkheim's social order.

sociology as the discipline to carry out this program, and Garfinkel sees ethnomethodology as the heir to Durkheim's neglected legacy, a legacy neglected and misunderstood by what he labels formal analytic, which is embodied by traditional sociological pursuits.

Garfinkel distinguishes his work from formal analytic (FA). Here, Durkheim's aphorism is variously understood according to need and occasion of FA's aim, tasks, work, procedural demands, achievement, and fundamental phenomenon. On the other hand, for ethnomethodology Durkheim's aphorism takes on a distinctive procedural emphasis. From the outset of its investigations, ethnomethodology addresses various settings of immortal ordinary society that exhibit topics of order as activities' achieved phenomena of order. Social facts are the achieved phenomena of order, commonplace achievements that, seen but unnoticed, constitute aspects of everyday life. Garfinkel proposes a different vision of sociology built around this restatement of Durkheim's aphorism by engaging in discussions, readings, demonstrations, first-person hands-on studies, and empirical research about the everyday witnessable phenomena of social order.⁹²

Garfinkel's ethnomethodology is developed in contrast to Parsons' vision of sociology. He rejects Parsons' vision that there is no orderliness in concrete activities but only in actions construed analytically. Garfinkel rejects the notion that "only methods of constructive analysis could provide—only and entirely—for any and every orderliness whatsoever, for every one of the endlessly many topics of order meaning, reason, logic,

⁹² Time and again, including explicitly in *Evidence for Locally Produced, Naturally Accountable Phenomena of Order, Logic, Reason, Meaning, Method, etc. In and As of the Essential Quiddity of Immortal Ordinary Society (I of IV): An Announcement of Studies* (1988), Garfinkel points out that when he is speaking of order, he is speaking of endless topics in intellectual history such a logic, purpose, reason, rational action, evidence, identity, proof, meaning, method, consciousness, and the rest. Order stands for 'order-in-and-as-of-the-workings-of-ordinary-society'; it is a practical achievement.

or method, and for every achievement of any of these topics of order” (1988: 106). In *Evidence for Locally Produced, Naturally Accountable Phenomena of Order, Logic, Reason, Meaning, Method, etc. In and As of the Essential Quiddity of Immortal Ordinary Society (I of IV): An Announcement of Studies* (1988), Garfinkel’s critique of Parsons’ work and formal analytics more broadly involves eight elements: the phenomena of order cannot be recovered with a priori representational methods; the social science movement makes use of the features of order, finding them unavoidable and yet specifically uninteresting and, thus, ignores them; the social science movement reduces the phenomena through various reduction procedures; the phenomena can only be inspected in specific cases and cannot be recovered by attempts to specify examinable practicing by detailing a generality; the phenomena is only discoverable, it cannot be imagined; the phenomena specifies ‘foundational’ issues in and as the work of a ‘discipline’ that is concerned with issues of produced order in and as practical action; these phenomena are locally and endogenously produced, naturally organized, reflexively accountable in and as detail, and therein they provide for everything that details could possibly be; and, finally, every topic of order is to be discovered and is discoverable, and is to be respecified and is respecifiable, as only locally and reflexively produced, naturally accountable phenomena of order.

For ethnomethodology, order is present and observable in the concrete rather than the abstract. While formal analysis finds its social order through the aggregate of individuals described demographically, ethnomethodology looks for its social order in service lines, entering a freeway traffic stream, pedestrian crowd street crossings, walking together, conversational turn-taking, jurors’ work, in everyday social interactions of all

kinds.⁹³ Both FA and ethnomethodology are concerned with invariance, but ethnomethodology looks for invariance in the phenomenal details. There are constancies, but they are found not by introducing generic representations into the in vivo stream of practices. Instead, the local parties who staff the achieved phenomenon provide for them endogenously. To get at these constancies, one needs to have persons embodiedly there and embodiedly engaged, a notion that escapes the insistence of formal analysis. In *Two Incommensurable, Asymmetrically Alternate Technologies of Social Analysis* (1992), Garfinkel explains that both professional sociology and ethnomethodology are interested in the phenomenon of order, but each in distinctive ways. Garfinkel argues that there is not only a distinguishable approach, but also an incommensurable approach to what ordinary society and its analysis could be: incommensurable on the nature of 'immortal' society, on the work of its production and reproduction, on its objectivity and observability, on its accountability.

Garfinkel sees ethnomethodology as working out 'what more' there is to formal analytic investigations than formal analysis has been or will ever be able to provide. Garfinkel argues that ethnomethodology does not dispute the achievements of FA, but rather asks 'what more' is there that users of formal analysis know and demand the existence of, that FA depends upon to do its work. This rests on the question of the phenomenon of order and where this phenomenon is constituted. According to worldwide social science movements, there is no order in the concreteness of things. The research enterprises of formal analysis are defeated by the apparently hopelessly- circumstantial

⁹³ In *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working Out Durkheim's Aphorism* (2002) Garfinkel speaks of several types of orderliness beyond the dichotomy of the order focused on by formal analysis and the one found in immortal ordinary society. For example we can speak of a type of orderliness in mapping out the relationship between FA and EM.

and overwhelming details of everyday activities, or what is referred to here as the plenum. For FA there is no order in the plenum. To remedy this, the social sciences have worked out policies and methods of formal analysis that respecify the concrete details of ordinary activities as details of the analyzing devices and of the methods of formal analysis. They respecify the sheer circumstantiality of ordinary activities so that order can be exhibited analytically.

Generic theorizing is accompanied everywhere by curious incongruities. These incongruities speak to the existence of an alternate order, or elements that are not seen or that are taken for granted. Ethnomethodology is preoccupied with that alternate order. Garfinkel's critique of formal sociology's reliance on taken for granted elements is exemplified in his article *Methodological Adequacy in the Quantitative Study of Selection Criteria and Selection Practices in Psychiatric Outpatient Clinics* (1960b), where he reviews the existing quantitative studies that describe how persons are selected for treatment in psychiatric outpatient clinics. Here he finds that, despite the care with which these studies are done, it is not possible to decide what is actually known about the selection criteria and the studies presupposed knowledge of the social structures they claim to describe. Garfinkel finds that these studies share these assumptions, along with assumptions regarding how the categories 'in' and 'out' are understood as discrete events. Instead, in his own work, Garfinkel finds that 'in' and 'out' hold different meanings, depending on who are using them and for what purpose. Garfinkel argues that treating these variations as methodological nuisances may in fact preclude the development of the theory and methods necessary to understand the phenomenon under study.

Ethnomethodological investigations consist of evidence to the contrary. As Rawls (2002) points out, Garfinkel does hold on to one assumption: the assumption that members must have recognizably shared methods for producing mutually recognizable social actions. Garfinkel proceeds, from this assumption, to investigate how members manage to produce social order in particular social contexts.⁹⁴⁹⁵ Here, he finds that order is present everywhere in the plenum. There is order in the most ordinary activities of everyday life in their full concreteness, and this means that phenomenal details are ordered without loss of generality in their ongoing, procedurally enacted, substantive coherence. In *Ethnomethodology's Program* (1998), Garfinkel argues that “it has to do with the unexplicated specifics of details in structures, in recurrences, in typicality, not the details gotten by administering a generic description. These details are unmediatedly experienced and experienced evidently”. (1998: 7) The ordinary society is easily recognized, with uniquely adequate competence by one and all. Each person is depended upon and demanded of, even while they are seen but unnoticed. And yet, this ordinary society is hard to describe procedurally. It cannot be imagined by the transcendental analyst, who engages in generic theorizing; it can only be discovered in the actual case.

The procedure of generic representational theorizing puts a collection of signs in place regarding the enacted witnessable detail of immortal ordinary society. The FA procedure ignores the enacted, unmediated, directly and immediately witnessable details

⁹⁴ In *Towards a Critical Ethnomethodology* (1984) Alec McHoul argues that ethnomethodology's assumption that members' methods lead to a definitiveness of meaning, a shared social reality, could actually be otherwise. He proposes that the indexical expressions could point instead to an amplified polyvalency of meaning, that this is something that ought to be established empirically. It is not impossible, according to McHoul, to conceive or discover practical situations where quite indefinite senses are permissible or even required. I will discuss indexicality in more depth very shortly.

⁹⁵ Wilson and Zimmerman (1979) do highlight what they believe are assumptions shared between ethnomethodology and conventional sociology, namely the objectivity of social structure, the transparency of displays, and the context-dependency of meaning.

of immortal ordinary society. Thus, the only option available to analysts is to become interpreters of signs. According to Garfinkel, “designing and interpreting ‘marks, indicators, signs, and symbols’ is inevitably what sociologists and social scientists must do in order to carry out the corpus status of their studies of ordinary activities” (1996: 8). For its part, ethnomethodology is not in the business of interpreting signs, and Garfinkel does not see it as an interpretive enterprise. Local practices are not texts that symbolize ‘meanings’, but are identical to their own selves and constitute their own reality. Garfinkel (1972) proposes to drop the sign-referent dichotomy and reject a theory of signs as a necessary part of analysis.⁹⁶ If this theory is dropped, then what the parties talk about cannot be distinguished from how the parties speak. Ethnomethodology does not represent social order, it exhibits it. This process specifies the locally witnessed in non-ironic manner, meaning that it does not claim to know better or to offer a more scientific science than formal analysis.

This is why Garfinkel sees ethnomethodology and formal analysis as approaches incommensurable with Durkheim’s aphorism. This is highlighted in the key difference between ethnomethodology and formal analysis: their differing attitudes towards reflexivity. Garfinkel argues that “the literatures of the social science movement are consistent, reasoned, clear, lucid, coherent, reproducible, teachable, and correctable. In any actual case the claims are also wrong, unavoidably wrong, and in any actual case without remedies or alternatives” (2002: 261). For ethnomethodology, the objective reality of social facts exists in how every society’s locally, endogenously produced,

⁹⁶ In *Remarks on Ethnomethodology* (1972) Garfinkel illustrates this through an exercise of asking his students to repeatedly produce increasingly clear, accurate, detailed, and literal instructions. He does this by requiring them essentially to ‘repair’ the incompleteness of any set of instructions, no matter how carefully or elaborately written they may be. This turns out to be an impossible task, because in order to recognize what is said one must recognize how a person is speaking.

naturally organized, naturally accountable, ongoing, practical achievement, being everywhere, always, only, exactly and entirely members' work, with no time out, and with no possibility of evasion, hiding out, passing, postponement, or buyouts, is sociology's fundamental phenomenon. Garfinkel argues that "their existence is demonstrable—their existence is both instructably observable and instructably reproducible—in all studies of work. Their adequate observability is staff-specific, worksite-specific, discipline-specific." (1996: 18) This phenomenon is lost within the methods of generic representational theorizing. Furthermore, the domain of things that escape from FA accountability is massive in both size and range. Ethnomethodology specifies the 'what more' that formal analysis is uninterested in and unable to specify.⁹⁷

Garfinkel demonstrates different examples of this domain by speaking of ad hocing or the 'et cetera principle', of glossing as demonstrated by the documentary method of interpretation, and of indexical expressions. Let us discuss indexical expressions first. Garfinkel (1970) defines indexical expressions, influenced by Husserl, as expressions whose sense cannot be decided by an author without his necessarily knowing or assuming something about the biography and purposes of the user of the expression, the circumstances of the utterance, the previous course of discourse, or the particular relationship of actual or potential interaction that exists between the user and the auditor. Also influenced by Bertrand Russell, Garfinkel further explains indexical expressions as descriptions that are used to make unequivocal statements that nevertheless seem to change in truth value. Drawing from Nelson Goodman, indexical

⁹⁷ Garfinkel (2002) brings up Durkheim's exasperation with the failure of philosophy and generic social theorizing to explain the real world origins of 'basic categories' and 'general ideas'. I cannot help but draw a parallel between this and Garfinkel's own trouble with formal analysis and what he sees as its generic social theorizing.

expressions can be seen as referring to a certain person, time or place, and as relative to their user. Their use depends upon the relation of the use to the object with which the world is concerned. Time is relevant to what it names. Space is relevant to what it names. Finally, indexical expressions are not freely repeatable in a given discourse, in that not all of their replicas therein are also translations of them.⁹⁸ Most simply put: indexicality refers to the meaning of action as dependant on the context of its production.

In *Practical Sociological Reasoning: Some Features in the Work of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center* (1967a) Garfinkel argues that there is nearly unanimous agreement among students of practical sociological reasoning about certain properties of indexical expressions and actions. Namely, that while they are of enormous utility, indexical expressions and actions are awkward for formal discourse, that there is an important and unavoidable distinction between objective expressions on the one hand and indexical expressions on the other. Furthermore, there is consensus that without the distinction between objective and indexical expressions and the preferred use of the former, the victories of generalizing, rigorous, scientific inquiries would fail, that with a proper assessment procedure one can determine whether the expressions or actions are indexical or objective, and, finally, that only practical difficulties prevent the substitution of an indexical expression by an objective expression.

Logicians and linguists, in their explicit attempts to recover commonplace talk in its structural particulars, encounter these expressions as obstinate nuisances. Nuisances of indexicals are particularly dramatic wherever inquiries are directed to achieve the formulation of alternatives of sense, or fact, or methodic procedure, or agreement among

⁹⁸ Garfinkel (1970) traces an awareness of indexical expressions in the work of major authors over the entire history of logic, such as Charles Peirce, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Edmund Husserl, Bertand Russell and Nelson Goodman.

‘cultural colleagues.’ These features of indexical expressions have motivated professionals towards endless methodological studies seeking to remedy this. Indeed, the work by practitioners is to rid the practices of a science, of any science, of these nuisances, because the ways such work occurs gives each science its distinctive character of preoccupation and productivity with methodological issues.

Garfinkel argues in *On Formal Structures of Practical Action* (1970) that the distinction between objective and indexical expressions and their substitutability provides professional sociology with its infinite task. This is manifested in the practices of professional sociological inquiry. Specifically, it is manifested in the elaboration and defense of a unified sociological theory, model building, cost-benefit analysis, the use of natural metaphors to collect wider settings under the experience of a locally known setting, the use of laboratory arrangements as experimental schemes of inference, schematic reporting, statistical evaluations of frequency, reproducibility, effectiveness, and so on, and of natural language practices and the various social arrangements that entail their use, and more.

Irreconcilable interests exist between formal analysis and ethnomethodology due to the contrasting conceptions of the links between objective and indexical expressions, and due to the relevance of indexicals to the tasks of clarifying connections between routine and rationality in everyday activities. Ethnomethodology views indexicals not as a nuisance, but as a constitutive element of everyday activities. Garfinkel’s position is that the properties of indexical expressions are only locally and endogenously witnessable, known to one and all, ubiquitous, essentially unavoidable, and without remedy or alternative. They are what brings coherence to achieved phenomena. In *Studies in Ethnomethodology* Garfinkel argues this phenomenon consists of “the

analyzability of actions-in-context given that not only does no concept of context-in-general exist, but every use of 'context' without exception is itself essentially indexical" (1967c: 10). This gets to the notion of 'contexted phenomena', otherwise identified as reflexivity by Garfinkel. Indexicals are omnipervasive and do not need saving from difficulties presented by professional sociology.⁹⁹

Language is one phenomenon where reflexivity and indexicality are both apparent. Language is reflexive in that it is constitutive of the circumstances it describes, and it is indexical in that its meaning is derived from the context in which it occurs. In *On Formal Structures of Practical Action*, Garfinkel discusses how reflexivity assures indexical properties to natural language characteristics such as "the definiteness of expressions resides in their consequences; definitions can be used to assure a definite collection of 'considerations' without providing a boundary; the definiteness of a collection is assured by circumstantial possibilities of indefinite elaboration" (1970: 160). Garfinkel argues that since persons are heard speaking a natural language, they are engaged in the objective production and object display of commonsense knowledge of everyday activities as observable and reportable phenomena. The use of natural language extends and elaborates indefinitely to the circumstances it glosses and in this way contributes to its own accountable, sensible character. As such, it is the definition of an occasioned accomplishment. In *Towards a Sociological Theory of Information* Garfinkel explains, "we are faced therefore with the problem of the multitude of ways in which language 'thingifies' various possibilities of experience for our communicants, as well as

⁹⁹ Lucia Ruggerone (1996) argues that such a radical notion of indexicality plays a central role in determining the epistemological difference between conventional sociology and ethnomethodology. I will discuss the epistemological implications of Garfinkel's ethnomethodology more explicitly in the fifth section of this chapter.

looking to the conditions under which one type of thingifying rather than another occurs” (2008: 114).

While pointing out that the task of formulating ways of speaking is infinite, Garfinkel simultaneously calls attention to three highly general and probably universal processes through which meaning is conveyed in natural conversation. First, that ways of speaking are essentially indexical in the sense that part of their meaning and intelligibility always will lie in the situation in which they occur, and in the association that this situation evokes in the participants’ minds. Second, that ways of speaking are reflexive in the sense that the operations in question are part of all speaking and making sense, so that an inquiry into these ways of speaking is itself always a new instance. Finally, they are open-ended in that a sense that what is happening now can always be taken to depend upon, and to be revisable in light of, what happens later. Thus, language plays a crucial role in the mutual intelligibility of social action, which is at the center of what ethnomethodology seeks to study.¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹

Garfinkel argues that what he calls glossing practices are an inevitable phase of interactional enterprises. Glossing is employed to accomplish recognizably sensible definiteness, clarity, identification, substitution, or relevance of natural language. Enterprises of intelligible, particular appearances of organized everyday activities are unavoidable actions, only, and exclusively by competent speakers, who can undertake

¹⁰⁰ The application of the phrase ‘mutual intelligibility’ to characterize the embodied social practices studied by ethnomethodology originates from Anne Rawls’s discussion of Garfinkel’s work in the introduction of *Ethnomethodology’s Program: Working out Durkheim’s Aphorism* (2002)

¹⁰¹ In *The Reflexive Order of Language and Activities: Second Thoughts on Garfinkel’s Ethnomethodology* (1996), Lucia Ruggerone argues that Garfinkel’s focus on language increased as his career moved along. She interprets his notion of language as combining Schutzian and Wittgensteinian influences. Language, for Garfinkel, is both an ensemble of standardized typifications shared by members and simultaneously equates the natural attitude and the natural language. Language is thus both indexical and reflexive and is found at the heart of the social, intersubjective, ordinary meanings that they share and which constitutes the social order.

them only and entirely through the particulars of notational displays in natural language. Gloss enterprises are practical accomplishments. They are immensely varied phenomena, for they differ in ways dictated by a world of 'social fact,' albeit a world of social fact that is members' achievements. As practical achievements gloss enterprises are as immensely varied as organizational arrangements, for organizational arrangements are such achievements.¹⁰² Whenever a member employs accounting practices for an actual situation, she invariably makes use of the practices of what Garfinkel (1967c) calls 'et cetera', 'unless' and 'let it pass' to demonstrate the rationality of her achievement.

Garfinkel (1964) argues that what he calls the 'et cetera' principle lies at the heart of his ethnomethodological program and its contributions to sociological practice. No matter how specific the terms of common understandings may be, they are always accompanied by an unspoken and yet understood et cetera clause. This does not occur once and for all, but is bound to the temporal course of activities and thereby to the progressive development of circumstances and their contingencies. The et cetera principle involves all of the unstated yet intended assumptions held by members, assumptions that can be filled in by other actors based on the context in which the social action occurs. Garfinkel demonstrates this in his most famous collection of studies, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967), through studies of jury deliberations in negligence cases, clinic staff selections of patients for out-patient psychiatric treatment, and sociology graduate students' coding of the contents of clinic folders by following detailed

¹⁰² While glossing practices are a part of everyday activities, Garfinkel critiques the documentary method for making use of such glossing practices for the work of local evolving ordered phenomenal details of seriality, sequence, repetition, comparison, generality, and other structures. He argues that this gloss is convenient and convincing. "It is also very powerful in its coverage; too powerful. It gets everything in the world for practitioner/analysts. Its shortcomings are notorious: In any actual case it is indiscriminating; and just in any actual case it is absurdly wrong" (1996: 18).

coding instructions.

Garfinkel found that the 'et cetera' principle is an invariant feature of everyday activities, including sociological practice. For example, while coding, coders were assuming knowledge of the very organized ways of the clinic that their coding procedures were intended to produce descriptions of. They used a whole series of what Garfinkel calls 'ad hoc' considerations, leading him to name these practices 'ad hoking'. Given the invariant nature of these ad hoking practices, any attempts to suppress them, produced bewilderment on the part of coders. Garfinkel argues that ordinarily researchers treat such ad hoc procedures as flawed ways of writing, recognizing, or following coding instructions, as a nuisance. "The prevailing view holds that good work requires researchers, by extending the number and explicitness of their coding rules, to minimize or even eliminate the occasions in which 'et cetera' and other such ad hoking practices would be used" (1967c: 22). Garfinkel equates treating ad hoc features as a nuisance to complaining that if the walls of a building were only gotten out of the way that one could better see what was keeping the roof up.¹⁰³

Instead of dismissing 'bad records' as a methodological shortcoming, whether by sociologists or practitioners in the field, Garfinkel (1967f) seeks to offer an alternative sociological explanation for the sheer frequency of 'bad records' and the uniform ways in which they are 'bad'. Garfinkel came to think of the troubles with records as 'normal, natural' troubles, meaning in accordance with prevailing rules of practice. Problems occur when an investigator, outsider or insider, consults the files in order to answer

¹⁰³ Garfinkel (1963) also discusses the use of the 'et cetera' principle in the context of games and contract. The written rules of a game such as chess or tic-tac-toe rely on a whole array of unprinted and yet understood series of 'et cetera'. The 'et cetera' is a basic essential invariant property of the rules, without which the rules cannot be used for their purpose.

questions that theoretically or practically depart from organizationally relevant purposes and routines, under the auspices of which the contents of the files are routinely assembled in the first place.¹⁰⁴ In order to ‘make sense’ of the records, or read the contents without incongruity, a member must expect of oneself, expect of other members, and expect that as he expects of other members they expect him, to know and to use a knowledge (1) of particular persons to whom the record refers, (2) of persons who contributed to the record, (3) of the actual organization and operating procedures at the time the records are being consulted, (4) of a mutual history with other persons and (5) of procedures, including procedures for reading a record, as these procedures involved members. Essentially, reporting procedures, their results, and the uses of these results are integral features of the same social orders they describe.

Garfinkel’s studies show that ad hoc considerations are essential features of coding procedures. Ad hocing is required if the researcher is to grasp the relevance of the instructions to the particular and actual situation they are intended to analyze. Ad hocing plays a crucial role in recognizing coding instructions as ‘operational definitions’ of coding categories. They operate as grounds for and methods to advance and secure researchers’ claims to have coded in accordance with ‘necessary and sufficient’ criteria. These roles are also illustrated in Garfinkel’s (1967a) work on the ‘certification practices’ of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center (SPC), where a study of the staff’s work shows the use of various ad hoc considerations in account construction. Their rational features consist of what members ‘make of’ and do with the accounts in their socially organized actual occasions of use. In that way, SPC accounts are reflexively and

¹⁰⁴ Although Garfinkel (1967f) does acknowledge that part of the deficit in certain forms of record-keeping has to do with the marginal utility of added information and the allocation of scarce resources of money, time, personnel, training, and skills in view of the value that might be attached to the ends that are served.

essentially tied in the socially organized occasions of their use, for they are features of these occasions. Studying these ad hoc considerations is studying a constitutive part of social order that is treated as problematic by traditional sociological accounts.

Garfinkel views sociological reasoning and practice as a subject of inquiry for ethnomethodology, as for any other type of reasoning and practice such as legal reasoning, conversational reasoning, divinational reasoning, psychiatric reasoning, and the rest. Ethnomethodological studies are interested in members' accounts of formal structures wherever and by whomever they are, while "abstaining from all judgments of their adequacy, value, importance, necessity, practicality, success, or consequentiality. We refer to this procedural policy as 'ethnomethodological indifference'". (1970: 166)

By formal structures, Garfinkel means

everyday activities (a) in that they exhibit upon analysis the properties of uniformity, reproducibility, repetitiveness, standardization, typicality and so on; (b) in that these properties are independent of particular production cohorts; (c) in that particular cohort independence is a phenomenon for members' recognition; (d) and in that the phenomena (a), (b), and (c) are every particular cohort's practical, situated accomplishment. (1970: 166)

According to Garfinkel, this view of formal structures contrasts with prevailing views in sociology and the social sciences in that his approach of 'indifference' provides for the specifications of (c) and (d) by studying everyday activity as practical ongoing achievements.

In *Two Incommensurable, Asymmetrically Alternate Technologies of Social Analysis* (1992), Garfinkel argues that this 'ethnomethodological indifference' sets ethnomethodology apart from professional sociology by requiring that the tasks of inquiry and argument provide for

the practical objectivity and the practice observability of structures of practical action and practical reason in and as of ordinary activities while exercising an indifference to the policies of natural theorizing, withholding the corpus status of formal analytic descriptive facts, avoiding the design and administration of generic representations and their methodized dopes, and in related ways making no use of the methods of constructive analysis (1992: 187).

As far back as his PhD dissertation Garfinkel argues that objects of inquiry, perspectives, and their contents are to be studied as themselves, without reference to their accuracy, truth or falsity, utility, or requiredness for the practical affairs of life: “in short, without reference to those canons that come into play at the moment that a scheme is given ontological status” (1952: 7). Ethnomethodological indifference precludes descriptions of members as irrational or inferior in any way. In fact, it precludes valuations of any kind. Whether ethnomethodological indifference and its associated claims to be a descriptive and not interpretive enterprise is at all possible is one of the chief points of debate surrounding ethnomethodology. We now turn to some of the implications stemming from Garfinkel’s notion of reflexivity and his program of ethnomethodology as a whole.

Section Five: A Series of Implications

The fifth and final section of this chapter discusses the implications of Garfinkel’s work for sociology in general as well as for broader ontological and epistemological concerns, culminating with a discussion of Garfinkel’s vision for what science truly and essentially is: a legitimacy exercise. The section and chapter ends with a discussion of the application of Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology and reflexivity to the development of conversational analysis, his vision for a sociology of communication, his sociological theory of information, and most famously, the sociology of scientific knowledge.

Garfinkel does not see ethnomethodology as a remedy for what ails sociology. He is quite adamant in places such as the *Purdue Symposium on Ethnomethodology* (1968) that ethnomethodology is not a corrective enterprise. However, this does not mean that ethnomethodology has no implications for sociological practice. According to Garfinkel, ethnomethodology serves to illustrate that traditional sociological theorizing and practice rests on unexamined, unscrutinized, or unproblematic features of practical activities to accomplish the demonstrably rational character of its endeavors. What ethnomethodology does is illuminate these previously unobserved features of everyday activities that constitute social order. Garfinkel does not equate this with a remedy for sociology or a quest for a greater level of detail. Instead, he speaks of a qualitatively different type of pursuit, one that is concerned with the study of practical reasoning and common language. Above all, this involves treating social scenes empirically instead of conceptually.¹⁰⁵

Garfinkel and his ethnomethodology do not invoke Mannheim, or the descendants or predecessors of Mannheim and his sociology of knowledge, in order to demonstrate that sociologists have a located way of talking and that a more rational way of talking is possible. Ultimately Garfinkel is not interested in undermining sociology, but is proposing an ethnomethodological program with its own object of investigation. In *Ethnomethodological Studies of Work* (1982) Garfinkel argues that ethnomethodological studies now compose a corpus. Researchers interested in the achieved production and accountability of the phenomena of social order can find in ordinary society an immense

¹⁰⁵ Heritage (1984) lists a series of research recommendations that flow from Garfinkel's work. These include: 1) any setting can be analyzed for members' methods in producing recognizable practical actions; 2) this analysis cannot be done according to rules external to the characteristics of these settings; 3) all social settings can be viewed as self-organizing; and 4) members of a setting are continually engaged in 'making sense' of their circumstances.

technical domain of organizational phenomena. These phenomena, according to Garfinkel, were not suspected until these studies established their existence and provided methods to study them.

However, much like Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Garfinkel's ethnomethodology has important ontological and epistemological implications. Garfinkel argues that empirical constructs are not describing the world, but are the world. "There is no reality beyond them since the ultimately and irreducibly real world is found in the perceived object and not in the signal" (2008: 230). This has ontological and epistemological consequences. It means empirical constructs are not approximations of something beyond them, for "there is no question here of a pie that may be cut in many ways, but rather the pie is found in the act of cutting" (2008: 230). Although, Garfinkel is quick to acknowledge that this constructed world is "forever at the mercies of a Nature that is transcendental to Man's best constructions" (2008: 230). In this way, ethnomethodology is again seen as an alternate science to traditional formal analysis and, in Rawls' words (2002), involved in a respecifying of valid knowledge. This respecified valid knowledge comes from the achieved, directly perceived, coherent appearances of ordinary society's endogenous populations that staff its production.

For Garfinkel, according to this view there is no miracle to logico-empirical method that insures the user objectivity that lesser method distorts. Rather, a consequence of following logico-empirical method is that statements cannot be tested by the meanings of empirical constructs, but must be tested by subjecting them to a course of experience with a Nature that the user conceives as blind to the meanings of her statements. The particular and socially and historically unusual objective character of the sociologically empirical world is found as a consequence of this rule. This is because it organizes

experiences to present one out of many possible objective worlds: an objective world that, in this case, stands only as long as the experiences that it hypothesizes can be repeatedly confirmed by any person, regardless of social affiliation, who does what the statements say they should do. Garfinkel (2008) argues that such a world is certainly at odds with the arrays of them encountered in the course of a day's normal experiences.

The business of 'sciencing', then, does not describe a procedure by which reality is successively approximated, but describes a procedure of successively transforming or, even better, successfully reconstituting a world in accordance with the particular rules of the scientific attitude and the devices of the scientific method. Whether a constituted object is seen as objective and real has to do with the legitimatizing practices associated with the scientific method. Objective knowledge is an achievement of consensus. According to Garfinkel (2008), the reality of an object is not found in its ontological structure but rather is found in its constitution as a unity of meaning.¹⁰⁶ Mehan and Wood (1975) describe this as ethnomethodology being concerned not with the truth value of statements about the world, but instead attempting to determine the practices that make any statement true.

This study of the constitution of the unity of meaning is thus what ethnomethodology concerns itself with and conversational analysis is one of its techniques in this regard. In his 1982 collection *Ethnomethodological Studies of Work* Garfinkel displays some of the studies in this area. He talks about his approach being

¹⁰⁶ Garfinkel (2008) argues for a different theory of objects than Parsons and Schutz. For these authors, the actor does not determine the structure of the object world, but the structure is determined by the significances that the actor attaches to the object world. Hence the make-up of the actor determines how the actor stands in relationship to an order of objects. For Garfinkel, instead, the actor and the structure of the object world are simultaneously constituted. They do not stand in relationship to one each other the way described by Parsons and Schutz. There is no separate actor and world; together they form a unified field. Thus, there is no real object world independent of actors about which the actors can have prejudiced views.

extended to the area of work as early as 1972, when Harvey Sacks's observation that the local production of social order existed as an orderliness of conversational practices upon whose existence all previous studies depended, but missed. David Sudnow, who studies conversational practices of the work of professional jazz ensembles, built upon this. The collection discusses many more studies, including studying university lecturing in introductory chemistry.¹⁰⁷

But it is in the manuscripts published in *Towards a Sociological Theory of Information* (2008), in formulating some of the outlines for long term program of research in the sociology of communication, that Garfinkel explains that to say an object is real is to mean that it is of interest to an experiencer relative to some order of past, present, and anticipated experiences. He argues that communication is one important facet of sociology's central object of study: the problem of social order. Garfinkel identifies characteristic operations of communication as expectations of timing, how information is incorporated, operations of memory and recall, the identities by which a communicant recognizes herself as the perpetrator of communication, the communicative relationship, the social definition of the situation, the alterations on how a situation is constituted, maintained, protected, changed, the modes of inducing discrepancies between expectations and memories, alterations by which 'errors' are corrected, and alterations to the normal whereby discrepancies are regulated. Garfinkel lays out a set of

¹⁰⁷ Although Mehan and Wood (1975) argue that conversational analysis has moved away from ethnomethodology in some ways. They propose that some of conversational analysis has been willing to ignore the indexical relations between talk and its content. Instead, some pursuing conversational analysis have treated talk as possessing finite meanings. The authors characterize this as suspending consideration of the consequences of reflexivity as laid out by Garfinkel.

ninety-two rough ideas that a full-fledged sociology of communication would concern itself with.¹⁰⁸

Anne Rawls' monograph contains several unpublished manuscripts of Garfinkel, which together lay out a sociological approach to information very much in line with his program of ethnomethodology.¹⁰⁹ Garfinkel defines information in very specific ways, distinguished from the more general philosophical notion of knowledge. He speaks of amounts of information as a measure of the degree of order; here, order is once again defined as lack of randomness. Information is something that thus exists, something that can be described empirically. Garfinkel believes that information should be capable of being doubted, believed, tested, and recalled. It should be able to be invested with degrees of certainty, and capable of remaining invariant under variant characteristics. This means that information needs to stand in some clear and determinate relationship to notions of signal, message, error, randomness, order, memory, feedback, communication, channel, and route. Information is transmissible from one physical spatial point to another, which means it is transformable. It must be possible to talk about the clarity or ambiguity, uniqueness or typicality, private, public, personal or impersonal character of information. It can be acquired through various procedures, not just through logico-empirical science. Information must be capable of being treated independently of the

¹⁰⁸ Some of these include the conditions under which communication and the passage of information is perfect or imperfect at providing complete or incomplete information; the ways in which certainty is achieved in the face of situations with incomplete information; the properties of socially defined fact; what factors condition the possibility of experiencing incongruity that undermines an order; the role of various types of attitude, such as natural versus scientific in communication; the role played by standard time, phenomenal time and *durée* in communication; the relationship between credibility and factuality; the extent that any message requires for its informing character a set of invariant expectations; structural and operational characteristics of identity classification schemes; analysis and experimental test of the conditions of the social affects; and power as a problem.

¹⁰⁹ Garfinkel, in the acknowledgements of *Ethnomethodology's Program* (1996), speaks of Anne Rawls as someone he is indebted to. Briefly a student, now his teacher, esteemed colleague, and rare friend, someone who edited his last few monographs, some of which are collections of manuscripts written as early as the 1950s, such as those used in *Towards a Sociological Theory of Information* (2008).

perceiver. Finally, for Garfinkel, each world has an order of information peculiar to it, and this order of information is a function of the mode of attending to it.¹¹⁰

Information means ordered possibilities. Garfinkel discusses the terms of retention, protention, anticipation, and expectation in speaking of various kinds of possibilities. Retention means a possibility constituted in *durée* or phenomenal time. Protention refers to a possibility constituted in *durée* and phenomenal time but without standard time. Anticipation is a protention within a course of activity governed by teleological principle. Finally, the term expectation designates a possibility constituted within a scheme of standard time. This leads to Garfinkel's discussion of various ways in which information can be obtained. He speaks, however, of information not as something that is recalled from memory, but as something that is re-created out of the resources of the available order of possibilities of experience. Through his studies, Garfinkel has also noticed that individuals rarely acknowledge information shortage but more often claim that everything that needed to be known was known. This allows Garfinkel to highlight a distinction between two types of ignorance that he believes are sometimes confounded. One is a sense of ignorance of what could be known but is not, ignorance by a referee who knows better or a God-like figure, according to Garfinkel. This is to be distinguished from a second sense of ignorance that refers to the differential distribution of information among a set of actors, which here makes no reference to a sum.

Beyond the study of everyday activities, Garfinkel takes his work in a myriad of directions including the study of conversation and development of a sociological theory

¹¹⁰ Garfinkel (2008) also offers to help flesh out his theory of information through definitions of concepts of signals, sign, expression, message, and communication. He builds on Bateson by distinguishing between primary information, which is communication about communication, with secondary information, which covers all other types. He also distinguishes between eidetic information, which bears on what the world means, and material information, which bears on the question of what the world consists of in fact.

of communication and information. However, where his legacy may be more present in current day is in the study of the scientists' work. Garfinkel extends his ethnomethodological approach to the study of a whole series of workplaces, and chief among these is the practice of science. Garfinkel studies how the methods and terms used by science are themselves organizationally-situated phenomena. He is interested in how members characterize what they are doing when they are doing science so as to make it possible for them to draw conclusions that are recognized as 'scientific' by other members. "What do those procedures consist of when you come to examine them as phenomena so that that reflexive character of these rules is apparent?" (1968: 27). What Garfinkel's ethnomethodological studies find is that despite the meticulous and detailed instructions that scientists follow, there is 'something more' involved than what is laid out in formal accounts of scientific methods. This does not mean that scientists are at a loss over what to do, but rather that there is an orderliness and ordinariness to scientific activities that is not sufficiently spoken about in the 'scientific method' manuals. This is what ethnomethodological studies display, the ordinary practices through which scientists produce the evidently scientific character of their day's work. In this manner, ethnomethodology is thus a foundational discipline, for it demonstrates the ways in which various scientific practices compose themselves through vernacular conversations and the ordinariness of embodied disciplinary activities.¹¹¹¹¹²

¹¹¹ Garfinkel (1983) points out that unlike the phenomenologists' conception of genetic origins, where origins are traced through the activities of a transcendental consciousness, ethnomethodological studies consult locally observable sequences of conduct that make up the details of a discipline's daily work, or what we could call shop talk.

¹¹² Garfinkel (1983) also distinguishes his ethnomethodological approach from broader notions of 'social constructionism'. He does this by arguing that in ethnomethodology, issues and arguments that identify 'constructivism' are transformed into specific technical and researchable features of actual researchers' practices instead of simply being presented as a theoretically postulated descriptive philosophy embedded in academic arguments about science with no attention paid to endogenously produced practice that

Ethnomethodology raises the difference between formalized instructions and reports about methods and the observable events in any situated production of a methodic routine. It illustrates for example that scientific writing is a distinctive phase of the work, rather than purely a description about actual lab activities. Ethnomethodological studies attempt to open up for empirical study the visible ways in which accounts of scientific activities have their origins in specific human praxis. This is not done to point out that scientists actually act differently than they say publicly, but rather to show that practices in actual situations of inquiry are hidden within the analyzable specifics of formal scientific expressions. Garfinkel and his colleagues accomplish this by examining laboratory work while focusing on the temporal order of the real-world details of scientific praxis, which is, again, ethnomethodology's way of rediscovering the problem of order.

Garfinkel is concerned not only with the production of order, but also with the production of objects. He argues in *Temporal Order in Laboratory Work* (1983) that accounts of scientific activities such as 'inscriptions', factual statements, documentary records, and published reports all become disengaged from the actual course of scientific activity that produced them. In *The Work of a Discovering Science Construed With Materials From the Optically Discovered Pulsar* (1981) with Lynch and Livingston, Garfinkel traces the genealogy of the discovery of Pulsar NP 0532 through the temporal and embodied details of a sequence of observatory runs. The authors do this by examining the discovery of the Independent Galilean Pulsar (IGP) by Cocke and Disney and understanding it as a 'cultural object'. Garfinkel describes it as a cultural object because of the discovery's genetic origins within the embodied situation of work.

constitutes the technical development of ordinary scientific inquiry.

Garfinkel thus calls attention to “the way in which it is made to appear again and again, and in an increasingly definite way, over the course of a night’s work at the observatory” (1983: 221). This is done through an analysis of the tape recordings of several successive runs at the observatory. With the help of two of the original discoverers and other astronomers, Garfinkel and his colleagues suggest that the work of attaching the pulsar to nature was a situated preoccupation at the time of the discovery. Over the course of the night, the object became progressively ‘attached’ to nature simultaneously with embodied efforts to ‘detach’ it from locally explicated features of the instrumental ‘grasp’ of that object.

There is no denying that Garfinkel’s work has had a tremendous impact. There is an International Institute for the Study of Ethnomethodology, an American Sociological Association Section on Ethnomethodology, centers for the study of Ethnomethodology at several universities. His work has also had a significant influence on the development of labeling theory, conversational analysis, institutional ethnography, interpretive sociology in general, and the social study of science in particular. As Heritage (1984) points out, Garfinkel’s significance, unlike Foucault or Habermas, lies not in the range of his investigations or in any attempt at theoretical synthesis. Rather, it is found in his sustained preoccupation with a very narrow range of problems. Heritage calls this the theory of action, the nature of intersubjectivity, and the social constitution of knowledge, while Rawls (2002) describes it as continuing the search for the foundations of human intelligibility, of reason and logic, in the details of collective social practice. In the end it is not surprising that even the nature of ethnomethodology itself and its legacy are the subject of much debate. The claim that Garfinkel has left a significant mark on the discipline of sociology, however, is a claim that is likely less contentious.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to offer an account of the history, nature, and role of reflexivity in Harold Garfinkel's work. This was done by looking at the development of ethnomethodology as Garfinkel's vision for the practice of sociology. Garfinkel develops his ethnomethodology as a phenomenologically-inspired sociology, borrowing heavily from the work of Husserl and Schutz and making use of a host of conceptual tools such as experience, cognitive styles, epoché, noesis-noema, invariance, attention, action, rationality, and time. With the help of this phenomenological toolkit, Garfinkel produces ethnomethodology's chief insight regarding the miracle of the familiar society: that persons living ordinary lives are therein achieving everything that the magnificent topics of logic, meaning, method, order, world, real, and evidence have ever purported to be about. This has significant implications for what Garfinkel calls the 'what more' of traditional sociological accounts, including fundamental consequences for the practice of sociology and offering a strong vision for the role of the researcher.

Ethnomethodology is the study of everyday activities and their locally witnessable, accountable, reflexive features. It involves, above all, making the reflexive character of everyday activities observable. Ethnomethodology is concerned with studying members' knowledge of their ordinary affairs, of their own organized enterprises, where researchers treat this knowledge as part of the same setting also made orderable by this knowledge. Reflexivity is here a feature of everyday activities as opposed to the quality of a theory, the quality of a research method, or the quality of an individual researcher. The meaning of social action depends on the particular context in which it occurs. Moreover, the elements of that context themselves depend on their own

contexts for meaning. But finally, these latter contexts include the very social actions with which we began, so that each element in the situation is reflexively related to the others. An acknowledgement of these relationships and the study of this reflexivity are at the heart of the distinction between what Garfinkel sees as traditional sociological pursuits and his program of ethnomethodology. This follows what he believes is Durkheim's legacy, that is, the study of social order as present in ordinary, immortal society. It means investigating the reflexive and indexical properties of everyday activities systematically and empirically as a way to map out the problem of social order.

Reflexivity at Work: Making Sense of Alvin Gouldner's Reflexive Sociology

Introduction

This chapter discusses Alvin Gouldner's use and understanding of the history, nature, and role of reflexivity in his program of reflexive sociology by extensively exploring his complete body of published works, from his first article *Attitudes of 'Progressive' Trade-Union Leaders* (1947) at the age of twenty-seven until *Against Fragmentation* (1985), published posthumously. This review focuses on a set of two relationships that I believe are central to Gouldner's view and engagement with sociology: first, the relationship between society and social theory, and, second, the relationship between social theory and social theorists.

The chapter is organized in four sections. Section one lays out the background and context necessary to understand the nature and role of Gouldner's reflexive sociology. I begin with a brief discussion of biographical details, training, and theoretical influences that shaped Gouldner's early engagement with sociology, and follow with a discussion of his empirical and theoretical work amending and refining standard industrial sociology theories, concentrating on Weber's contributions. Next, I look at Gouldner's interest in leadership, general group tension, wildcat strikes, and various aspects of bureaucracies. My aim in this section is to show that Gouldner was not content with applying pre-existing models, but sought to reform them. This is an *élan* that would remain constant throughout his entire career and lead to his reflexive sociology.

The second section of this chapter moves from these early empirical studies to Gouldner's affinity for social theory. From an early point in his career, Gouldner advocated that to better understand society, one must understand the social theories about

it. This insight would shape his academic career, and is the first of two relationships that I map out in this chapter. In this second section, I briefly explore Gouldner's description of the origins of sociology as a first step towards linking the study of social theory to better understand society. The bulk of this section, however, involves applying this insight more broadly to Gouldner's extensive writing about the history and nature of first functionalism and then Marxism. Through this, I thus highlight the areas Gouldner found lacking in functionalism, Marxism, and Weber's theory, all of which eventually became pillars of his reflexive sociology. As we will see, Gouldner is not only writing a history of the discipline of sociology, but is simultaneously developing his own vision for the role of social science which is more fully realized in his sociology of sociology.

The third section turns to the second relationship Gouldner focuses on: that of social theories and social theorists, an eventual central feature of his sociology of sociology. This section starts with a rejection of what Gouldner calls 'methodological dualism'. Gouldner instead advocates for an examination of the 'whole scientist', which includes personal realities and the study of background and domain assumptions. I then discuss the nature of, and the role played by, these conceptual tools that Gouldner focuses so much on. This approach is exemplified in Gouldner's study of Plato and his social theory, from which emerges an interest in the distinction between episteme and techne. I conclude this section with a discussion of Gouldner's direct conflict with the vision and the promotion of sociology as a value-free discipline. In this light, Gouldner re-frames sociological objectivity as something that is not incompatible with a value-committed sociology, which Gouldner heavily promotes, but as a sociology that rejects objectivism.

These elements comprise Gouldner's own brand of sociology of sociology, which he calls reflexive sociology in order to distinguish it from others and highlight its key

feature. Following my discussion of the history and nature of Gouldner's reflexive sociology, the fourth section of this chapter will focus on its role and implications. His program of reflexive sociology is built around a pair of relationships, that of social theorists and social theories as well as social theories and society. Because of this, Gouldner argues that any profound change to society must occur through a change to our social theories and, thus, a change to social theorists. This fourth section looks at Gouldner's vision for the specific role to be played by intellectuals and their forming into theoretical collectives, in particular, their responsibility to focus on news and world-making activities. Gouldner's vision for sociology is one that fully welcomes political responsibilities, of a sociology that embraces emancipation. For Gouldner, a reformer at heart throughout his career, a reform of society should pass through a reform of sociology.

Section One: Early Pursuits

In this section I overview the background and context necessary to understand the history of the emergence of Gouldner's reflexive sociology. This is done partly by looking at some biographical details along with the theoretical influences that have shaped Gouldner's interests. From an early stage of his career, Gouldner was not only a practitioner of sociology, but was also interested in investigating the history and nature of sociology and, in turn, reforming the practice of sociology. This élan for reform manifested itself in his early empirical studies in industrial sociology where he sought to built upon and amend Weber's theories on bureaucracy, and it continued for many years in his attempts to examine and correct the functionalist tradition from within which he operated. By briefly covering these earliest empirical and theoretical pursuits of

Gouldner's, I illustrate his on-going interest in not only working within sociology, but in fashioning a new vision for sociology which he ultimately builds into his reflexive sociology.

I offer a few brief biographical details to start. Alvin Gouldner was born in New York in 1920, attended City College of New York, and graduated in 1941. He was then trained at Columbia University in the 1940s under Merton and Lazarsfeld, among others. During his career he was professor of sociology at Washington University, the University of Buffalo, and the University of Amsterdam, as well as president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems in 1962. He authored eleven books, including nine monographs, eleven articles, and founded the journal *Theory and Society*. Gouldner was a sociologist, a social theorist, and an intellectual historian who passed away in 1980.

In his early writing, Gouldner is quick to credit Robert Merton as his very influential teacher (1950, 1954a, 1954b). He also identifies Max Weber, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim as crucial authors one needs to engage with and learn from, and acknowledges the debt he also owes to Talcott Parsons, Karl Mannheim and Sigmund Freud (1950, 1954b) and the influence their work had on his thinking. Gouldner's interest in analyzing existing theories and examining their unstated assumptions, an approach he turns into his vision for a reflexive sociology, derives from an amalgam of these various authors and the training he received from Merton at Columbia University.

Gouldner's earliest published work, *Attitudes of 'Progressive' Trade-Union Leaders* (1947), was an empirical study of trade-union leadership that he conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews and standard questionnaire techniques. Here, Gouldner is interested in how trade-union leaders reconcile their roles as leaders with their roles as husbands and fathers when the two came into conflict. In

this work Gouldner traces how a combination of family life, endless hours working tirelessly on the behalf of others, and the subsuming of personal success and ascendancy can become a source of strain.

Gouldner uses empirical studies not only to add to existing theoretical work, but also to question, interrogate, and amend these theories¹¹³. This first takes place in the field of industrial sociology and, specifically, surrounding the nature of leadership. In the edited volume *Studies in Leadership* (1950) Gouldner looks at the long changing history of leadership from feudal times until more modern forms. Here, Gouldner is critical of many existing studies on leadership, characterizing them as trait studies. His critique of trait studies comes from interrogating the very category of leader, emphasizing that there is no unbridgeable gap between leaders and followers. Another of Gouldner's earliest contributions, *Wildcat Strike* (1954b), amends some prevalent conceptions among industrial sociologists about group tension. While the standard view saw unions as facilitating communication between members and management, Gouldner found that that depended on the type of relationship union leaders had with management. For example, when formal union leaders are oriented toward managerial expectations and view certain workers' grievances as non-legitimate, they may actually impair instead of foster communication¹¹⁴.

In the early part of his career, Gouldner continually moves between theoretical models and empirical studies to test these models, amend them, and test them again.

¹¹³ Lemert and Piccone commented that "his refusal to buy into ready-made schools and his penchant for producing his own unique formulations" (1982: 741) was simultaneously a strength and weakness of Gouldner's.

¹¹⁴ Gouldner (1954b) thus found a distinction between grievances, which were interpreted as legitimate demands by the union leadership because they bore on the content of the contract, with complaints, which were deemed as non-legitimate. This is note-worthy because Gouldner found that it is demands that are interpreted as complaints, such as the changing speed of the machine, the demotion of the old supervisors and their replacement with new ones that are part of the explanation for strikes.

Gouldner works out much of his interests in leadership, and also bureaucracy, through a study of strikes where he amends and refines some of the standard industrial sociology theories. He looks at how bureaucracy affects the nature of the relationship between workers and management, and how union leadership operates under such conditions. This leads Gouldner to be particularly interested in a certain type of strike: the wildcat strike. Gouldner defines a wildcat strike as a strike involving issues ordinarily of 'little interest' to labor and business leaders. In his monograph *Wildcat Strike* (1954b), Gouldner is interested in finding out under what conditions workers are more or less interested in wages. He finds that workers' interest varies depending on management's violation of the indulgency pattern, which was felt to be present when "management's actions did not appear to strive for a return on every cost" (1954a: 54).

The first period of Gouldner's career is principally engaged with and amending the work of Weber¹¹⁵. Gouldner sought to build upon Weber's theory of bureaucracy, showing that there are several types of bureaucratic forms and that this variation is linked to historically specific social structures. According to Gouldner, Weber saw bureaucracies as relying on administration and based on expertise and discipline. In his monograph *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy* (1954a), Gouldner argues that Weber's work implicitly embodies two distinctive types of bureaucracy: representative and punishment-centered. The representative type is based on rules agreed upon and technically justified, while punishment-centered is based on the imposition of rules and obedience for its own sake. Gouldner is also interested in showing how bureaucracy is experienced in quite different ways by individuals at different levels of bureaucratic

¹¹⁵ Gouldner chose to name his Chair at Washington University the Max Weber Research Professor of Social Theory. Lemert and Piccone argue that looking at the whole of Gouldner's career, Weber can be seen as "an emblem of all the dichotomies by which Gouldner thought and worked" (1982: 744).

hierarchy. He pays attention to how various rules fulfill different functions for different ranks in the industrial bureaucracy, in how rules are stricter for certain strata of the bureaucracy than for others. Gouldner focuses on both manifest and latent functions of bureaucracies¹¹⁶ and is most critical of Weber for not discussing to whom organization rules affect the greatest.

Gouldner has the same penchant as Weber for typology construction. For example, the typology he builds around locals versus cosmopolitans allows him to offer what he feels is a stronger explanation of how the phenomenon of bureaucratization is linked to the disappearance of the indulgency pattern. Gouldner finds that modern organizations require that their members have some degree of loyalty, especially for organizations operating in a threatening environment. Weber's theory of bureaucracy tends to overlook this, assuming that the more experts in an organization's personnel, the more efficient the organization and the greater its stability. But in *Cosmopolitans and Locals: Toward an Analysis of Latent Social Roles* (1957b), Gouldner finds that experts are also cosmopolitan in outlook, and, according to his analysis, less loyal to their employing organization. Consequently, organizational survival may be threatened by a recruiting policy that attends solely to the expertise of the candidate. This is an example of where Gouldner's empirical work allows him to amend existing theories to better understand intra-organizational tension and conflict.

¹¹⁶ Gouldner in fact maps out the relationship between terror and bureaucratization, another mechanism for dealing with resistant population. He argues that both are ways a power center controls populations on whom it is dependent, but with whom it cannot otherwise replace, motivate or mobilize. Terror is used when resistance is expected to be active, while bureaucracy is used when resistance is more passive. "Bureaucratization is the routinization of domination; terror arises when routines of domination collapse in the face of mounting crisis, or before routines of domination have yet developed" (Gouldner 1980b: 239). Gouldner explains that following a revolution bureaucracy is not terribly reliable. Thus, terror is seen as useful to achieve specific aims.

From the earliest stages of his career (1948; 1957a), Gouldner is interested not only in practicing sociology, but also in proposing particular visions of how sociology ought to be practiced by others. He believes that instead of concerning ourselves with whether bureaucracy is or it not inevitable, the more fruitful approach is to identify variations and types of bureaucracies. Gouldner adopts the metaphor of clinical sociology as a vision for sociologists practicing industrial sociology where the goal is to better understand and mitigate the effects of bureaucracies, rather than unilaterally condemning them. This vision, which Gouldner contrasts with engineering sociology and sociologists as morticians, was a way to bridge the rift between policy makers and social scientists, on one hand, and between applied researchers and pure theorists on the other. Gouldner is mindful of the distinction between these in the literature and seeks, through the conduct of his own work, to bridge the gap.

Section Two: Understand Social Theories in Order to Understand Society

The second section of this chapter turns from these early empirical studies in the field of industrial sociology to Gouldner's affinity for social theory. From an early point in his career, Gouldner advocates that to better understand society, one must understand the social theories about it. This is the first of two relationships that I highlight in this chapter as key to understanding his reflexive sociology. This section highlights some elements of Gouldner's analysis of the history of sociology, starting with its origins, moving to functionalism, and finally, Marxism. Gouldner is interested in the history of sociology because he argues this historical perspective insulates us from the vulgarities of the present. Gouldner's view of theories is that they develop within particular historical landscapes. Gouldner spent much of his career uncovering what he feels are a theory's

latent assumptions, as well as demonstrating how theories are products of particular historical periods. He sees theories not as simply responses to facts, but as responses to other 'enemy' or 'competing' theories¹¹⁷. In this discussion, I highlight areas Gouldner found lacking in Weber's work, Parsons' work, and Marxism, areas that eventually formed the pillars of Gouldner's reflexive sociology. This section continues to emphasize the narrative that, throughout his academic career, Gouldner had a consistent drive not only to practice and write about sociology, but also to offer his own vision for the role that sociology ought to play.

Before turning to an examination of the dominant social theories present within sociology, Gouldner tackles the myth of 'Comte the founder of sociology' in American sociology in his work *Emile Durkheim and the Critique of Socialism* (1973b). He argues that situating Comte as the founder of sociology performs ongoing social functions for those holding this belief, and this constitutes an interesting problem for the study of the sociology of knowledge. Gouldner offers the hypothesis that acknowledging Comte as the father of sociology was less professionally damaging than acknowledging Saint-Simon since the latter is also considered the founder of socialism. Gouldner believes that the argument about the 'founding father' is a fundamental debate about the character of the discipline.

Gouldner sees sociology as born to be the counterbalance to the political economy of the middle class in the 19th century. For Saint-Simon, sociology was an N+1 science. Gouldner argues that this conception of sociology can have two different implications:

¹¹⁷ However, Gouldner (1970) is slightly critical of the ideology of convergence as the pursuit of intellectual consensus. He rejects the implication that great theorists can be shown to have come to a consensus unbeknownst to themselves, and that it is these common elements, rather than their disagreements, that are theoretically productive. Gouldner sees this an Americanized version of Hegelianism which he does not support.

sociology as studying leftovers, and sociology as the ‘queen’ of the social sciences.

Gouldner (1973b) also contrasts classical sociology, which stresses universality, searches for enduring structures and laws, emphasizes order and conceives of objectivity as conformity with reason¹¹⁸, with romantic sociology, which stresses the relativity of society, searches for change, processes, negotiations and conceives of objectivity as the consensus of scholars achieved through debate¹¹⁹. He employs this divided conception of sociology to describe the contemporary sociological landscape between the camps of ‘Academic Sociology’, centered on Comte’s vision for sociology and developed by university academicians, and Marxism, developed by unattached intelligentsia and partly inspired by the work of Enfantin, Bazard and Gans.

From its origins, sociology was conceived as a new religion of humanity¹²⁰.

Gouldner (1973b) believes that it is Durkheim who did much to secularize sociology and distinguish it from socialism. He presented it as a discipline primarily concerned with what is and what has been, but not with what ought to be. Gouldner argues that Durkheim bridges the gap between Comteianism and Marxism, leading to a convergence between Marx and Durkheim. This convergence stems from Durkheim’s expansion of the Marxian formula that ‘social being determines social consciousness’ by promoting that social, and

¹¹⁸ Gouldner (1970) argues that, as a call for a detached scientific method of studying society, the explanation for sociology’s apolitical start, is due to the intense political conflicts over the fundamental character of society at the time. He argues that viewed historically, modern ‘value-free’ sociology, a topic we will discuss later this chapter, is the adaptation of Sociological Positivism to political failure.

¹¹⁹ Gouldner himself leans towards Romanticism. He sees Romanticism as an emancipator standpoint, which will become an important part of his own vision for the role of sociology to which we will come back to later. He links this Romantic standpoint to the work of Weber, Mead, Goffman and Becker among others. Romantics reject an image of the social world as a given, neatly arranged static order, but instead view it instead as full of tension, changing, open-ended, loosely stranded, somewhat indeterminate and fluid process.

¹²⁰ Sociologist was first conceived as a kind of priest in the religion of humanity. Gouldner (1970) writes that once Saint-Simon passed away, his students began giving lectures on the street. Comte on the one hand and Enfantin and Bayard on the other, with important differences, but both about who and what is sociology and espousing a conception of the sociologist as a kind of priest of humanity.

not merely economic, relations influence the development of beliefs.

For Gouldner then, an interest in understanding society starts with an interest in sociology and its social theories. Gouldner is not content with just describing sociology, but also sees himself as a critic. Of the two kinds of critics he identifies, those who live for and those who live off sociology, he sees himself as the former. Gouldner (1970) argues that a critique of sociology needs to see the discipline as the flawed product of a flawed society. Sociology operates within particular contexts, at macro-institutional levels in particular states, as well as in the more immediate locale of the university. He thus offers a critique of sociology, which he sees as requiring detailed analysis of dominant theoretical products created by sociology. Gouldner believes that no serious critique of sociology can be accomplished without close analysis of both its theories and its theorists. As such, I now turn attention to Gouldner's analysis of the history and constitution of functionalism.

After his early work within industrial sociology engaged with and amending the work of Max Weber, Gouldner works within, attempts to reform, and ultimately rejects the functionalist approach, or what he calls establishment or academic sociology. Gouldner wants to extend a sociological analysis to functionalism itself, attempting to uncover, reflect and make visible its assumptions about the world. Most of this work is done using and critiquing Talcott Parsons' structural-functionalist approach, which he sees as benefiting greatly from emerging at a specific historical time and also in a specific geographical place, Harvard University. It developed as a rapid response to the emergence of the Welfare State on the one hand, and as an American response to Marxism on the

other¹²¹. Gouldner finds that much of Parsons' theoretical work is shaped by two powerful impulses “(1) by his effort to generalize the anti-Marxist critique, and, (2) at the same time, by his effort to overcome the determinism, the pessimism, and, indeed, the anti-capitalism of these critics of Marxism”¹²². (1970: 183) Gouldner describes Parsons' work as a polemical optimism, an anti-pessimistic optimism that led him to view existing institutions as viable. Gouldner sees Parsons' biggest contribution as synthesizing Western European social theory within the framework of an American structure of sentiments, assumptions and personal reality, and argues that Parsons, more than any other contemporary social theorist, influenced academic sociologists. In *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, Gouldner writes, “it is Parsons who has provided the focus of theoretical discussion for three decades now [1940s, 50s and 60s], for those opposing him no less than for his adherents” (1970: 168).

Gouldner examines Parsons' theory as representative of functionalism and offers a critique pertaining to three elements. The first stems from Parsons' belief that the oneness of the world is its most vital character, where its parts take on meaning and are significant only in relation to the whole. Understanding functionalism means understanding the social world as a system. Gouldner finds that functional analysis premises the operation of a ‘principle of functional reciprocity’, but that this is only present at the level of assumption. In *Norms of Reciprocity* (1960a), Gouldner maps out the manner in which the concept of reciprocity is tacitly involved in, but formally

¹²¹ Gouldner is somewhat critical of Parsons for never really acquainting himself with Marx's work. Gouldner critiques Parsons for in fact being better acquainted with Marx's critics than with Marx himself. Gouldner remarks that in the “793 pages of his *Structure of Social Action*, Parsons makes not a single reference to the original writings of Marx or Engels, citing only secondary sources”. (1970: 150)

¹²² Although Gouldner (1970) remarks while analyzing the topic of social change functionalism increasingly seemed to converge with Marxism. The issue, for Gouldner, is that Parsons mobilizes different assumptions to account for stability and for change.

neglected by, modern functional theory. Gouldner is critical of functionalism for leaving this assumption relatively unexamined, a criticism that is echoed by more contemporary authors (Chriss 2000). Leaving reciprocity unexamined means that its full nature and role are not sufficiently understood given the crucial role this concept plays in functionalism's theoretical model.

Second, apart from the unacknowledged and ill-defined use of reciprocity, Gouldner is critical of functionalism for espousing a version of 'everything affects everything else'. He recognizes that functionalism has moved the conversation from a single-factor model within social science towards a multiple causation model, but that is not quite enough. In *Notes on Technology and the Moral Order* (1962b), which Chriss (2000) remarks is Gouldner's last attempt to work within and reform functionalism, Gouldner argues that we should be using a stratified model where we can attempt methodically to note the relative weight or influence of various factors compared to each other.¹²³

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly going forward, Gouldner argues that functionalism and its preoccupation with the problem of order demonstrate a metaphysical and political conservatism that fails to see that this might create its own legitimacy. Gouldner argues that legitimacy and authority never eliminate power; rather, they only make it latent. Functionalism is in the service of conserving, a notion which is expressed by functionalism's reluctance to engage in social dissent or criticism. This is very much at odds with Gouldner's own leanings, as I will discuss later in the chapter,

¹²³ In this last published work where Gouldner's work could be classified as working within the functionalist paradigm, *Notes on Technology and Moral Order* (1962b), Gouldner seemed very enthusiastic about the development in mathematics and statistics and their potential to open up new opportunities for factor analysis for cases that require those quantitative tools to map out the difference between two or more elements in determining a given outcome. Gouldner does not return to this particular methodology or potential approach once he abandons functionalism after 1962.

and likely a significant factor for him leaving functionalism behind and developing an interest in Marxism.

If functionalism is worth studying because it represents the establishment sociology in the United States, Gouldner argues that studying Marxism is important because it offers the genetic code of the main twentieth century revolutions. For example, consider that at one point about one third of the world's population was living in states that saw themselves as Marxist. Where Marxism gets treated as a theory that is a product of earlier theories, philosophies, or ideologies, but also as a product of particular social and historical conditions, Gouldner proposes a sociological analysis of Marxism that he calls 'a Marxism of Marxism'. This means offering what he sees as a critique of Marxism, but critique meant in a very particular way. For Gouldner, critique is: "a lapidary act: it strives to discern and strike off from Marxism (as from any doctrine) its flawed, erroneous, and irrational parts, so that it may rescue its productive and rational side, polishing and resituating this in a new intellectual setting". (1980a: 9) Gouldner spends much of the end of his career (*The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar, and Future of Ideology* (1976), *The Two Marxisms: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of a Theory* (1980a) and *Against Fragmentation: The Origins of Marxism and the Sociology of Intellectuals* (1985)) attempting to 'make sense' of the contradictions and fragmentation present in Marxism. The implication of his work is that better understanding of Marxism renders possible better understanding of social and political revolutions.

Gouldner argues that to understand a theory like Marxism is to understand its intellectual allies, ancestors, adversaries and competitors. He speaks to the tendency in theory making to overstate differences and minimize convergence, which includes the

tendency to eliminate internal contradictions and reduce dissonance between how an object is supposed to appear and how in fact it seems to be. Gouldner tasks himself with resisting impulses to normalize the world, interrogating the internal contradiction present in Marxism, and understanding what role Marxism plays, not just in theory, but in practices such as Stalinism, Maoism¹²⁴ and Castroism. While conducting this work, Gouldner strives for a reflexivity that knows it is always interpreting, reading, and constructing the Marxism of its critique. Reflexivity, for Gouldner, turns out to be the key to addressing the internal contradictions within Marxism and is thus at the heart of his reflexive sociology.

Gouldner starts with the history and evolution of early Marxism, where he discusses the establishment of the paradigm of historical materialism by Marx and Engels along three separate stages. In the first stage, Marx and Engels distinguish their ideas from others and their paradigm coalesces. In the second stage, the paradigm is applied and demonstrated. In the third stage, the paradigm is normalized and defended against vulgarization and attempts to eliminate anomalies. For Gouldner, Marxism developed as a fight on two fronts: a fight against artisans (insiders) on one hand, and against

¹²⁴ Gouldner characterizes Maoism as placing a greater emphasis on the universality of contradiction and thus of having achieved a reflexivity superior to that of Western Marxisms because it can and has faced its own internal contradictions. Gouldner argues that Marxism “is simply unthinkable without the complex of institutions that centre on the university, which trains and provides livings for a secular intelligentsia” (1973d: 452). No university, no intelligentsia, no Marxism. Mao’s anti-intellectualism is a way of destroying the links with the past. Maoism is the Marxism that recognizes that there is no way forward for the revolution except through the death of Marxism. Gouldner finds that Maoism marks the highest and final stage of the historical development of Marxism. “Revolution requires an end to the contradictions of Marxism – which is to say, an end to ‘Marxism’.” (1973d: 459). Gouldner had a long-standing interest in the Chinese model of Marxism and wrote about the nature and role of the Red Guard as far back as 1952 in his *Red Tape as a Social Problem* (1952). There Gouldner describes the constituency and role of the Red Guard as militant students protecting Mao and his teachings. Gouldner discusses how important the role of theory played in the Chinese Revolution. Indeed, it was theory, Mao’s theory “that made the primary difference for them and not objective conditions. In the hands of Mao, Marxism more than ever became a doctrine to live by rather than a dogma to abide by, and it is at this level that their exhortation to read and study Mao seems most intelligible”. (1952: 410) The rise and decline of their success is attributed to theoretical and ideological factors which is why it is seen as a cultural revolution that seeks a complete transformation of the values and beliefs of the Chinese people.

intellectuals (outsiders) on the other. On the latter count, Gouldner finds that Marx's words are supportive of intellectuals' claim to a privileged epistemological position, and thus, legitimates the authority of outsiders. Gouldner actually devotes quite a bit of attention to studying Marx's epistemology and there finds the key to understanding contemporary strands of Marxism.¹²⁵

Gouldner is first and foremost interested in mapping out the internal crisis of Marxism, which has been recognized for a very long time as the internal crisis between Scientific Marxism and Critical Marxism¹²⁶. Gouldner's main argument is that Marxism has suffered from internal contradictions from its very inception that can be traced back to Marx conflating the distinction between the contrary and negation. While Marxism defines itself in opposition to idealism from the beginning, Marx's opposition to German idealism sometimes takes the form of negating idealism and other times by affirming its contrary. Herein lies the conflation. In affirming idealism's contrary Marx is led to postulate that ideas are weak, depending, and controlled elements; instead of causing something, ideas are caused. The affirmation of the contrary, then, is the distinctive method of critique. "Thus in rejecting 'Consciousness determines social being', Marx often affirms the contrary, namely, 'Social being determines consciousness.'" (1980a: 84). This is quite different from negation, an alternative mode of opposition to idealism also used by Marx, which holds that ideas are neither independent nor controllers.

Gouldner illustrates Marx's conflation of contrary and negation by taking excerpts

¹²⁵ It is interesting that Gouldner makes very little reference to epistemology during his career until those last few books written about the history of Marxism and discussing Marx's epistemology. In *The Politics of the Mind* (1972) Gouldner does admit that *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970) neglected epistemological problems, and he claimed he would re-visit this at a later time, which he only did through this engagement with Marx's epistemology, but not explicitly with his own

¹²⁶ Lemert and Piccone (1982) discuss the admiration that Gouldner held for Lukacs and seeing him as the origin for modern Critical Marxism.

from *The German Ideology* (1932) and arguing that the juxtaposition of contrary and negation, often only a few pages apart, documents the existence of their confusion. This is significant because Gouldner argues that the dialectic between Scientific Marxism and Critical Marxism is grounded in Marx's original conflation¹²⁷. Each side takes up this dialectic in relation to how important Hegel was for Marx: one side accepts the young Marx, while others see him as still mired in ideology; one sees Marx as a culmination of German idealism, the other, as superior to that tradition. The oppositional perspectives stem from two readings of Marxism and grow partly from the tension between voluntarism and determinism, between freedom and necessity, which leads to two different visions of how change will come about. Here, scientific Marxism sees change happening through shifts in the objectified social structures on which men's will and consciousness rely, while Critical Marxism views change as occurring through people's will and consciousness to overcome the deficiencies of nature, history, and those objectified social structures.

Gouldner comments on how easy the road has been to salvage the purity of one interpretation of Marx by insinuating that rather than Marx having internal contradictions within the course of his career, the contradictions stem from differences found between Marx and Engels. This is done through authorship: by attributing the presence of contradictions to the influence of Engels, and by holding him responsible for the defects of Marxism while leaving Marx's contribution as pure. Gouldner opposes such an approach generally and such a view on authorship specifically, arguing that this promotes the idea of social theory as the product of a single 'creator'. Instead, Gouldner argues,

¹²⁷ Gouldner (1973d) maps out theorists of the Marxist world and what camp they would fit under, between critical marxists such as Lukacs, Gramsci and Frankfurt School and scientific marxists such as Althusser and Therborn.

texts ought to be seen as the product of several members of a theoretical community¹²⁸.

Gouldner argues that Scientific Marxism's and Critical Marxism's reading of Marx are equally true parts of Marxism, and he offers an explanation of how they can co-exist using the manifest-latent distinction to characterize various elements of Marxist theory. Until the Second International, Scientific Marxism was the manifest part of Marxism's theory, while Critical Marxism was part of its background assumptions¹²⁹. So while Marxism's manifest level theory, as technical and extraordinary language, focused on working class self-emancipation, Marxism also lived at an additional, deeper level, which at first was not easily spoken in its own community. This analytic existed at the level of background assumptions, where there remained an abiding commitment to voluntarism, of philosophy, of theory, of ideology, and of consciousness. That relationship began to change with the emergence of Leninism. By the time of Mao's China and Castro's Cuba, Critical Marxism became the dominant theory and Scientific Marxism was thrust into the background assumptions. Thus, this archaeological perspective on the two Marxisms by Gouldner helps explain how they are able to survive the contradiction each represented for the other. Gouldner (1980a) explains that it is the simultaneous existence of these two levels that allowed Marxism to survive failures of its manifest, technical theory, and, moreover, argues (1985) that it is the metaphoricality of Marxism that is one of its greatest sources of political validity and adaptability.

As with functionalism, Gouldner is interested in the underlying elements of

¹²⁸ More to come later in this chapter on the role Gouldner attributes to theoretical communities.

¹²⁹ Gouldner finds it interesting that the three main texts used to portray Marxism as critique were self-censored by Marx. The Grundrisse, the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 and the theses on Feuerbach were never published by Marx himself. Gouldner finds that Marx's science's standpoint is deterministic and structural while his critiques's standpoint is voluntaristic. Scientific Marxism tends toward gradualism and even parliamentarianism while Critical Marxism is infused with the more catastrophic imagery of abrupt and violent revolution. Gouldner links the rise of Critical Marxism to the changing political economy.

Marx's theory. Gouldner (1985) contrasts the popular description of Marxism's fundamental epistemology, where truth mirrors 'what is', with what he sees as a more accurate description of Marxism's epistemology, where reality and truth form a 'whole' and, in particular, a 'whole' whose parts are not harmoniously arranged but are internally contradictory. That distinction links to the idea of false consciousness where not all persons or groups are able to see the whole and its contradictions, and speak the truth about them. False consciousness is also central to the Marxist idea of 'ideology', which refers to any view professing false consciousness. Marx's epistemology involves an ideology critique that attempts to show the partiality of what a person knows. In this way, Gouldner finds, Marx's epistemology is very much about the whole and can in fact be described as a holistic epistemology; since the working class is the universal class, once exploitation is gone, false consciousness will be gone. Marxist epistemology is of truth-as-whole, and Marxist critique focuses on what has been silenced and repressed systematically. Grounded in an emphasis of struggle, Marxist epistemology entails the notion of 'transformative criticism', where critique entails de-mystification. This idea greatly appeals to Gouldner and is something he believes should be at the heart of the sociological enterprise.

Gouldner argues that Marxism's project is to enhance rationality, extirpate false consciousness, and de-mystify the world, all the ultimate aim of emancipation. Gouldner (1957a) characterizes Marx as no Faustin concerned solely with understanding society, but as a Promethean who sought to understand it well enough to influence and to change it. Marxism's objective was to transform everyday life, and Marx never doubted that rationality was only part of emancipation. Marx's project of emancipation, then, is at the bottom of a critique of, and drives to overcome, fragmentation. As a result, Gouldner is

interested in the relationship between doctrine of holism and the doctrine of recovery. Marxism is involved in a dialectic between providing a picture of totality and accentuating a limited part of it. De-mystification requires that the 'natural' be revealed as the doing of human beings, for Marxism is about hidden classes, hidden class struggle, and hidden exploitation. Capitalism is unique because of the hidden character of its exploitation; thus, recovery is the overcoming of a charged silence. Marxism is not special or immune to this, but, as all else, must also be the subject of critique. In this way, Gouldner attempts a demystification of Marxism by turning the tools of Marxism against itself¹³⁰.

In *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar, and Future of Ideology* (1976), Gouldner's main criticism, and the areas he feels Marxism is most lacking, are in its failure to see itself as speech¹³¹, and in how the normal Marxists distinguish tacitly but sharply between themselves and the world they critique. Gouldner distinguishes between the Normal Marxism he sees as raising itself above what it critiques and the Marxism he privileges, which calls itself reflexive and acknowledges "important continuities between the critic and the criticized, between the subject and the object, itself and the other" (1976: xv). Gouldner finds that Marxism embodies objectivism: specifically, an objectivism that lacks reflexivity. He defines objectivism as discourse that one-sidedly focuses on the object while occluding the speaking subject. "Objectivism thus ignores the way in which the spoken object is contingent in part on the language in which it is spoken, and varies in character with the language—or theory—

¹³⁰ This is what Chriss (2000) calls a Marxist outlaw, one that applies Marxist critique to Marxism.

¹³¹ Gouldner writes that no matter what one "may think of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, he was right in seeing that Marxism resisted efforts to see itself as a speech produced by speakers, who may also be limited by their own social context" (1976: 44).

used” (1976: 45). Gouldner uses the concept of ideology, defined as speech that does not recognize its own grounds, to critique both Marxism and Academic sociology¹³².

Looking at Marxism as an ideology, Gouldner finds it lacking in the area of reflexivity. This is significant in terms of Gouldner’s preoccupation and development of his vision for sociology built around reflexivity. Gouldner spends so much time mapping out the history of social theory because he believes that transformation of society is linked to transformation of theories about society. In his view, radicals who do not learn to use their theory self-consciously will be used by said theory, and that is what he is trying to avoid and proposing at the same time.

The old society maintains itself also through theories and ideologies that establish its hegemony over the minds of men, who therefore do not merely bite their tongues but submit to it willingly. It will be impossible either to emancipate men from the old society or to build a humane new one, without beginning, here and now, the construction of a total counter-culture, including new social theories; and it is impossible to do this without a critique of the social theories dominant today. (Gouldner 1970: 5)

Part of the reason for an investigation into the history and nature of sociology, in Gouldner’s opinion, is that normal sociology profoundly lacks reflectiveness. In *The Politics of the Mind* (1972b), Gouldner discusses normal sociology as embodying a mindless activism, instrumental and useful, yet antithetical to the goals of emancipatory sociology. Gouldner argues that a philosophically unreflective sociology cannot be

¹³² Gouldner discusses Mannheim’s distinction between the limited reflexivity of partial ideology and the total view of ideology he turned into his programme for a sociology of knowledge. “Indeed, each ideology did not see itself as having hidden, and as needing to recover, some part of the social world. It only saw others as needing to do this and saw itself as correcting or helping them. It was exactly this limited reflexivity (or self-awareness) that, as Karl Mannheim claimed, made ideology only a primitive precursor of the sociology of knowledge. Correspondingly, says Mannheim, when we move from this partial view to one that regards the views of all groups as grounded socially, then we have moved from ideology to the consciousness of the “sociology of knowledge.”” (1976: 281)

successful in “helping men rid themselves of their false consciousness and emancipating themselves.” (1972b: 112) And as we shall see, Gouldner advocates emancipation as the goal of the discipline of sociology. That is why he critiques Weber for the attempted separation of facts from values, and functionalism for its inherent conservatism and support of current social order. Gouldner has a different vision in mind, one that he calls critical theory. He sees critical theory, unlike normal sociology, as eschewing ‘value freeness’ and embodying a reflexive understanding of its own value commitments. Gouldner envisions a role for sociology that is heavily influenced by Marx and Marxism but that recognizes that its commitments will contain ambiguities and contradictions: a role that recognizes its rationality is, too, “limited by the world in which it exists and by the social positioning of those speaking for it” (1976: 294).

This rejection of various forms of objectivism implies a particular understanding of truth. Gouldner (1965) rejects the platonic assumptions that truth exists to be uncovered, and has a vision of truth as only that which is judged by members of a theoretical community to have survived the baptism of criticism¹³³. He seeks out truth as practical reason, as something that can be used towards the transformation of daily life, something that can lead towards a new emancipatory sociology. Gouldner sees as the special reflexive tasks of such a sociology to seek out what will inhibit false consciousness and to foster what he calls rational discourse. The ultimate end of our social theory is human fulfillment and liberation. As such, it is the task of social theory to create new and extraordinary languages and to help men learn to speak them. Gouldner

¹³³ In this regard, Gouldner (1976) credits Kuhn, Bachelard, Feyerabend, Lakatos, Popper, Habermas, Foucault and Blum. Gouldner likes Kuhn’s insistence that the validity of some truth-claims is grounded in the consensus of some scholarly community. The general standards employed in coming to consensus must be judged separately before a specific consensus it reaches can be accepted as reasonable.

writes that there is “no common language, no community, no truth” (1972b: 104). Truth-claims are to be understood as proposals and counterproposals in a dialogue, and in a community, of the interested who share a culture of critical discourse. Given the concern, then, with the consensual grounding of truth-claims, the production of truth has an inescapable political dimension. This rejection of objectivism also means that the speaker is re-introduced as a crucial element of the equation: who constitutes those communities matters. The relationship between social theorists and social theories is the second important relationship which forms the basis of Gouldner’s reflexive sociology, and the one to which I now turn my attention.

Section Three: Understanding Social Theorists in Order to Understand Social Theories

This third section focuses on examining the second relationship foundational to Gouldner’s reflexive sociology, the relationship between social theories and social theorists. I open with a discussion of Gouldner’s rejection of methodological dualism, and then turn quickly to an analysis of what Gouldner calls the ‘whole scientist’, which includes personal realities and the study of background and domain assumptions. The section discusses the nature and role played by these conceptual tools and how they help shape his reflexive sociology. I then present Gouldner’s study of Plato and his social theories, which exemplifies Gouldner’s focus on this relationship. This leads directly into a discussion of how Gouldner’s vision for sociology comes in direct conflict with the promotion of sociology as a value-free discipline. Here, Gouldner re-frames sociological objectivity in such a way that it becomes compatible with his value-committed reflexive sociology.

As seen in the previous section, Gouldner has a vision of truth that is not eternal

and cannot be derived from reason and logic alone. Gouldner (1972b) argues that sociologists do not merely study or describe society, but conceptualize and order society. Sociologists fashion ways of looking at, thinking and talking about the social world and that comes with a certain set of responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is to better understand the nature of the role played by social theorists in such a process. Fuhrman (1989) describes this as Gouldner being interested in analyzing the limits of social theory's understanding of itself by partially linking the production of social theory with dreams, imaginations, and feelings of theorists.

Gouldner's ultimate goal is the transformation of society. Society cannot be transformed without transforming the social theories about society. In turn, social theories cannot be transformed without understanding the role played by social theorists and their limitations. Much of his theoretical work surrounding the history of Marxism (1976, 1980 and 1985) and Plato in *Enter Plato* (1965) is about linking social theorist, social theory and society to one another. That brings Gouldner to pursuing a sociology of social science through a study of social theorists.

This focus on the relationship between social theories and social theorists is born out of Gouldner's rejection of methodological dualism, a stance that "focuses on the differences between the social scientist and those whom he observes; it tends to ignore their similarities by taking them as given" (1970: 496). Gouldner sees methodological dualism as calling for a separation of the subject and object for fear of contamination. It assumes that values, interests and commitments can never be anything but blinders. The notion that research can be 'contaminated' premises that there is research that is not contaminated. Gouldner (1970) believes that in this respect, all research is 'con-

taminated', because all research is conducted from the standpoint of the limited perspectives of the subject.

Gouldner believes that methodological dualism entails a fantasy of the sociologist's Godlike invisibility. He contrasts this with the methodological monism of his reflexive sociology, which requires that one must become aware of oneself as both knower and agent of change. In *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970), Gouldner writes that the social theorist "cannot know others unless he also knows his intentions toward and his effects upon them; he cannot know others without knowing himself, his place in the world, and the forces—in society and in himself—to which he is subjected" (1970: 497).

This leads Gouldner to turn his attention to what he calls the 'whole scientist'. Gouldner believes in the role of theorists in shaping theories, and in that endeavor he finds that facts seem to have relatively little to do with the shaping of much social theory. Much theory-work begins with an effort to make sense of one's experience. In this regard, Gouldner develops a set of conceptual tools to study the influence of social theorists on social theories: the distinction between analytics and theory, the concept of personal realities, and the concept of background and domain assumptions. All of these components become crucial for him in understanding social theories and, in turn, society. Gouldner (1962a: 25) argues that students should be taught all of how science is made, exposed to the whole scientist. That means exposing students to the scientist's blindness as well as gifts, to methods as well as values¹³⁴.

¹³⁴ In commenting on this aspect of Gouldner's work, Levesque-Lopman (1989) points to earlier authors, namely Schutz and his adaptation of Husserl's philosophy of sociology, to make the point that sociologists' biography is a very relevant element to study.

Gouldner (1980a) believes in the need to have a meta-theory, one that distinguishes between a theory and the analytics of theorists¹³⁵, which are identified as their characteristic ways of processing information, their typical *modus operandi*. Analytics are then linked downwards to latent background assumptions and upwards to articulate theory. Gouldner believes that a theory has elements of a theorist's self-understanding and a theorist's false consciousness. In this way, theories encompass elements both known and unknown to its authors. Analytics are more likely to remain tacit when they are different or contradict claims made expressly in the theory. Gouldner believes that one can understand the existence of those contradictions better with the conceptual help of analytics.

For Gouldner then, this necessitates looking at the sociologist's personal reality, meaning her domain and background assumptions. Gouldner (1970) argues that every sociologist holds certain things in the social world to be real and that those derive from their assumptions. Those assumptions comprise the sub-theoretical level of social theories that are shaped by the larger culture and society. They are what Gouldner calls the infrastructure of theory. Gouldner (1969) argues that this personal reality of the sociologist is every bit as real to him as the facts he has acquired through sociological research. Gouldner (1970) acknowledges the difficulty of seeing and treating sociologists like any other subject, but he believes it is a worthwhile and necessary part of the research process. Gouldner is proposing a self-conscious sociology, one that puts its assumptions to the test.

Gouldner distinguishes two types of assumptions: background assumptions are

¹³⁵ This theory-analytic distinction is reminiscent in Gouldner's use of Arthur Lovejoy's metaphysical pathos concept in *Metaphysical Pathos and the Theory of Bureaucracy* (1955b).

unpostulated and unlabeled preconceptions about the nature of the world and everything in it, and domain assumptions are limited to one particular conceptual sphere. Gouldner (1970) describes how background assumptions come in different sizes, from the most pervasive and primitive beliefs about the nature of truth and reality embedded in learning our first language, to the more specific assumptions associated with various domains. Domain assumptions are then background assumptions applied only to members of a single domain; they are, in effect, the metaphysics of a domain.

Several commentators (Lesvesque-Lopman 1989; Phillips 1988; Steinmetz and Ou-Byung 2002) have described this discussion of background and domain assumptions as Gouldner's principal contribution to sociology. Levesque-Lopman (1989) tells us these domain assumptions, or what she calls sub-theoretical beliefs, determine whether or not a theory is intuitively convincing. Phillips (1988) links Gouldner's focus on assumptions and Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* published eight years earlier with Merton's latent functions. Steinmetz and Ou-Byung (2002) comment that Gouldner saw every social theory as both a personal theory and a tacit theory of politics.

Gouldner (1970) discusses both background and domain assumptions when examining the social career of a theory. He finds that theories are often accepted or rejected based on the background assumptions embedded in them. Furthermore, he believes that all social scientists commit themselves to domain assumptions and that every theorist must deliver their domain assumptions into the real of focal awareness even if there is also a potential for increased self-deception. Without this disclosure, these assumptions cannot be held firmly in view of others and submitted to the test of evidence and criticism.

These conceptual tools were first put in use in *Enter Plato* (1965), a case study of

the sociological analysis of social theorists where Gouldner links social theorists, social theories, and society. Gouldner (1965) devotes attention to Plato in part because he characterizes Plato as the first great social theorist in Western tradition, and also to argue that current social scientists need to have a longer historical consciousness. Gouldner offers what can be described as a sociology of knowledge study of the Platonic origins of Western social theory¹³⁶, analyzing the nature and development of Plato's social theory, linking it both to the society in which he lived and to his personal reality and assumptions. He discusses and links Plato's social theory, aristocratic values, and the development of democracy. While Gouldner is himself sympathetic to the Sophists¹³⁷, he remarks how Plato fought cultural relativism and the moral anarchy he saw accompanying their position. This can be seen in Plato's ahistoricism as a piece of his metaphysics, and in his view that a quest for knowledge is a quest for 'ought' and not simply 'is'. Plato was concerned with how men should spend their lives and wished to reconcile differences concerning values by discerning a single system of value of eternal validity. That role had to be assumed by his Guardians who own no private property, who have no families, who have an unswerving loyalty to the community as a whole.

Gouldner (1965) discusses the consequences of the lack of history, development, evolution, and change to Plato's social theory by offering a sociological perspective on Plato's theory of Forms. Gouldner finds Plato's concern with historically invariant and

¹³⁶ Steinmetz and Ou-Byung (2002) also see Gouldner as developing a sociology of knowledge starting with *Enter Plato*. In fact, Pedraza (2002) argues that Gouldner was fulfilling Merton's wish for a sociology of knowledge in *Enter Plato*. Pedraza describes *Enter Plato* as a case study of social theorists in general. Pedraza mentions that Gouldner may have specifically chosen Plato not only because of the importance and influence of Greek culture, but also because he identified with Plato. Chriss (2000) draws parallels between Gouldner's life and Plato's and describes his history of social theory as an "intellectual genre comprised of at least three parts—history, sociology, and criticism" (2000: 209).

¹³⁷ Gouldner (1965) offers for example a sociological explanation for the relativist position of the Sophists, one being due to their cosmopolitan travel and exposure to a variety of beliefs.

universal sources of pathology and its solution in reason to be unappealing, and offers a critique of reason as depending on a view of the self as relatively autonomous, as anti-democratic, and as depoliticized. Plato's social theory and his remedy for the ills of his own society are seen as too individualized and timeless to be satisfactory. That said, Gouldner does draw from Plato in numerous ways in shaping his own approach to social theory, of which the most significant is Plato's distinction between episteme and techne.

Gouldner highlights in Plato's work a kind of polarization between two types of knowledge: between "the true and highest knowledge, episteme, which embodies awareness of the known, of the knower, and of knowing, on the one hand, and another but lesser form of knowledge, techne, to which it is counterposed and which, on the other hand, consists of the lessons of experience, of trial and error, of clever skills refined through diligent practice". (1965: 268) This leads, for Gouldner, to two possible conceptions of sociology: one as a natural science and the other one as a cultural science, with the contrasting pathways of seeking out information and seeking out awareness. It is clear that Gouldner privileges the view of sociology as a cultural science, as one seeking greater awareness.

Gouldner writes that methodological dualism embodies "the tacit assumption that the goal of sociology is knowledge conceived as information. Correspondingly, it serves as a powerful inhibitor of the sociologist's awareness" (1970: 496). For Gouldner, awareness is the capacity to discern the boundaries of information. Awareness is access to hostile information¹³⁸ born of a capacity to overcome one's own existence, and cannot be given or received, only facilitated. Knowing as awareness means we do not discover the truth in external world, but through experience. While knowledge as the pursuit of

¹³⁸ A more lengthy discussion of hostile information is forthcoming shortly.

information does not have to pay attention to the knower, knowledge as awareness means knowledge is contingent upon the knower's self-awareness. "It depends on all that a man¹³⁹ does and lives. In the last analysis, if a man wants to change what he knows he must change how he lives; he must change his praxis in the world" (1970: 493). However, Gouldner does acknowledge that knowledge as awareness has its limitations, such as a tendency towards mystification and perhaps even pessimism.

The rejection of truth as eternal and universal, a belief held by Plato and by some in the discipline of sociology, means paying particular attention to the speaker as subject. For Gouldner, it means that to understand society, it is not sufficient to understand social theories that are ways of organizing and ordering the world, but one must also understand the social theorists who use and produce those social theories. It means looking at what he calls the 'whole scientist', at his personal reality, at his background and domain assumptions. It means bringing into focal awareness what was previously only unspoken and indeed sometimes unknown. That is the vision Gouldner has for sociology, a product of sociology of knowledge, at the heart of his sociology of sociology, one he dubs reflexive sociology in order to distinguish it from other types.

The ultimate goal of reflexive sociology is this deepening of the sociologist's own awareness. Gouldner (1970) advocates for a practice of sociology that fully examines the subject, the person of the sociologist, and not just her intellectual output. At any given time, how does one's own society, one's social role, and one's personal praxis affect the sociologist's work? A program for reflexive sociology involves attention to the valid-reliable bits of information arrived through methodical research, but also a persistent commitment to the value of the sociologist's increased self-awareness. In this way, and in

¹³⁹ Gouldner used gendered language which I modified except within the confines of specific quotes

others, Gouldner's vision for sociology is as a value-committed, rather than value-free, discipline¹⁴⁰.

Gouldner wrote about the myth of value-free sociology in his 1962 piece, *Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of Value-Free Sociology*¹⁴¹, and continued to develop this theme throughout his career as it formed part of the basis for his reflexive sociology. It is an element of his work oft commented on and seen as one of his chief contributions to the discipline of sociology (Levesque-Lopman 1989; Hammersley 1999; Chriss 2000; Pedraza 2002). It is in *Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of Value-Free Sociology* that Gouldner lays out in more explicit detail his view of the myth of value-free sociology, discussing how Max Weber thought that social science should be and could be value-free. Gouldner finds Weber's argument appeals to reason, but not to experience. However, he concedes that Weber distinguished between scientific objectivity and moral indifference, which is not something he finds contemporary sociologists doing. In Weber's time, the myth of value-free sociology served particular purposes that were both personal and institutional, and Weber's call for value-free sociology was to depoliticize rather than amoralize sociology, an important distinction that may have been lost on the part of some¹⁴².

Gouldner writes about how, historically speaking, value-free sociology made sense for allowing a temporary respite from traditional forms of morality in the pursuit of a Reason. Gouldner argues that value-free doctrine thus "had a paradoxical potentiality: it

¹⁴⁰ Hammersley (1999) credits Gouldner for being among the first to extend sociological analysis to sociologists' own beliefs.

¹⁴¹ However, traces of critique to the myth of value-free sociology can be found all the way back to *Studies in Leadership* (1950) where Gouldner explicitly speaks about how he was writing a partisan book, one that embraced democratic values unabashedly.

¹⁴² Levesque-Lopman, in commenting on Gouldner's work, discusses how "the 'value-free' rule of science has become the excuse for sociologists not to become actively, forthrightly involved in the issues of their societies. Hiding behind claims of 'objectivity,' sociologists veil the fact that their work does serve [particular] interests"(1989: 368).

might enable men to make better value judgments rather than none”. (1962a: 11)

While Gouldner does admit that Weber saw conscious values to be more worthy than traditional and unthought ones, he is opposed to the segregation Weber advocated between faith and reason. Furthermore, he finds the consequences of value-free sociology in the realm of education and teaching too dire. A sociologist’s selection of problems and her preferences for certain hypotheses and neglect of others are unavoidable. In this way, Gouldner argues, there cannot be a value-free sociology. Rather, he writes that “the only choice is between an expression of one’s values, as open and honest as it can be...and a vain ritual of moral neutrality which, because it invites men to ignore the vulnerability of reason to bias, leaves it at the mercy of irrationality”. (1962a: 24)

Gouldner is most critical of value-free doctrine because of the implications of not seeing the mutual connectedness of facts and values, which he describes as an illusion among sociologists “that their exclusion from the larger society is a self-imposed duty rather than an externally imposed constraint”. (1962a: 13) Value-free doctrine validates refraining from social criticism,¹⁴³ which Gouldner sees as the *raison-d’être* of the discipline of sociology. In fact, in *The Politics of the Mind* (1972b), Gouldner lays out his specific vision of what the role of the radical theorists ought to be: 1) Theorists should commit themselves to the establishment of conditions requisite for rational discourse and human liberation; 2) Theorists should seek out involvements with and on behalf of specific social strata in directions compatible with human emancipation; 3) Theorists should engage themselves politically in ways that bring them into tension, conflict,

¹⁴³ One of the key commentators of Gouldner’s work, James Chriss, makes this point when he shows how Gouldner argues that “sociology’s unreflective embrace of positivism and the tenet of objective knowledge makes sociologists less vital and potent as actors in the world because they subordinate their own human judgments, hunches, insights, and designs for action to a sterile Apollonianism embodied in a set of doctrinaire slogans designating ‘good science’” (2000: 218).

opposition and resistance to established authority, institutions and culture, and help them to escape from convention definitions of social reality; and 4) Theorists should collaborate with, but remain autonomous from, movements or parties who share a common commitment to human emancipation. The above, however, does not mean that Gouldner is ready to abandon scientific objectivity, which he feels differs radically from moral indifference¹⁴⁴. It is to that topic that I now turn.

Gouldner discusses the topic of objectivity explicitly in *The Sociologist as Partisan* (1968). Here, he argues that, while all sociology is done from particular standpoints and that all standpoints are partisans, some forms of partisanships are more liberating than others. Gouldner sees the sociologist as needing not to reject the idea of a standpoint, but rather, to acknowledge that their standpoint is distinguishable from subject or participant standpoints because it can be an 'outsider' standpoint. It is by espousing this outsider standpoint that sociologists can do justice to their participants' standpoints.

Gouldner (1968) does not see an incompatibility between partisanship and objectivity. He mentions the example of the physician who is committed to the side of the patient and against the germ. Gouldner distinguishes between three conceptions of sociological objectivity: normative objectification, personal authenticity, and transpersonal replicability. Normative objectification is the first conception of sociological objectivity, where discussion of bias and impartiality is mentioned and the sociologist seen as a judge. Gouldner argues that the sociologists' value commitment is a necessary condition for his objectivity. It is not an easy thing to know what our own

¹⁴⁴ Six years later in *The Sociologist as Partisan* (1968), Gouldner expressed worry about how his argument against the value-free myth was so persuasive that some were taking it too far in the other direction.

value commitments are, or how they may come in conflict with one another and be shared by others. While the concept of normative objectivation pertains to not deceiving others about the value basis of one's judgment, the second conception, personal authenticity, is about not deceiving oneself. "By personal authenticity or awareness, I mean to call attention to the relationship between the sociologist's beliefs about the actual state of the social world, on the one hand, and his own personal wishes, hopes, and values for this social world, on the other hand" (1968: 59). Personal authenticity, or what Gouldner also calls awareness, exists when the sociologist is capable of admitting factuality, even factuality of things that violate his own hopes and values. Gouldner calls this the capacity not only to acknowledge but to seek out 'hostile information'.

According to Gouldner, these two conceptions of objectivity are linked and need each other, for one cannot be objective about the world outside without being knowledgeable about oneself. In both forms of objectivity, knowledge is not a simple process of retrieval, but entails a measure of struggle in and with the sociologist's self. This requires courage, and what Gouldner sees as an antithesis to complacency. Essentially, for Gouldner, the pursuit of objectivity rests on moral character, which is deeply undermined through sociologists' training. Specifically, Gouldner argues that professionalism and a focus on technical issues undermines the sociologist's capacity for objectivity.

Gouldner also discusses transpersonal replicability as a third conception of objectivity. Here, the sociologist describes its procedures with such explicitness that others employing them will reach the same conclusions. Gouldner's slight criticism of this conception is that it equates replicability with objectivity by transforming objectivity into a purely technical issue. According to Gouldner, Weber's theory embodies this

notion that objectivity may be animated entirely by impersonal machinery of research. This relies on a full segregation of the world of facts from the world of values, which Gouldner rejects. Gouldner argues that modern technical conceptions of objectivity, unlike Weber's, assume social scientists will do the right thing. For Gouldner, the modern conception of objectivity is not characterized by neutrality, but as alienation from self and society. "Objectivity is the ideology of those who are alienated and politically homeless". (1970: 103) His own vision for a desirable objectivity is one firmly rooted in a form of partisanship, in a standpoint, in the standpoint of the outsider.

Gouldner wants to distinguish between objectivity, which he supports, and objectivism, which he rejects. Gouldner argues that knowledge is a belief that stands up under rational criticism and under the contention of rational debate. Objectivism, however, has a different view of knowledge, one that does not require debate, and one that does not recognize the role played by personal presence. The objectivist rejects knowledge as a social product. He sees objective truth as existing apart from the people who constitute it, knowledge as free from impurities stemming from people's values, interests and attitudes. The objectivist thinks of herself as a 'mirror' held up to the merely 'reflecting reality'. In this way, "the objectivist's basic posture is to deny and conceal his presence in the world and how this presence shapes it and what he says about it. In presenting his own work he seeks to expunge and edit out all traces of his personal presence and commitment" (1972b: 87). Objectivism, then, is the very antithesis of Gouldner's use of the concept-practice of reflexivity.

Section Four: Reflexive Sociology – A Sociology of Sociology

All of these various elements comprise Gouldner's own brand of sociology of

sociology, one he calls reflexive sociology to distinguish it from others and highlight its key feature. Now that the history and nature of Gouldner's reflexive sociology has been discussed, the fourth section of this chapter focuses on its role and implications. His program is built around a pair of relationships: one between social theorists and social theories and one between social theories and society. Because this is so, Gouldner argues that any profound change to society must pass through a change to our social theories and thus a change to social theorists. This is at the heart of his vision for sociology, a sociology that is decidedly value-committed, a sociology that is reflexive. This vision holds a special role to be played by intellectuals and the necessary formation of theoretical collectives. The focus of their attention needs to be on the news and other world-making activities. This requires a sociology of sociologists who fully embrace their political responsibilities, a sociology that seeks and embraces emancipation.

This sociology starts with Gouldner's vision of a necessary focus on the social theorists. This is in contradistinction, he argues, to Karl Marx's own vision for intellectuals. This is because Marxism remains without accounting of its own paradoxical origins. Marxism did not account for how, if social being determines consciousness, individuals with bourgeois origins could identify with the working class and study history from its standpoint. In *Against Fragmentation: The Origins of Marxism and the Sociology of Intellectuals* (1985), Gouldner describes this as a failure of reflexivity, a failure of acknowledging the important role played by intellectuals and instead placing itself behind the mask of history¹⁴⁵. This, Gouldner claims, is an assumption reflected in

¹⁴⁵ Gouldner (1985) argues that Marxism cannot deal with its middle-class origins without contradicting itself. He finds that this is one of the major reasons for Marxism's silence about the role of the intellectual. This is because at one level it is suspicious of theory and intellectuals while on another level it is committed to the power of ideas to change the world. Gouldner sees Maoism as having tackled this contradiction most

much of sociology that presumes a distinction between the sociologist's own behavior, seen as immune to social pressures, while the behaviors of those who are studied are seen to be shaped by their surroundings. Behavior is viewed as socially determined for others while not socially determined for sociologists. Thus, the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of sociology are only accepted in principle, but not practiced. Gouldner rejects this asymmetry and argues for the extension of the tools of analysis used in studying others to be applied to sociologists themselves.

What Gouldner is advocating is a sociology of sociology, one that deepens the sociologist's awareness of who and what he is, as a member of a specific society at a given time, and how this affects his work¹⁴⁶. To distinguish his sociology of sociology from others, Gouldner (1970) calls his a reflexive sociology. Gouldner sees reflexive sociology as accepting the dangers of value commitment. It does so by confronting the problem of 'value-free' sociology from two directions. On the one hand, it denies the possibility of a value-free sociology. On the other, it sees the dangers of value-committed sociology when hostile information is ignored¹⁴⁷. Gouldner believes that sociology is better off ending in distortion than beginning in it due to espousing a value-free form.

The aim of the reflexive sociologist is not to remove his influence on others, but to know it. Gouldner argues in *Remembrance and Renewal in Sociology* (1971a) to move away from the idea of a contaminated research, one that presupposes the existence of uncontaminated research. Reflexive sociology attributes importance to the theorist's

clearly and nearly transcending Marxism on behalf of an uncompromising equality.

¹⁴⁶ Steinmetz and Ou (2002), drawing a link between Gouldner's reflexive sociology and Plato's distinction between episteme and techne, describe this as an awareness of the known, of the knower, and of knowing.

¹⁴⁷ For example, he asks whether partisanship can be compatible with objectivity. The remedy he finds Becker offering is a type of transparency in our allegiance and an avoidance of sentimentality. Those may be laudable goals, but Gouldner's issue is that this confessional style of transparency is often accompanied by complacency.

infrastructure, to her domain assumptions, her sentiments: the things that she believes are real. This needs to become an object of study. Thus Gouldner (1970) conceives of Reflexive Sociology as interested in researching sociology, sociologists, their occupational roles, their establishments, power systems, subculture, and their place in larger society. This cannot be done through a value-free program, but must be done through the conception of reflexive sociology as a moral sociology.

Reflexive Sociology is a vision Gouldner proposes for how sociology ought to be conducted. It is a vision that incorporates the various elements discussed so far, but is most explicitly laid out in *The Coming Crisis to Western Sociology* (1970). It is a vision that links change to society with change to social theories and, in turn, with change to social theorists. Reflexive Sociology is concern with what sociologists actually do in the world. Gouldner sees as its historical mission the raising of sociologist's self-awareness to a new historical level. This is done because of a fundamental belief that knowledge of the world cannot be advanced apart from the sociologist's knowledge of herself. Above all, reflexive sociology means viewing our own beliefs as we now view those held by others¹⁴⁸. It means a certain breakdown of the sociologist-layperson distinction.

Gouldner (1972b) describes as the first task of reflexive sociology to establish new social and human conditions to sustain rational discourse about social worlds. The task has two sides. The first is to create tension with conventional definitions of social reality, or what Gouldner calls "the oppositional, polemical, critical, isolating and combative side of the process". (1972b: 96) This involves rejecting what Gouldner (1976) calls objectivism, identified as a pathology of cognition that entails silence about

¹⁴⁸ Gouldner suggests that this may even lead to a modern measure of wisdom. That in "seeing ourselves as we see others it would transform not only our view of ourselves, but also out view of others" (1970: 490)

the speaker, about his interests and desires, and about how these interests and desires are socially situated and structurally maintained.¹⁴⁹ This silence is maintained by concealing the presence of the sociologist, by ignoring the role of language and theory in which discourse takes place. Objectivism does not understand itself as a historically produced discourse, but as supra-historical and supra-cultural, imagining itself valuable to the extent it can escape history and society. Gouldner is thus part of a tradition of authors seeking to historicize discourse.

Among other things for Gouldner this means interrogating the role played by language in constructing social reality and establishing the given¹⁵⁰. Part of Gouldner's solution passes through multilinguality, which he sees as enhancing our reflexivity about and ability to elude the limits of any one of our languages. This is so because it changes our awareness of language in terms of how communication and social reality is language constructed, and language mediated. This enhanced reflexivity means a greater self-awareness concerning the rules to which one submits and leads to more autonomy¹⁵¹. However, there are probably very definite limits on any individual's capacity to reflect upon the assumptions underlying her own use of language, just as there are limits to an individual's capacity to reflect on the assumptions underlying her own critique of other's assumptions (i.e. background and domain assumptions). Therefore, the other side to the task of establishing new social and human conditions to sustain rational discourse is the construction of theoretical collectivities. Gouldner himself attempted to contribute to the

¹⁴⁹ This is produced by ideology according to Gouldner, which is a mode of discourse with a limited reflexivity

¹⁵⁰ Gouldner (1976) argues that the nonreflexive working within limits of the given characterizes modern social science, it is what Thomas Kuhn called 'normal science' and what Jurgen Habermas saw as the essence of positivism.

¹⁵¹ Not to be mistaken with Gouldner's critique of the ideology of autonomy, which also is meant to foster heightened awareness. This is not done to discredit the sociologist's efforts at autonomy, but to enable these to be realized more fully by recognizing the limitations and restrictions present.

formation of a new theoretical community when he founded *Theory and Society* in 1974.

Gouldner (1985) lays out what he sees as the role of intellectual and theoretical communities: striving toward a systemic wholeness and a doctrine of recovery that allows the community to adapt to the present and deal with its own silences. This recovery of silences takes place through a focus on ‘hostile information’, on critiquing normalization and on challenging established definitions of social reality. Promoting the social organization of intellectuals is important because theoretical contributions are often the work of groups rather than lonely genius. As Gouldner argues, “changes in social theory are always—in smaller, interpersonal influences as well as through larger institutional pressures—a social product”. (1965: 177) These theoretical collectives are the medium through which the tasks of reflexive sociology can be pursued, and Gouldner sees them as more important to the development of social theory and sociology than any other technical instrument, rules, research methods or techniques. Social organization is the feature of these theoretical collectives that leads to social theory attaining its fullest reflexivity.

In *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (1979), Gouldner attempts to identify and trace the emergence of a potential theoretical collective capable of fulfilling this role, which he does through presenting a history of what he calls the New Class in Western Europe. This collective, according to Gouldner, emerged out of secularization as well as the existence of a European-wide communication network, and the rise of mass education and socialization of the young by groups of teachers¹⁵². This New Class consists of both technical intelligentsia and intellectuals who developed their

¹⁵² Gouldner (1979) writes that the term ‘New Class’ may have been first used by Mikhail Bakunin.

own diverse vernacular language, namely the culture of critical discourse (CCD)¹⁵³. Thus, the New Class is a speech community¹⁵⁴. Specifically, it is a historically evolved set of rules that, first and foremost, is concerned with the justification of its assertions, as well as a community that proceeds not by invoking authority but rather, seeks the voluntary consent of those addressed solely on the basis of arguments adduced. The key is an exercise in justification. Justification does not depend on diffuse precedents, on the speaker's societal position or authority, but on speech that makes its own principles explicit. Gouldner finds CCD is more reflexive, self-monitoring, and capable of more meta-communication. There is the obligation to examine what had hitherto been taken for granted, to transform 'givens' into 'problems'¹⁵⁵. Because of this, Gouldner saw CCD as the most progressive force in modern society and key to human emancipation.

However, this community was not without problems. Specifically, Gouldner identified as a paradox of the New Class that it is both emancipator and elitist. While it does subvert all establishments, social limits, and privileges, including its own by providing a critique of forms of domination and challenging tradition, it also bears the seeds of new domination and dogmatism. It does so by monopolizing truth and by

¹⁵³ Gouldner (1979) distinguishes his view of the New Class from Galbraith & Bell's benign technocrats, Bakunin's master class, Parsons' old class ally and Chomsky and Zeitlin's servants of power. Gouldner (1979) agrees with much of Chomsky's indictment of the New Class but he feels Chomsky perhaps expects too much of them. Gouldner disagrees with Chomsky that a vigorous opposition to the system is actually providing secret help. Here, Gouldner rejects that political pessimism, and is critical of Chomsky for his lack of reflexivity. Moreover, Gouldner asks how Chomsky, as well as the works from Noble and Lasch he cites favorably, escape the criticism and pessimism Chomsky has for the New Class? Gouldner finds Chomsky to be part of the New Class he critiques and yet, like Marx, silent on this reality. Thus, Gouldner sees Chomsky not as the enemy of the New Class, but as its vanguard.

¹⁵⁴ This is not the same as Habermas' ideal speech situation from his communicative model, which Gouldner (1976) admires and discusses but ultimately problematizes. Gouldner (1979) rejects the 'apoliticism' he identifies within Habermas' work and his focus on cultural reformation based on a notion of equality. Gouldner finds equality to be a value-affirmation made by one group as a critique of the privileges held dear by another group, but which are irrelevant to its own values. Equality is the leveler of some differences, but never the leveling of all differences. He sees the ideal speech situation as generating new system of stratification, rather than abolishing all.

¹⁵⁵ Although, while Gouldner (1979) saw CCD as more productive of intellectual reflexivity, he did believe it meant an associated loss of warmth and spontaneity.

making itself its guardian. The New Class sees itself above other classes, holding its speech to be better than theirs. As it tears down old hierarchies, it creates new ones, undermining all distinctions and yet believing its own culture is best. Thus, Gouldner (1979) saw the New Class as a universal class in embryo, but one that is accordingly deeply flawed.

Ultimately the New Class failed to deliver the goods for a whole series of reasons, discussed in detail by Lemert and Piccone (1982). Part of this failure has to do with Gouldner's belief in the voluntarist potential of this New Class and its ability to change history, a belief that may have been misplaced. Another part of this has to do with the constitution of this New Class as based on shared training and ownership of cultural capital instead of based on their values and personal realities. Additional part of it has to do with the absence of a substantial power base of this New Class in modern society to effect changes even if they wanted. Finally, part of it is because the New Class may have had little stake in pursuing a radical emancipatory agenda since they may benefit from the current way of being. Gouldner perhaps recognized some of this, since, as Lemert and Piccone (1982) point out, Gouldner abandoned CCD in his later books.

Still, although the New Class was not the historical agent capable of fulfilling his Reflexive Sociology, and even if it is doubtful that there will be a universal class capable of doing so, this does not undermine Gouldner's program for how social theorists and sociologists ought to conduct themselves. This program is based on the notion of recovering silences, both within social theorists' own contributions and within the world-creating activities of news-making. On the form of the work conducted by social theorists within their theoretical communities, Gouldner discusses the importance of being mindful of the nature of writing and authorship from a Reflexive Sociology perspective.

Throughout his career, Gouldner shows a concern with presentation and writing style. In his 1965 work *Enter Plato*, he wrote that ignoring a theorist's style is to ignore one of the most evident pieces of information we have about him and his theory. Gouldner argues that style may reveal a scholar's permeative interests and inclinations, and offers as an example Plato's use of the dialogue style, which may make his argument appear more convincing than warranted by closer inspection. On the other hand, the treatise of contemporary scholarship may win its way by pretending to be more than it is. Gouldner is critical of the training sociologists receive "to conceal and obfuscate their deepest intentions and meanings when we teach them to write reports in the usual 'professional' style which result in an important gap between the work that was accomplished and the lean, antiseptic, published prose" (1969: 314). Reading the published works requires, then, training in a kind of intellectual archaeology¹⁵⁶.

Similarly, in *The Two Marxisms: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of Theory* (1980a), Gouldner sees that authorship has become a conventional fiction or pre-text, minimizing the larger cultural origins while emphasizing the individual origin of a text. It is what he calls 'socially sanctioned illusion': an author derives help from countless sources and is often working within a rich tradition where debts are too numerous to count. There are groups of associates, research assistants, students, colleagues, reviewers, and family members who all had a hand in helping with the creation of texts. Gouldner views a theory as being the product of unpaid theory work by members of working groups. The author's name serves as the name of an intellectual team, and this needs to be recognized and acknowledged in ways that are far more

¹⁵⁶ Gouldner (1970) describes Parsons' style as tortured and the result of no accident. The obscurity of Parsons' work meant it required a significant personal investment.

explicit. This is part of Gouldner's vision for Reflexive Sociology, one founded on his belief that knowledge and knowledge systems are important in shaping social outcomes, that knowledge is simultaneously one of the best hopes we have for a humane social reconstruction and at the same time acts as a historically shaped force that embodies particular limits¹⁵⁷. One of the knowledge producing systems that Gouldner believes requires much attention is the news.

Gouldner (1976) agrees with and credits Robert Park for his analysis of the news as a major source for defining social reality in the modern world. Gouldner defines news as something that is not routine, as information that is not already known. News may focus notice, but it also de-focalizes notice, and that is why Reflexive Sociology needs to be mindful of its nature and its role. Gouldner argues that there are internal contradictions to the capitalist news-producing system. Specifically, there exists a contradiction between the publisher's property interests and social values, and the drive to produce 'interesting' content for their readers and subscribers. This means, not surprisingly, that Gouldner problematizes the mass media's claims to and definition of what it means to be objective, a standard, he believes, is selectively applied. In fact, news is always a selective representation. For Gouldner, this notion sets for a reflexive sociology the task of recovering the wholeness by, paradoxically, stressing one-sidedly the repressed and silenced side of reports. This means both being critical of good news, those contributing to a social reality congenial to power which are the focus of less critical eyes, and also helping persons maintain access and accept bad news, or what Gouldner (1985) calls

¹⁵⁷ In his 1979 work *The Future of Intellectuals*, Gouldner describes his own analysis here as Left Neo-Hegelianism.

‘hostile information’¹⁵⁸. This centering on ‘hostile information’ is part of the special tasks Gouldner envisions for his program of reflexive sociology¹⁵⁹.

This is part of what Gouldner means by a value-committed reflexive sociology. His ideal vision for a theoretical community is one that has some consensus in their internal relations to one another, combined with an ability to maintain distance from, and tension with, society-at-large and elites in particular. That is how social reality can be best problematized. Ideally, for Gouldner, these twin roles are what would characterize the university, yet is most closely embodied in vanguard political parties. It is not surprising then that commentators view Gouldner’s reflexive sociology as having an explicit political agenda (Johnson 1989), one that attempts to bring out the liberative potentialities of sociology (Flacks 1989)¹⁶⁰, offers a moral vision for sociology (Lemert and Piccone 1982), sees critical scholars as having the power to change the world (Chriss 2000), and, above all, is committed to human emancipation. With *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, Gouldner seeks to create space so that an emancipatory sociology might arise in the U.S.¹⁶¹. Gouldner states in *The Politics of the Mind* “every society is in part a product of a social theory and every theory is in part a social product of the society. It is therefore impossible to make a critique of one without the other, although one may have a false consciousness and may think this possible” (1972b: 85). Gouldner calls this particular kind of false consciousness, objectivism. He argues that only once sociology surrenders this objectivistic false consciousness and openly adopts a commitment to the

¹⁵⁸ Ironically, Gouldner (1985) points out that the reception of intellectual communities’ work also depends on whether it is good news. Good news tends to be credited more as well as accepted more readily.

¹⁵⁹ This is to be contrasted with what Gouldner (1976) calls newspaper sociology, which he sees as mostly concerned with common sense, versus Reflexive Sociology, which proposes to analyze ideologies rather than taking the world as common sense.

¹⁶⁰ Flacks (1989) credits Gouldner for legitimizing the radical protest within sociology by critiquing academic sociology in general and Parsons in particular.

¹⁶¹ It is Weber that Gouldner (1980a) credits for bringing the liberative potential of sociology into focus.

values of emancipation and human fulfillment will it truly be able to fulfill its mission.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the history, nature, and role of Alvin Gouldner's use and understanding of reflexivity. This was accomplished by extensively exploring all of Gouldner's published works, from his first article, *Attitudes of 'Progressive' Trade-Union Leaders* (1947), to *Against Fragmentation* (1985), published posthumously to 'make sense' of his concept-practice of reflexivity. I began this chapter by laying out the context of Gouldner's early work to better situate and understand the emergence of reflexivity in his work. Gouldner was an intellectual historian who mapped out the historical context of the emergence of social theories, linking them to the societies in which they were born. Laying out this context allowed me to then map out two sets of relationships that help to bring Gouldner's reflexivity to life. These are of course the relationships he sees between society and social theory, and between social theory and social theorists. This allowed for a deeper and more nuanced discussion of both the nature and the role of his program of reflexive sociology in order to show that issues pertaining to reflexive sociology were long-standing through Gouldner's career.

Gouldner (1973a) saw *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970) as a study in the sociology of knowledge about how social theorists work with a false consciousness and fail to see how their own theory, and not just those of their political enemies, is shaped by their whole social being. This is the key insight at the foundation of his conception of reflexivity. His vision for sociology is that of a sociology that embraces fully its political responsibilities, a sociology that embraces fully emancipation. For Gouldner, a reformer at heart from the very start of his career until the very end, a reform

of society must pass through a reform of sociology. Early in his career, found in a footnote, Gouldner (1954a) draws on Max Lerner's (1950) discussion of Machiavelli to distinguish between what ought to be, what is, and what can be. It would certainly be fair to characterize Gouldner's contributions as seeking to extend the sphere of the socially possible.

Reflexivity at Work: Making Sense of Pierre Bourdieu's Reflexive Sociology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the emergence of reflexivity within the context of Bourdieu's work. This involves three tightly connected yet discrete questions. What within Bourdieu's work led him to develop this notion of reflexivity? What constitutes reflexivity and eventually his programme for reflexive sociology? And finally, what role or purpose does the idea of reflexivity play for Bourdieu's continual interest in the progress of social scientific work? These questions are considered through an examination of a selection of Bourdieu's prolific academic career that includes more than twenty-five books and approximately two hundred and sixty articles, along with countless other prefaces, interviews, conference papers, and class material in which his ideas were developed. It is a substantial amount of writing, very diverse in nature yet with significant coherence. I believe that Bourdieu sets out in his career to reform the practice of social science and much, if not all, of his work is a direct or indirect contribution to this goal. His writing shifts between at least three different areas: his empirical studies in both Algeria and in France, the process of research where he theorizes and thinks about the nature of the research process, and more theoretical works where he discusses the social conditions of the production of knowledge and identifies aspects of philosophy and theory that intellectuals and researchers need to pay attention to. I discuss these various types of writing in order to answer the three questions laid out above.

This chapter is organized in four sections. In the first section, I discuss Bourdieu's

theoretical influences, starting with his early philosophical training and his early structuralist tendencies. His work in Algeria is pivotal in making him aware that structuralism, and in fact the whole of how social science is conducted, is missing part of the picture. He then starts to elaborate on the importance of the sociology of knowledge and paying special attention to epistemology. Most importantly, for Bourdieu, epistemology is intrinsically linked to practice, it should both inform and be informed by it.

In the second section, I emphasize how Bourdieu is first and foremost concerned with the progress and the limits of social scientific work. This manifests itself in his attempt at reconciling the objectivism-subjectivism divide by pointing to the limitations of both while simultaneously offering an explanation of the congruence between the two. This leads to the development of his concepts of habitus and field, which become key to understanding his sociological insights.

Stemming from these concerns, section three discusses Bourdieu's focus on the intellectual field along with notions of doxa, heterodoxy, and orthodoxy to point out the limitations of the point of view of intellectuals. This insight rests on what I believe is the central distinction Bourdieu promotes: that of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge, or between theory and practice. I cover this distinction at length as presented by Bourdieu, paying special attention to the role played by time. Bourdieu calls the failure of intellectuals to recognize this important distinction the scholastic fallacy. Reflexivity is thus introduced and developed to overcome several limitations Bourdieu identifies as being in the way of conducting productive scientific work.

Finally, section four covers the process through which Bourdieu places reflexivity at the center of his vision for sociology, a reflexive sociology. This process informs what

he likes to call the craft of research. Beginning with education and continuing through teaching, writing, and presentation, reflexivity occupies the central role in Bourdieu's vision for the progress of sociology. He develops and argues for a sociology of sociology that embodies reflexivity, which he sees as a necessary step in the conduct of any sociological work. This is done partly through what he refers to as participant objectivation, a notion he describes in detail. All of this leading to the political contribution he sees from his reflexivity and reflexive sociology. Bourdieu points out sociology's crucial role in the maintenance of, or in challenges to, the current modes of domination through the struggle over classification systems and taxonomies in society. He does this, in part, through a discussion of symbolic power, cultural capital and language. Bourdieu views his reflexivity as a necessary step toward intellectual freedom and eventually to emancipation from all forms of domination.

Section One: The Context of Bourdieu's Work

Section one sets the context in which reflexivity emerged within Bourdieu's work, covering his early theoretical influences and the framework in which his career begins. I outline his early philosophical training and his early structuralist tendencies, explaining that his work in Algeria is pivotal in making him aware of the missing elements of structuralism and, in fact, the whole of how social science is conducted. I describe how Bourdieu starts to elaborate on the importance of the sociology of knowledge and on paying special attention to epistemology. Most importantly, for Bourdieu, epistemology is intrinsically linked to practice, and should both inform and be informed by it.

Bourdieu started his academic career as a student in philosophy in France in the early 1950s, before his experiences in Algeria marked his passage toward sociology. This

transition, he states, was the consequence of an accumulation of small changes that had as much to do with the self-work he did as an intellectual as with the work he did on observing the social world around him¹⁶². Alternately describing himself as an ethnologist, sociologist, or anthropologist, Bourdieu primarily sees distinctions among the disciplines as barriers to the progress of scientific work. He seeks to draw upon multiple inspirations across disciplinary boundaries, which he characterizes as very often arbitrary and sometimes even absurd¹⁶³. This means that Bourdieu also seeks to draw on many authors who were seemingly very much at odds with one another, such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber¹⁶⁴. Bourdieu is fond of saying that “one may think with Weber or Durkheim, or both, against Marx to go beyond Marx and, sometimes, to do what Marx could have done, in his own logic. Each thinker offers the means to transcend the

¹⁶² Bourdieu increasingly sees sociology as a better fit than philosophy because it constructs itself in opposition to the totalizing ambition of philosophy, transforming metaphysical problems into problems that can be treated scientifically and therefore politically. As we will see, these concerns with the scientific and the political are at the very heart of his academic engagement. He also sees sociology as leaving behind ultimate answers to ultimate questions such as the meaning of history, progress, and the role of great men, to encounter those problems in the most elementary operations of practice. Philosophy, however, never went very far and was a mainstay influence on Bourdieu throughout his career. It is also interesting that Bourdieu's work has also been described as a unification of philosophy and science such as Nikos Panayotopoulos in *The Thinker of the 'Primitive Thought' of the Thinkers of 'Primitive Thought'* (1999).

¹⁶³ He feels the same way about the divisions between history and sociology, or history and anthropology, not to mention economics. He says that the inclination to view society in an ahistorical manner - which is the hallmark of much American sociology - is implied by this simple division. Bourdieu feels that many scientific mistakes would be avoided if every sociologist were to bear in mind that the social structures he or she studies at any given time are the products of historical development and of historical struggles that must be analyzed if one is to avoid naturalizing these structures. For this reason, he writes in *Homo Academicus*, “the social history of science - in the tradition represented in France by Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, and Michel Foucault - should be a necessary part of the intellectual tool-kit of all social scientists” (1988a: 779). Bourdieu believes that the classificatory mode of functioning of academic and political thought is one of the obstacles to the progress of research because it hinders intellectual inventiveness by making it impossible to surpass false antinomies and false divisions. As we will see shortly, Bourdieu uses philosophers Bachelard and Canguilhem to help him overcome the limitations he sees in structuralism as represented by Levi-Straus.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas Meisenholder, in *Pierre Bourdieu and the Call for a Reflexive Sociology* (1997), traces several different aspects of the influence of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber on Bourdieu's work. He argues that Bourdieu takes the idea that common epistemological forms are products of society from Durkheim, the importance of class relations and a relationist social ontology from Marx, and the crucial notion that social action takes place within specific social fields from Weber.

limitations of the others”¹⁶⁵. (Bourdieu 1988a: 780)

Other than these authors, Blaise Pascal is one of the principal influences on Bourdieu. Bourdieu attributes to him many insights that will become driving forces of his intellectual career. For example, Bourdieu was focused on everything that concerns symbolic power, Pascal’s concern for ‘ordinary people’, and the ‘sound opinions of the people’, which led to seeking the ‘reason of effects’, the *raison d’être* of the seemingly most illogical or derisory human behaviors. This was a concern Bourdieu would share throughout his career. Finally, Bourdieu is also influenced by Pascal’s use of philosophy as a tool and technique to understand the world around him, rather than as an end goal in itself. In fact, Bourdieu likens philosophical skills to mathematical techniques, both useful in their own way, and sees no ontological difference between a concept of Kant or Plato and a factorial analysis.

While the theoretical influences of Bourdieu diversified with time, at the onset of his empirical work in Algeria he labeled himself a structuralist influenced by the school of thought dominated by Levi-Strauss, and also indirectly by the work of Durkheim. Bourdieu saw the novelty of structuralism in the introduction into the social sciences of the structural method or, more simply, “of the relational mode of thought which, by breaking with the substantialist mode of thought, leads one to characterize each element by the relationships which unite it with all the others in a system and from which it derives its meaning and function”. (Bourdieu 1990a: 4) It is with the tools and techniques of structuralism that he ‘entered the field’ in the 1950s. I will now turn to a brief

¹⁶⁵ Bourdieu has a very distinct idea of the relationship intellectuals should have with authors and texts from the past. As far as he is concerned, one should have a very pragmatic relationship with authors, using of them what one needs. This is particularly evident when he borrows and adapts concepts from a variety of sources and ‘puts them to work’ in the pursuit of his own purposes (see later discussion in the chapter of *doxa* and *habitus* to name two). I believe this is one of his chief strengths and contributions to the sociological literature.

discussion of how this experience in Algeria¹⁶⁶ firmed up some of the ideas he brought with him into the field, while challenging others. This becomes key in understanding his vision for a reflexive sociology.

Bourdieu found himself in Algeria after having been stationed there as a French soldier during his military service. He was appalled by what he saw and sought to go back and study this society, which he saw as driven by contradictions. Bourdieu was particularly interested in the principle of equilibrium between the forces of assimilation and dissimilation present in Algerian society. The basic premise of his work in Algeria was that the two antithetical aspects - unity and plurality, continuity and division – could be understood only when considered in relation to each other. It is a constant motivation of Bourdieu's to be able to explain apparent contradictions by placing those contradictions in a context and showing how both can be present simultaneously.

While Bourdieu maps out many features of Algerian society, especially those forces of assimilation and dissimilation, he pays special attention to the phenomenon of parallel-cousin marriage and gift exchange. Bourdieu is curious to understand these phenomena, whose content and meaning had been debated in the social science literature, in particular by structuralist authors. Bourdieu sees domestic organization, the extended family, as the basic social cell, the focal point where the most varied orders of facts converge- economics, magic, customary law, ethics, religion – and the model from which all social structures have been developed. The family, the keystone of this society, is at the same time the model on which the whole social system has been constructed, as he

¹⁶⁶ I am discussing here mostly the early empirical work Bourdieu conducted in Algeria, but of course he also conducted fieldwork in France throughout his career, starting with his hometown of Denguin in the 1950s and early 1960s. In *Bourdieu's Béarnais Ethnography* (2006) Tim Jenkins discusses the importance of these early works as re-visited by Bourdieu at the end of his career when he explicitly links the topic of biography to theory.

wrote in *The Algerians*, the “bonds of consanguinity are considered as the archetype for every social tie, particularly for political ties” (1962: 16). It follows, then, that Bourdieu formulates his explanation for both parallel-cousin marriage and gift exchange through the structure of the family.

In the family, Bourdieu finds the necessary context to explain the contradictions between competing theories about parallel-cousin marriage and gift exchange. For Bourdieu, both of these phenomena exist to reinforce the family structure and to create a moral and religious bond with others, implying the duty of giving back. These practices can only be understood within the context of what Bourdieu calls ‘honorable exchange’. These bonds draw their strength from a code of honor present in Algerian society, which Bourdieu argues is the only code the Algerians know. This code is at the foundation of Algerian society, the glue that holds the structure together, and the primary force in the maintenance of social cohesion.

Bourdieu garners two core insights from his time in Algeria that will shape the direction of his thought and the rest of his career. The first is that this code of honor and the social regulations that it generates are not felt as an “inaccessible ideal or as a restraining imperative, but are rather present in the consciousness of each individual”. (Bourdieu 1962: 20) This code seems to have been realized primarily through the community, where the will of the individual immediately conforms to the general will. But this ideal is put into effect only insofar as it is not realized as an ideal, “not objectively formulated as a formal and abstract principle, but instead felt as a sentiment, as something immediately and inwardly manifest”. (Bourdieu 1962: 24) This will soon become his concept of habitus.

The second important insight from his time in Algeria that would significantly

shape the course of his work stems from Bourdieu trying to explain the contradictions¹⁶⁷ present in gift exchange and parallel-cousin marriages and from trying to form a coherent theory to explain the totality of all observations, as is customary in structuralist accounts. Trying to combine all the available information into a single account, Bourdieu encountered countless contradictions and as soon as he endeavored to explain them away, other fundamental oppositions would appear. The more Bourdieu sought to find coherence within the set of practices he observed, the more an entire set of symbols or practices had to be classified as unclassifiable. Eventually Bourdieu came to the

¹⁶⁷These contradictions stemmed mainly from the fact that agents Bourdieu studied had various explanations for why they engaged in parallel-cousin marriage, explanations that could not always, if ever, be accounted by a single unified theory. The two dominant structuralist theories on parallel-cousin marriage at the time of Bourdieu's work in Algeria were the theory of unilineal descent groups and the alliance theory of marriage. The former theorized that this phenomena took place in order to preserve the tightness of the family unit as much as possible in order to preserve and maintain control over the resources of the family, while the latter theorized that parallel-cousin marriage takes place in order to increase the resources and strength of the family unit by uniting the resources of two wings of an extended family. Bourdieu finds that the endless debate back and forth between advocates of both these theories is misplaced since neither can explain the totality of parallel-cousin marriages. For Bourdieu, the problems these theories have are in explaining the ambiguities and contradictions found in the phenomena of parallel-cousin marriages. These contradictions arise partly from a distinction between what in practice separates "official kinship, single and immutable, defined once and for all by the norms of genealogical protocol, from practical kinship, whose boundaries and definitions are as many and as varied as its users and the occasions on which it is used". (Bourdieu 1977: 34)

Bourdieu believes structuralists were in a particularly bad position to detect this distinction between official and practical kinship because their dealings with kinships were restricted mostly to cognitive uses. That made them disposed to take for gospel truth the official discourses which informants were inclined to present to them, and thus, allowing the official definition of social reality to be imposed on them, "a version which dominates or represses other definitions" (Bourdieu 1977: 37) In contrast, Bourdieu found that agents had the power to manipulate without limit their own social identity, where different strategies were utilized and different logics were employed to engage in parallel-cousin marriage depending on the current imposed necessities. Bourdieu found that parallel-cousin marriage was sometimes employed as a mechanism in the struggle for domestic control between husbands and wives. For instance, it was sometimes initiated by the mother in an attempt to pursue her interests in reinforcing her position in her adoptive home by bringing into the family a woman sprung from her own lineage. Other times, it was pursued by the father, who, in arranging his son's marriage, as befits a man, by an agreement with his own kind, his own brother, or some other patrilineal kinsman, "reinforces the agnatic unit and, thereby, his own position in the domestic unit". (Bourdieu 1977: 45)

So, for Bourdieu, there is no need to appeal to ethical or juridical rules, such as done by structuralists accounts, when attempting to explain the choice of the parallel-cousin marriage, but rather one ought to look at them as the results of strategies "consciously or unconsciously directed towards the satisfaction of a determinate type of material and symbolic interests". (Bourdieu 1977: 48) Since these interests are variable, sometimes imbued with opposite meanings and functions for several members of the same family, one cannot wring out all the incoherences and contradictions from accounts of the practice of parallel-cousin marriage.

conclusion that the inability to classify everything was a failure of the very logic of the system of classification.

Bourdieu observes that what appeared as contradictions within a structuralist account made sense to the Algerians who embodied those symbols and practices. He becomes aware of a gap between the theoretical aims of theoretical understanding, including specifically structuralist accounts, and the practical aims of practical understanding. This insight leads to a distinction Bourdieu develops further between theoretical logic and the logic of practice, and to his notion of reflexivity as the awareness of this distinction. This distinction manifests itself in Algeria for Bourdieu most clearly in his discussion of parallel cousin marriage, which allows Bourdieu to speak of matrimonial strategies or of the social uses of kinship, rather than of rules of kinship as had been done by structuralists.

Bourdieu claims that his article *La Maison Kabyle Ou Le Monde Renverse* (1970), written in 1963 and published in the collection of texts edited by Jean Pouillon and Pierre Maranda in honor of Claude Levi-Strauss, was probably the last work he wrote as a blissful structuralist¹⁶⁸. For it was becoming apparent to him, because of the insights he garnered from his empirical work in Algeria, that to account for the findings there had to be an “ordering principle capable of orienting practices in a way that is at once unconscious and systematic”. (Bourdieu 1990a: 10) But above all, it was the ambiguities

¹⁶⁸ Although it is noteworthy that almost thirty years later when asked to describe his work in a couple of words, Bourdieu would talk of constructivist structuralism or of structuralist constructivism. By structuralism or structuralist, he means that there exist in the social world itself, and not merely in symbolic systems, language, myth, etc., objective structures which are independent of the consciousness and desires of agents and are capable of guiding or constraining their practices or their representations. By constructivism, he means that there is “a social genesis on the one hand of the patterns of perception, thought and action which are constitutive of what he calls the habitus, and on the other hand of social structures, and in particular of what he calls fields and groups, especially of what are usually called social classes”. (Bourdieu 1990b: 123)

and contradictions that came with the application of the structural method that led Bourdieu to question the application of it to practice¹⁶⁹.

Once Bourdieu was ready to move on from structuralism due to the insights he garnered in Algeria, his theoretical inspirations, and his move from philosophy toward sociology, he then frames his work with the label of the sociology of knowledge. Bourdieu defines the sociology of knowledge as posing in sociological terms the traditional philosophical problem of the conditions in which objective knowledge is possible and the limits to such knowledge. The sociology of knowledge makes its goal not only knowledge of an object, like the natural sciences, but knowledge of the knowledge, practical or scientific, of a given object of knowledge, and indeed of any possible object of knowledge. This does not mean that, “like philosophy, which assigns itself a similar mission, [sociologists of knowledge] claim to occupy an absolute position, without a ‘beyond’, such that they cannot themselves become objects of knowledge, especially for a particular form of historical knowledge”. (Bourdieu 1999: 83) They have no choice but to strive to know the modes of knowledge, and to know them historically, to historicize them, while subjecting to historical critique the very knowledge that they apply to them. Bourdieu principally fashions his initial sociology of knowledge from the work of his former philosophy teachers Bachelard and Canguilhem.

They are part of the tradition of the philosophy of science, one that cannot easily be labeled with an ‘ism’, but one that has as its common basis the primacy given to construction. The fundamental scientific act is the construction of the object; you do not

¹⁶⁹ Loic Wacquant in *Ethnography* also credits this break out of the structuralist paradigm to Bourdieu simultaneously doing empirical work in both Algeria and France and using both locations “as a living laboratory to cross-analyze the other and enabled Bourdieu to discover the specificity of the ‘universally prelogical logic of practice’” (2004: 387).

move to the real without a hypothesis, without instruments of construction. And when you think you are without any presuppositions, you still construct without knowing it and, in that case, almost always inadequately. Bourdieu adopts the epistemology promoted by Bachelard found in his main premise, that the scientific fact is won, constructed, and confirmed. For Bourdieu, this calls into question both the empiricism, which reduces the scientific act to one of validation, and the conventionalism, which sets against it only the preliminary of construction. The fact is won, constructed, observed, in and through the communication among subjects, that is to say through the process of verification, collective production of truth, in and through negotiation. Bourdieu espoused the view that a fact truly becomes a scientific fact only if it is recognized as such. The construction is socially determined in a twofold way: on the one hand, by the position of the laboratory or scientist within the field; on the other hand, by the categories of perception associated with the position of the receiver.

The conception of science advocated by Bourdieu is centered on the 'epistemological obstacles' as labeled by Bachelard, which are social and mental obstacles standing in the way of scientific knowledge and also on the construction of the autonomous scientific object. One has to exercise epistemological vigilance in order to overcome these epistemological obstacles. It is this notion of epistemological vigilance from the history of science that Bourdieu will import into the sociological field and eventually name reflexivity. In *The Craft of Sociology: Epistemological Preliminaries* (1991b), Bourdieu describes epistemological vigilance as a reflection by the scientific subject on his own social relations, "a reflection which not only applies to the fact that sociologists are subject to the ebbs and flows of the *Zeitgeist*, that they carry ways of thinking and prejudices that they owe to their social origin, the social position they have

acquired, and their specific roles as intellectuals, but also to the social order within their own scientific community and their own position within it”(1991b: ix).¹⁷⁰

Bourdieu contends that epistemological vigilance is particularly necessary in the social sciences, where the separation between everyday opinion and scientific discourse is more blurred than elsewhere. In fact, to the extent that ordinary language and scholars’ use of them “constitute the mass vehicle for common representations of society, it is clear that the most indispensable preliminary for the controlled development of scientific notions is a logical and lexicological critique of ordinary language”. (Bourdieu 1991b: 14) Failure to subject ordinary language, the primary instrument of the construction of the world, to a methodological critique entails the risk of mistaking objects pre-constructed in and by ordinary language for data. Bourdieu points out that the divisions performed by ordinary vocabulary are full of unconscious and uncontrolled preconstructions that may find their way into sociological discourse. A sociologist who renounces her epistemological privilege, then, sanctions a spontaneous sociology¹⁷¹.

What Bourdieu calls ‘epistemological rupture’, that is, the bracketing¹⁷² of ordinary preconstructions and of the principles ordinarily at work in the elaboration of these constructions, presupposes a rupture with modes of thinking, concepts, and methods

¹⁷⁰ Apparently *The Craft of Sociology* (1991b) was meant to be the first of three ‘handbooks’ to assist postgraduate students preparing and conducting empirical work (Robbins 2007). In *Reading Bourdieu with Adorno: The Limits of Critical Theory and Reflexive Sociology* (2004) Nedim Karakayali points out that Bourdieu did not write the second volume because it would have been a general theory of society, something Bourdieu did not want to write because he sees such theory as disregarding empirical research.

¹⁷¹ Richard Jenkins, in his extensive analysis of Bourdieu’s work entitled *Pierre Bourdieu* (1992), points to critique of ordinary language as one of Bourdieu’s main contributions. He writes that “[Bourdieu’s] objective is never to allow the reader to forget, not for a minute, that what he or she is reading is not ‘reality’ but an account, and what is more, an account which is constructed in particular and specific ways” (1992: 177), although it is fair to point out that Jenkins questions whether the price paid in communicability is not too high.

¹⁷² The action of bracketing, which is the necessary step Bourdieu calls ‘epistemological rupture’, involves a dual process: first, an awareness of the preconstructions a researcher brings to her research and, second, an active effort at putting aside those preconstructions and their influence on the research process.

that have every appearance of common sense, of ordinary sense, and of good scientific sense going for them. Bourdieu sees as the most vital task of social science, and thus of the teaching of research in the social sciences, to establish a fundamental norm of scientific practice, what he calls in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (1992b) “the conversion of thought, the revolution of the gaze, the rupture with the preconstructed” (1992b: 252). Bourdieu returns to this notion of the need to change the scientific gaze when he expands on the notion of scholastic fallacy.

Bourdieu develops the sociology of knowledge as a valuable tool for uncovering the social conditions in which sociological works are produced. Through this process, the sociologist will find an exceptionally valuable instrument of epistemological vigilance, a means of enhancing and clarifying knowledge of error and the conditions that make it possible and sometimes inevitable. In combining all of these elements, Bourdieu is promoting a vision of a theory of knowledge and a theory of politics as inseparable. Every political theory contains, in implicit form at least, a theory of perception of the social world, and theories of perception of the social world are organized in accordance with oppositions very analogous to those found in the theory of the perception of the natural world. I will come back to this closer to the end of the chapter.

At the moment of his entry into the sociological landscape, Bourdieu encounters the first of many dichotomies he seeks to undermine. He sees two contrasting errors against which sociology had to define itself. The first one, which can be called theoreticist, is symbolized by the Frankfurt school; in other words, by people who, without doing any empirical research, denounce the positivist danger everywhere (Lucien Goldmann was the French representative of that current). The second could be called positivist and is symbolized by Lazarsfeld. This is where data accumulated without any

critical reflection on the nature of the knowledge accumulated¹⁷³. Against these two tendencies, Bourdieu wants to produce an empirical sociology that is theoretically grounded, a sociology that can have critical intentions but which has to be performed empirically.

Against the theoretical and methodological orthodoxy that he sees as dominating the scientific world, Bourdieu's project is a political intention to create what he calls in *Science of Science and Reflexivity* "a realistic third way" (2004a: 103), one capable of leading to a new way of doing social science, one that embodies these various insights¹⁷⁴. He believes that Bachelard's philosophy of science could be imported into and applied to social sciences and be the beginning of this third way. Bourdieu seeks to create a new epistemology for the social sciences and a new method of practice. Above all, he seeks to create an epistemology that is intrinsically linked to practice, one that both informs and is informed by it.

Section Two: Overcoming/Explaining the Objectivism-Subjectivism Divide with Habitus

In the second section I discuss Bourdieu's attempt to reconcile the description of the world's objective structures with people's subjective understanding of the world, what he calls the objectivism-subjectivism divide. The section goes over Bourdieu's proposed solution to address this divide while offering an explanation of the congruence

¹⁷³ Interestingly, Derek Robbins in *Sociology as Reflexive Science: On Bourdieu's Project* (2007) argues that Bourdieu's meticulous representation of the instruments and methods used to generate his findings, partly out of a desire to legitimate scientificity, was quite reminiscent of Lazarsfeld.

¹⁷⁴ Here, political stands mostly for the questioning of taken-for-granted elements structuring the academic field and in the consequences of historicizing classification systems, taxonomies, and various form of capital, which will be explored later in this chapter. This chapter does not directly deal with Bourdieu's more politically explicit writings, such as *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (1998b) and *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2* (2003b). These works, like several others, were less directly relevant to telling the 'reflexivity' story I am engaged with in this chapter.

of the two. This is what leads him to develop further the concept of habitus and the concept of field, both becoming central elements of the development of his vision for sociology.

Bourdieu is first and foremost concerned with the progress and the limits of social scientific work. Given this, Bourdieu uses a plethora of research techniques to gather as complete information as possible about his object of study, all the while questioning these techniques and trying to understand what they can and cannot give him. Bourdieu combines the accumulation of statistics, with an eye toward deciphering the objective structures of the world, and interviews to map out people's subjective understanding of this world. More importantly in the case of Bourdieu, is that he views these two techniques as necessary to gain a full appreciation of the work done by each. Statistics only gain their sociological value once they can be understood and, inversely, people's subjective understandings can only be explained once they have been empirically contextualized.

It is in the course of his empirical work in Algeria that Bourdieu gains even more insight into the process of research, the process of knowledge-gathering, the process of knowledge production. After the statistical work done in *Travail et Travailleurs en Algerie* (1963), Bourdieu conducts numerous interviews where he comes to believe that the variation in responses by individuals in similar statistical categories had more to do with the level of awareness they had of their situation and their ability to express that awareness than with objective differences in their behavior or attitude. This awareness of their situation takes place once individuals can reflexively think about themselves and their relation to the world around them. This reflexivity is not given to everyone and tends to appear in those who can create some distance between themselves and the

situation in which they are embedded.

For Bourdieu, how a researcher handles and makes sense of the information he gathers is a crucial question in the research process. Bourdieu believes that, for a researcher, there is a great risk of treating identical things differently and different things identically, of comparing the incomparable and failing to compare the comparable. This happens because in sociology, according to Bourdieu, “even the most objective ‘data’ are obtained by applying grids which involve theoretical presuppositions and therefore overlook information which another construction of the facts might have grasped”. (Bourdieu 1991b: 37) The qualitative difference that reflexivity and distance exercise in the response given by individuals in the course of interviews is also a necessary tool for researchers. The sociologist who refuses the controlled, conscious construction of his distance from the real and his actions on reality may not only impose questions on his subjects that their experience does not pose to them, but also omit the questions that it does pose them.

Bourdieu (1991b) argues that all scientific practice, even and especially when it claims allegiance to the blindest empiricism, involves theoretical presuppositions and that the sociologist’s only choice is between unconscious, and therefore unchecked and incoherent, hypotheses and a body of hypotheses methodically constructed with a view to experimental proof. Bourdieu argues that even if it were to break free of the presuppositions of spontaneous sociology, sociological practice could never achieve the empiricist ideal of presuppositionless recording, if only because it uses recording techniques and tools¹⁷⁵. Just as there is no neutral recording, so there is no neutral

¹⁷⁵ Bourdieu argues that even techniques which seem most neutral can bring with them implicit theory of the social, “that of the public conceived as an ‘atomized mass’” (1991b: 40) for example.

question. Finally, a sociologist who does not subject her own questioning to sociological questioning will be incapable of making a truly neutral sociological analysis of the answers it receives.

Despite all this complexity, perhaps even because of it, Bourdieu sees empirical work as inevitable and inseparable from theoretical preoccupations. It is through empirical work that theoretical problems can be worked out because they become actualized and operationalized and can be confronted by the situation. For Bourdieu, it is only in the course of empirical work and the application of theories in practice that we will be able to find our way out of such theoretical quagmires as relativism, the nature of truth, and the eternal dichotomy of objectivism-subjectivism.

Bourdieu wants to promote the position that the object of social science is a reality that encompasses all the individual and collective struggles aimed at conserving or transforming reality. Bourdieu points out that there are social conditions for the production of truth, that is to say that there is a politics of truth, what he describes in *Other Words: Towards a Reflexive Sociology* as “an action constantly exercised in order to defend and improve the functioning of the social universes in which rational principles are applied and truth comes into being”. (1990b: 32) If the sociologist manages to produce any truth, she does so not despite the interests she has in producing that truth but because she has an interest in doing so, which Bourdieu asserts in *Sociology in Question* “is the exact opposite of the usual somewhat fatuous discourse about ‘neutrality’” (1993: 11). Bourdieu goes further by stating that “whatever one does, the truth is antagonistic. If one thing is true, it is that truth is a stake in struggles”. (Bourdieu 1993: 59)

Given this multiple nature of truth, Bourdieu points out that all sociological

statements should be preceded by a sign announcing 'it is as if' and should function in the same way as quantifiers in logic, which would continually remind us of the epistemological status of the constructed concepts of objective science. He argues that everything conspires to encourage the reification of concepts, beginning with the logic of ordinary language, which is inclined to infer the substance from the substantive or to award to concepts the power to act in history in the same way as the words designating them act in the sentences of historical discourse, that is as historical subjects.

This leads Bourdieu to insist, in *Three Forms of Theoretical Knowledge* (1973), that one must distinguish between three modes of theoretical knowledge, which all stand in opposition to practical knowledge and each of which also implies a set of tacit theses. The first mode of knowledge, which he terms phenomenological, makes explicit primary experience of the social world. However, according to Bourdieu, phenomenological knowledge excludes all interrogation about its own conditions of possibility. At a second level, objectivist knowledge constructs the objective relations structuring not only practices, but also representations of practices, and in particular primary knowledge of the world. Thirdly, what Bourdieu refers to as praxeological knowledge is concerned not only with the system of objective relations constructed by the objectivist form of knowledge, but also with the "dialectical relationships between these objective structures and the structured dispositions which they produce and which tend to reproduce them, i.e. the dual process of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality" (Bourdieu 1973: 54). This knowledge presupposes a break with the objectivist form of knowledge. That is, it presupposes investigation into the conditions of possibility and into the limits of the objectivistic viewpoint, which grasps practices from the outside, as a fait accompli, rather than constructing their principle by placing itself within the process. It is

this relational mode of knowledge, as opposed to a substantive mode of knowledge, which Bourdieu utilizes and promotes for sociology in his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*¹⁷⁶ (1984). Bourdieu thus assigns to sociology the important role of restoring the agents to the sense of their practice by what he describes in *Structuralism and Theory of Sociological Knowledge* as “unifying, against the appearances of their irreducible opposition, the truth of the lived-through signification of conduct and the truth of the objective conditions that make such conduct and the experience of it possible and probable”. (Bourdieu 1968: 705)

This epistemology is tied to empirical work as well as nourished by it. Bourdieu seeks to overcome the dualism of theoreticist theory and empiricist methodology. He states in *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, “my entire scientific enterprise is indeed based on the belief that the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a ‘special case of what is possible,’ as Bachelard puts it, that is, as an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations”. (Bourdieu 1998: 2)

With this epistemology in hand, Bourdieu points out that he has the tools to overcome what he calls in *The Crumbling of Orthodoxy and Its Legacy*, the “rock-bottom antinomy upon which all the divisions of the social scientific field are ultimately founded, namely the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism”. (Bourdieu 1988a: 782)

¹⁷⁶ Bourdieu uses the example of Saussure and what he calls his intellectualist point of view, where he focuses overly on the structure of signs, that is, on the relations between them, to the detriment of their practical functions. Bourdieu points out that the moment one shifts from the structure of language to the functions it fulfills, that is, to the uses agents really make of it, one sees that knowledge of the code alone permits only a very imperfect mastery of the linguistic interactions. The meaning of a linguistic element depends at least as much on extra-linguistic as on linguistic factors, that is, on the context and situation in which it is employed.

Bourdieu proposes to integrate into a single model the analysis of the experience of social agents and the analysis of the objective structures that make this experience possible. In other words, these two moments, the subjectivist and the objectivist, stand in a dialectical relationship.

It is worth mentioning Bourdieu's emphasis that individuals share objective realities with other individuals, and thus share not only similar living conditions but also similar perceptions of these conditions, since the former inform the latter. Because so many people share objective conditions in society, there is a great level of coherence between these objective structures and subjective mental categories. The near-perfect match that is then set up between the subjective and objective categories provides the foundation for an experience of the world as self-evident, taken for granted according to Bourdieu (1998).¹⁷⁷ In everyday practice, the struggle between objectivism and subjectivism is a permanent one. Everyone seeks to impose his subjective representation of himself as an objective representation. A dominant agent is one who has the means to force the dominated agent to see her as she wants to be seen. This is where Bourdieu's interest and evolving project once again have a political dimension.

One of Bourdieu's most important contributions to the sociological literature is his development of the concept of habitus to capture and encapsulate the dialectic of objectivity and subjectivity. Within the notion of habitus comes a model that connects an explanation of the objective structures of the world with people's subjective understanding of this world and, moreover, that provides an answer as to the level of coherence between the two. Bourdieu did not invent the concept of habitus; rather, it has

¹⁷⁷ Bourdieu assigns to language a crucial role in this process because it is not only a mode of expression but also implicitly shapes the categories of perception and evaluation of the social world.

a long history. It is an old Aristotelian concept rethought by Bourdieu to avoid the choice between structuralism without subject and the philosophy of the subject¹⁷⁸. Bourdieu traces its use to authors as different as “Hegel, Husserl, Weber, Durkheim and Mauss, all of whom used it in a more or less methodical way”¹⁷⁹. (Bourdieu 1990b: 12) While these authors used this concept, none gave it the decisive role Bourdieu wishes to attribute to it.

For Bourdieu, social agents are the product of history, a history of the whole social field. To account for this, Bourdieu develops the notion of habitus. He defines habitus as

systems of durable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, i.e. as the principle of the generation and structuration of practices and representations. Consequently, these can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their purposes without presupposing any conscious aiming of ends and an express mastery of those operations leading to these ends and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of a conductor’s orchestrating action. (Bourdieu 1973: 64)

Bourdieu sees the habitus functioning as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, function at every moment as a “*matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and make possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks”. (Bourdieu 1977: 83) Habitus can thus be seen as classificatory schemes, principles of classification, principles of vision and division, different tastes. It makes distinctions between what is good and what is bad, between what is right and what is wrong, between what is distinguished and what is vulgar, and so forth.

¹⁷⁸ In sum, Bourdieu describes his theory of habitus as aiming to exclude “‘subjects’ dear to the tradition of philosophies of consciousness without annihilating agents to the benefit of a hypostatized structure, even though these agents are the product of this structure and continually make and remake this structure, which they may even radically transform under definite structural conditions”. (Bourdieu 1992b: 140)

¹⁷⁹ While those are influences Bourdieu openly recognizes, other commentators (Foster 2005; Meisenhelder 1997) have pointed to Merleau-Ponty as an influence on Bourdieu’s use of habitus as linked to the physical body of the individual.

Habitus directs behavior, but at an unconscious rather than conscious level¹⁸⁰.

Bourdieu utilizes habitus to explain how behavior takes the form of sequences that are objectively guided towards a certain end, without necessarily being the product either of a conscious strategy or of a mechanical determination. This is meant to be in opposition to what Bourdieu sees as the intellectualist philosophy of action represented in particular by the theory of homo economicus as rational agent¹⁸¹. Bourdieu explains that habitus can be better understood as something close to what is suggested by the idea of habit, while differing from it in one important respect. The habitus, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions. So the term constantly reminds us that it refers to something historical, linked to individual history. Moreover, by habitus, “the scholastics also meant something like a property, a capital. And indeed, the habitus is a capital, but one which, because it is embodied, appears as innate”. (Bourdieu 1993: 86) Habitus however, Bourdieu argues, differs from the notion of habit in that it is powerfully generative. In other words, the habitus is a product of conditionings that tend to reproduce the objective logic of those conditionings while transforming it.

It is because the identity of the conditions of existence tends to produce similar systems of dispositions that the resulting homogeneity of habitus generates an objective harmonization of practices.¹⁸² This leads to conferring upon them the regularity as well as

¹⁸⁰ Bourdieu explicitly differs from the influential Marxist theory of his time that speaks of class consciousness. In many ways, Bourdieu wants to develop a theory of class unconsciousness through this concept of habitus.

¹⁸¹ Bourdieu’s notion of habitus can be seen as a theory of action where he proposes that most human actions have as a basis something quite different from intention, that is, they have acquired dispositions which make it so that an action can and should be interpreted as oriented toward one objective or another without anyone being able to claim that that objective was a conscious design. (Bourdieu 1998)

¹⁸² In *Three Forms of Theoretical Knowledge* Bourdieu uses Leibniz’s analogy to illustrate this point: “Imagine two clocks in perfect agreement as to the time”. (1973: 69)

the objectivity which define their specific ‘rationality’ and which results in their being experienced as evident or taken for granted: “they are seen as immediately intelligible and predictable by all agents possessing practical mastery of the system of schemes of action and interpretation objectively implied in their accomplishment and by those alone; that is by all those who, like the members of the same group or class, are products of identical objective conditions, which exercise a universalizing and particularizing effect insofar as they only homogenize members of a group by distinguishing them from all the others”. (Bourdieu 1973: 68)

The concept of habitus is important to the development of social scientific work for two major reasons. First, it gives a new perspective on doing research: since subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing, what they do has more meaning than they know. The habitus is the universalizing mediation that causes an individual agent’s practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less ‘sensible’ and ‘reasonable’. What Bourdieu describes in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* as the “part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own producers is the aspect by which they are objectively adjusted to other practices and to the structures of which the principle of their production is itself the product”. (1977: 79) This gives a whole new perspective, a whole new set of possibilities, and, thus, a whole new mission to researchers conducting interviews. Bourdieu gets at this difference when he speaks of the distinction between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge or between practice and theory.

Secondly, habitus is important to the development of social scientific work because Bourdieu is elaborating a new theory of action, one that centers on notions of habitus as a set of dispositions, one that structures behaviors through unconscious

predispositions and has a whole array of consequences for researchers themselves and for what they bring to their research projects. While the concept of habitus is developed to address the dualism of objectivism and subjectivism, it raises its own set of problems for researchers in their quest to conduct scientific work. Bourdieu will in turn develop his reflexive sociology in great part to address the new problems raised for researchers by the notion of habitus. Before we turn to this development, and to better understand it, it is important to contextualize Bourdieu's habitus within another concept he develops: the notion of field.

Habitus works within the scope of fields. Bourdieu invokes the idea of field to embody the relational mode of knowledge in which he points out and develops the concept of habitus¹⁸³. Fields are relatively anonymous structured social spaces with their own rules, power relations, and capital. Bourdieu argues that the notion of the field marks a first break with the interactionist approach inasmuch as it takes note of the existence of this structure of objective relationships among laboratories and among researchers, not to mention among agents under study, which govern or orient practices. Further, a second break occurs where the relational approach that the field introduces is associated with what Bourdieu calls in *Science of Science and Reflexivity* a “dispositionalist philosophy, which breaks with the finalism, allied to a naive intentionalism, which sees agents as rational calculators seeking not so much the truth as the social profits accruing to those who appear to have discovered it”. (2004a: 33) The advantage of the notion of field, according to Bourdieu, is that it does not provide ready made answers to all possible queries. Rather, its major virtue “is that it promotes a mode

¹⁸³ Yet one more way to describe Bourdieu's work would be Comtist according to Robbins (2002), who speaks of when Bourdieu rejects substantialist in favor of relational thinking

of construction that has to be rethought anew every time”. (Bourdieu 1992b: 110)

Despite the presence of various forms of material and symbolic power and capital at play, all agents involved in a particular field share a certain number of fundamental interests, namely everything that is linked to the very existence of the field. Given that, Bourdieu turns his attention, and points out that sociology should turn its attention to, the existence of the intellectual field and everything that this field entails.

Section Three: The Development of Reflexivity

Section three discusses Bourdieu’s continued analytical work with a view toward improving the development of science, with an elaboration of the particular features of the intellectual field. He elaborates on the notion of doxa to point out the limitations inherent in the point of view of the intellectuals. This insight rests on what I believe is the central distinction Bourdieu promotes, that between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge or between theory and practice. This section covers this distinction at length as presented by Bourdieu, paying special attention to the role played by time. Bourdieu calls the failure to recognize this important distinction on the part of intellectuals the scholastic fallacy. Reflexivity is thus introduced and developed to overcome several limitations Bourdieu identifies as standing in the way of conducting productive scientific work.

Being interested in the advancement and progress of scientific research, Bourdieu pays particular attention to the content and characteristics of the intellectual field. Bourdieu (1993) describes the intellectual field as one where there is a monopoly on the production of discourse on the social world, a political space that has its own logic, in which a particular type of interest is invested. As in any other field, intellectuals have

interests and compete with one another, and their categories of thought are deeply influenced by their presence in this particular field. One of Bourdieu's contributions in *Homo Academicus* (1988) and *For A Socio-Analysis of Intellectuals: On Homo Academicus* (1989) resides in uncovering the fact that intellectual productions are related, not to the social position of the producer defined in the broadest terms, but to the location he or she occupies in the objective structure of the intellectual universe¹⁸⁴. Bourdieu points out that, contrary to the illusion of the 'free-floating intellectual', which he points out is in a sense the professional ideology of intellectuals, the intellectual field implies specific interests such as those coming from academic posts or publishing contracts, university positions or book reviewing, but also involves signs of recognition and gratifications that are often imperceptible for someone who is not part of that world but which expose intellectuals to all sorts of subtle constraints and censorship. Reflexivity is then key to understanding these interests and the influence they have on research produced in the social sciences.

With this intellectual field comes a refined and distinctive habitus. Bourdieu points out that those whose 'culture' is the academic culture conveyed by the school have a system of categories of perception, language, thought, and appreciation that sets them apart from those whose only training has been through their work and their social contacts with people of their own kind. The professorial schemata of perception and appreciation thus function as generative schemata which structure their whole practice, especially through academic works such as courses, textbooks, or doctoral theses.

¹⁸⁴ Wacquant writes in *Sociology as Socioanalysis: Tales of 'Homo Academicus'* (1990) that this should be seen as part of Bourdieu's interest in fighting symbolic domination more generally. Wacquant also notes that *Homo Academicus* (1988) is at the time both Bourdieu's most personal and impersonal book. It is note-worthy that Bourdieu's deconstruction of the intellectual field took place while he was the chair of sociology at the College de France, a position of high reward and power within the French academic world.

Bourdieu is interested in uncovering the scientific unconscious which regulates our daily practices as researchers.

Uncovering this scientific unconscious embedded in the intellectual field is a crucial step in the betterment of scientific practice for Bourdieu because it is only then that one can become aware of the constraints and limitations inscribed in the scholastic field. Thus, what philosophers, sociologists, historians, and all those whose profession it is to think and speak about the world have the greatest chance of overlooking are the social presuppositions inscribed in the scholastic field. This is what, to awaken philosophers from their scholastic slumber, Bourdieu calls by “the oxymoron of epistemic doxa: thinkers leave in a state of unthought the presuppositions of their thought, that is, the social conditions of possibility of the scholastic point of view and the unconscious dispositions, productive of unconscious theses, which are acquired through an academic or scholastic experience, often inscribed in prolongation of originary (bourgeois) experience of distance from the world and from the urgency of necessity”. (Bourdieu 1998: 129)

Bourdieu discusses the nature of this scientific unconscious as doxa, referring to what a field implicitly defines as ‘unthinkable’ things, things that are not even discussed.¹⁸⁵ Doxa is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in

¹⁸⁵ Doxa is again part of a long line of concepts developed by others which Bourdieu puts to use. John Myles argues in *From Doxa to Experience: Issues in Bourdieu's Adoption of Husserlian Phenomenology* (2004) that Bourdieu took much of his concept of doxa from Husserl, but that Husserl offers a more complex and fluid relationship between doxa and reflexivity than Bourdieu allows. Bridget Fowler, for her part, in *Autonomy, Reciprocity and Science in the Thought of Pierre Bourdieu* (2006) discusses how it is Durkheim's idea “that men and women generate classifications of the world, doxa, which have their roots in social divisions, but which have a profound influence in the form of their basic beliefs about the social game”. For Fowler, this explains Bourdieu's interest in the doxic elements present in the academic and scientific field. Fowler also argues that Bourdieu takes up from Durkheim the significance of classification in social struggles, the importance of education in reproducing social groups, and “the dynamic or transgressive potential of some forms of anomie, where agents cannot cut their coat according to their cloth”. (Fowler 2000: 11)

practice between a habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense. Bourdieu speaks of doxa as everything that goes without saying, and in particular the systems of classification determining what is judged interesting or uninteresting, the things that no one thinks worthy of being mentioned, because there is no need to do so. The scientific universe has its own specific doxa, a set of presuppositions whose acceptance is implied in membership itself. These include the major dichotomies, which, paradoxically, unite those whom they divide, since intellectuals have to share a common acceptance of them to be able to fight over them. These dichotomies are also social oppositions between complicit opponents within the field that, according to Bourdieu, establish the space for legitimate discussion, and thus exclude any attempt to produce an unforeseen position as absurd, eclectic or simply unthinkable.

Bourdieu points out that it is crucial to be aware of what he calls the intellectualocentric doxa, which are imposed upon entry in the intellectual field as “undisputed, pre-reflexive, naive, native compliance with the fundamental presuppositions”. (Bourdieu 1990a: 68) All those who are involved in a field, whether champions of orthodoxy or heterodoxy, share a tacit adherence to the same doxa. This makes their competition possible and assigns its limits. Bourdieu sees this intellectualocentric doxa as an obstacle to the advancement of scientific progress and believes that only through examination and questioning, or a reflexive return on the nature of this doxa, can the researcher produce truly scientific work. Equally important, Bourdieu sees doxa as a site of past and current struggle. Doxa is a particular point of view, the point of view of the dominant. Given that, it is even more important for researchers to be aware of doxa and its many influences on intellectuals’ own point of

view.

For Bourdieu, the scientific unconscious as embodied in the scientific habitus is one half of what is crucial about the nature of the intellectual field, the other half being this idea of the intellectual's point of view. Bourdieu sees a set of invisible determinations inherent in the intellectual posture itself, in the scholarly gaze that one casts upon the social world. As soon as we observe the social world, we introduce bias in our perception of it because in order to study it, to describe it, we must retire from the social world more or less completely.

Bourdieu points out that to raise such questions on the very nature of the scientific gaze is an integral part of scientific work. These concerns arose within the course of Bourdieu's empirical work in Algeria and in France where he was confronted with the distinction between scholarly modes of knowledge and practical modes of knowledge. Bourdieu argues that the scholastic vision, to the extent that it engages in a mode of thinking which presupposes the bracketing of practical necessity, risks destroying its object or creating pure artifacts whenever it is applied without critical reflection to practices that are the product of an altogether different vision. Scholars who do not know what defines them as scholars risk putting into the minds of agents their scholastic view or imputing to their object that which belongs to the manner of approaching it.¹⁸⁶

Without this awareness of limits inherent in what Bourdieu calls his point of view on the object, the researcher is condemned to project on its object or subject his own unconscious representations. Bourdieu borrows the notion of scholastic point of view from John Austin, who uses it in *Sense and Sensibilia* (1962) and defines it as "the

¹⁸⁶ Bourdieu (1998) gives the example of Chomsky, who operates as if speakers were grammarians. Grammar is a typical product of the scholastic point of view.

particular use of language where, instead of grasping and mobilizing the meaning of a word that is immediately compatible with the situation, we mobilize and examine all the possible meanings of that word, outside of any reference to the situation". (Bourdieu 1998: 127) Bourdieu goes beyond Austin by pointing out that he fails to address the question of the social conditions of possibility of this very particular standpoint on the world and, more precisely, on language, the body, time or any other object of thought. He does so by linking Austin's notion of scholastic point of view with Plato's notion of *skhole*.

For Bourdieu, this insight has tremendous consequences for the practice of scientific research because with this scholastic point of view or *skhole*, withdrawing from action in order to observe it from above and from a distance, the intellectual constitutes practical activity as an "object of observation and analysis, a representation." (Bourdieu 1977: 2) Here, Bourdieu is describing a central characteristic of the intellectual field, this intellectualist bias inherent in the position of the social scientist who observes from the outside a universe in which he or she is not immediately involved. It is this intellectualistic relation to the world that replaces the practical relation to practice which agents have between the observer and its object. Bourdieu (1990b) illustrates this by pointing to the mediaeval tradition that contrasts the *lector*, who comments on an already-established discourse, with the *auctor* who produces new discourse.

The distinction between the intellectual mode of knowledge and the practical mode of knowledge is perhaps the most significant distinction Bourdieu works with during his career. He characterizes this distinction as that between theory and practice, reasoning that theory is a spectacle that can only be understood from a viewpoint away from the stage on which the action is played out. In *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu

argues “the distance lies perhaps not so much where it is usually looked for, in the gap between cultural traditions, as in the gulf between two relations to the world, one theoretical, the other practical”. (1990a: 14)

For Bourdieu practice is a process of knowledge, an operation of construction that sets up systems of classifications in terms of practical functions. These systems organize perception and appreciation, and provide a structure for practice. Bourdieu argues that practice has a logic which is not that of logic, and intellectuals need to avoid asking of it more logic than it can give, thereby condemning themselves either to wring incoherence out of it or to thrust upon it a forced coherence¹⁸⁷. He argues in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* that an “analysis of the various but closely interrelated aspects of the theoretization effect (forced synchronization of the successive, fictitious totalization, neutralization of functions, substitution of the system of products for the system of principles of production, etc.) brings out, in negative form, certain properties of the logic of practice which by definition escape theoretical apprehension, since they are constitutive of that apprehension.” (1977: 110)

For Bourdieu, the differences between the theoretical point of view and the practical point of view are not purely speculative but are accompanied by significant consequences in the practical operations of research. The grouping of information, such as is performed by a kinship diagram, is in itself an act of construction, indeed an act of

¹⁸⁷ In *Taking Bourdieu Into the Field* (2004) Lois Waquant argues that Bourdieu’s work displays some ambivalence about the relationship between the logic of practice and the logic of logic. In some instances, like *Practical Reason* (1998a) and *Masculine Domination* (2001), the gap between the two can be overcome by “reflexive return upon and analysis of the theoretical posture itself, its social conditions of possibility, and how it impacts research as a practical activity” (2004: 185). In other instances, such as *In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflexive Sociology* (1990b) and *Pascalian Meditations* (1999), there is an antimony “between practice as an unthought, immediate and mutual ‘inhabiting’ of being and world, carnal entanglement with the active forces that make social existence what it is, and the effort to capture it through thought, ratiocination, and language” (2004: 185). This ambivalence may well provide a key to understanding the multiple analysis of Bourdieu’s reflexivity.

interpretation, inasmuch as it brings to light “the whole system of relationships and removes the advantage one has when manipulating separate relationships, as and when they occur to intuition, by forcing one to relate each opposition to all the others”.

(Bourdieu 1990a: 10) Bourdieu does not seek to impeach theoretical forms of knowledge, but rather to promote an awareness of its limits so that diagrams, for example, with all the oppositions, equivalences and analogies that they display at a glance, are only valid so long as they are taken for what they are: models giving an account of the observed facts in the most coherent and most economical way. In this regard, they become false and dangerous as soon as they are treated as the real principles of practices, which amounts simultaneously to overestimating the logic of practices and to losing sight of what constitutes their real principle¹⁸⁸.

By cumulating information which is not and cannot always be mastered by any single informant, at any rate, never at a single moment, Bourdieu points out that the analyst wins the privilege of totalization. The researcher secures the means of apprehending the logic of the system which a partial or discrete view would miss, but by the same token, “there is every likelihood that he will overlook the change in status to which he is subjecting practice and its products, and consequently that he will insist on trying to answer questions which are not and cannot be questions for practice, instead of asking himself whether the essential characteristic of practice is not precisely the fact that it excludes such questions”. (1977: 106)

¹⁸⁸ Roger Foster, in his work *Pierre Bourdieu's Critique of Scholarly Reason* (2005), points to Wittgenstein's influence on Bourdieu in this matter and links Bourdieu's critique with Wittgenstein's critique of the 'intellectualist' or 'mentalist' picture of rule-following. Foster argues that “Bourdieu draws upon Wittgenstein's work to illuminate a widespread confusion in social theory between the idea of a rule as an explanatory hypothesis, formulated by the theorist to account for what he or she sees, and the idea of a rule as the principle actually applied by the agents themselves in their practice” (2005: 91). This is at the heart of the error of intellectualism that Bourdieu describes, of projecting theoretical comprehension into practice.

As it pertains to research, Bourdieu (1990) points to two examples of consequences of the theory-practice distinction. First, during the course of interviews, asking individuals to reflect on their practices, adopting a quasi-theoretical posture makes agents lose any chance of expressing the truth of their practice, and especially the truth of the practical relation to the practice. Second, the idea of objectivity in an opinion survey is associated with asking questions in the most neutral terms so as to give an equal chance to all possible answers. Bourdieu tells us this concern with neutrality is a theoretical concern. He adds that in reality, an opinion poll would no doubt be closer to what happens in reality if it were to break all the rules of 'objectivity' and give people the chance to situate themselves as they really do in real practice, that is, in relation to already formulated opinions.

There is a final and perhaps most important property of theory that is distinctive of practice: urgency. Urgency is the product of playing in the game and of presence in the future that it implies. "One only has to stand outside the game, as the observer does, in order to sweep away the urgency, the appeals, the threats, the steps to be taken, which make up the real, really lived-in, world". (Bourdieu 1990a: 82) Removing this urgency is attempting to grasp the action outside temporal movement. Thus, theory, in addition to its totalizing, abstracting, and coherence effects, also detemporalizes action.

Time is a very important theme for Bourdieu, one that constantly returns throughout his writing, such as in *Pascalian Meditations* (1999)¹⁸⁹. While doing

¹⁸⁹ Lois McNay wrote extensively on the importance of time in Bourdieu's work in *Gender, Habitus and the Field: Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity* (1999) as well as *Meditations on Pascalian Meditations* (2001). She writes that time is at the heart of Bourdieu's conceptions of practice and habitus whereas they are themselves "the incorporation of temporal structures or the regularities and tendencies of the world into the body" (2001: 149). McNay (1999) also writes about Bourdieu's use of time as protension, as an embodied practical sense of the forthcoming, from which emerges agency, and which she contrasts with Foucault's inscribed body which concentrates more on the retentive aspect of time.

ethnological work in Algeria, Bourdieu was also undertaking philosophical work on Leibniz's conception of time. It is in Algeria that Bourdieu starts distinguishing between different awarenesses of time, different experiences of time. He writes that time is felt subjectively in Kabyle, stretching out or seen as a revered commodity, depending on the context. The availability of time is something Bourdieu notices was a distinguishing factor between most Algerians, who can think only of the present, and the Algerians who are more at ease financially and therefore possess leisure time. For Bourdieu, the scholastic situation implies, by definition, a particularly free relationship to what is called time, a suspension of urgency¹⁹⁰.

This relationship with time is important to Bourdieu's theory-practice distinction. Bourdieu points out that scientific practice is so 'detemporalized' that it tends to exclude even the idea of what it excludes: "because science is possible only in relation to a time which is opposed to that of practice, it tends to ignore time and, in doing so, to reify practices" (1977: 9). The detemporalizing effect that science produces when it forgets the transformation it imposes on practices inscribed in the current of time, simply by totalizing them, "is never more pernicious than when exerted on practices defined by the fact that their temporal structure, direction, and rhythm are *constitutive* of their meaning". (Bourdieu 1977: 9)

Bourdieu argues that when one discovers the theoretical error that consists of

¹⁹⁰ Bridget Folwer, in her work *Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture* (2000), describes this as a phenomenological analysis of time. In *Mapping the Obituary: Notes towards a Bourdieusian interpretation* (2004) she expands on this by arguing that Bourdieu borrowed from Husserl and Heidegger certain approaches to time. While Bourdieu critiques Merleau-Ponty in *Sociology and Philosophy in France since 1945: Death and Resurrection of a Philosophy Without Subject* (1967), phenomenology clearly had an influence on Bourdieu's work beyond simply his understanding of time. In *Sociology and Philosophy in the Work of Pierre Bourdieu, 1965-75* (2002), Derek Robbins argues that with the help of Robert Skolowski's *Introduction to Phenomenology* (2000), we can gain an insight into Bourdieu's work through an understanding of the distinction between natural attitude and phenomenological attitude found in the phenomenological tradition.

presenting the model that has to be constructed to give an account of practice as the principle of practice, one sees that at the root of this error is the antinomy between the time of science and time of action which tends to destroy practice by imposing on it the intemporal time of science. The shift from the practical scheme to the theoretical schema, constructed after the event, lets slip everything that makes up the temporal reality of practice in process. For Bourdieu, practice unfolds in time and possesses all the correlative properties, such as irreversibility, that synchronization destroys. Its temporal structure, that is, its rhythm, its tempo, and above all its directionality, is constitutive of its meaning. Bourdieu mentions music as an example, where any manipulation of its structure, even a simple change in tempo, either acceleration or slowing down, subjects it to a deconstruction that is irreducible to a simple change in an axis of reference. “In short, because it is entirely immersed in the current of time, practice is inseparable from temporality, not only because it is played out in time and especially with tempo”. (Bourdieu 1990a: 81)

The consequences for the progress of social scientific work are crucial for Bourdieu. As long as one only considers practices which, like rituals, derive some of their most important properties from the fact that they are ‘detotalized’ by their unfolding in succession, one is liable to neglect those properties of practice that detemporalizing science has least chance of reconstituting, namely the properties that it owes to the fact that it is constructed in time, that time gives it its form, as the order of a succession, and therefore its direction and meaning. Bourdieu (1990a) points to time as an answer in practice to what seemed likely paradoxical truths at the theory level. With time, opposing truths can not only co-exist but can reveal a greater understanding of a given

phenomenon¹⁹¹¹⁹².

So, for Bourdieu, the scientific researcher's work is heavily influenced by presuppositions of three different orders. To start, a researcher's work is affected by presuppositions linked to her position in the social space, such as class and gender. Then there are the influences that are constitutive of the doxa specific to each of the different fields (religious, artistic, philosophical, sociological, etc.) and, more precisely, those that each particular thinker owes to her position in a field. Finally, there are the presuppositions constituting the doxa generically associated with the *skhole*, leisure, which is the condition of existence of all scholarly fields. These have all been reviewed in the previous pages and together form what Bourdieu calls the scholastic fallacy. Bourdieu's conception and use of reflexivity is to combat the effect of these three presuppositions.

For Bourdieu, this scholastic fallacy, which is the core of the lack of awareness on the part of researchers to the theory-practice distinction and of the intellectual habitus they bring to their research, not to mention the doxic elements of the intellectual field, hinders the progress of truly scientific work. Bourdieu urges us to track down all the

¹⁹¹ Bourdieu uses the example of gift exchange as a phenomenon that is oft debated that can only be grasped in its whole complexity and seeming contradiction once its temporal structure is fully taken into account.

¹⁹² Bourdieu also has a full discussion of the link between time and power. He demonstrates in *Homo Academicus* (1998) that it is mainly through the control of time that academic power is exercised. Bourdieu also points out, among other things, that "temporal power is a power to perpetuate or transform the distributions of the various forms of capital by maintaining or transforming the principles of redistribution". (Bourdieu 1999: 228) Bourdieu thus links time, power, and domination. Someone who introduces a new legitimate way of doing things shakes the power relations and introduces time. If nothing happened, there would be no time; the conservative agents would like to abolish time, to eternalise the present state of the field, the state of the structure that is favourable to their interests because they occupy the dominant positions within it, whereas the innovators, without even seeking to 'compete' with anyone, introduce change by their mere intervention and bring about the specific temporality of the field. It follows that each field has its own time. "A single chronology tends to impose a false unilinearity on different temporalities, the independent series corresponding to the different fields, which may indeed sometimes coincide, particularly when historical crises have the effect of synchronizing fields that have different histories and different temporalities". (Bourdieu 2004a: 64)

scientific mistakes that derive from this scholastic fallacy, such as asking interviewees to be their own sociologists for lack of having questioned the questionnaire. Bourdieu thinks we need to uncover all of the unnoticed theoretical effects produced by the mere use of instruments of thought, such as modelling, genealogies, diagrams, tables, and so forth, which “reproduce in their functioning the presuppositions inscribed in the social conditions of their construction, such as the bracketing of time, of temporal urgency, or the philosophy of gratuitousness, of the neutralization of practical ends”. (Bourdieu 1998: 133)

Bourdieu states that there is nothing that ‘pure’ thought finds harder to comprehend than *skhole*, the most determinant of all the social conditions of possibility of ‘pure’ thought¹⁹³. Despite that, Bourdieu fiercely states that ignoring everything that is implicated in the ‘scholastic point of view’ leads to the most serious epistemological mistake in the human sciences, namely, that which consists “in putting ‘a scholar inside the machine,’ in picturing all social agents in the image of the scientist or, more precisely, to place the models that the scientist must construct to account for practices into the consciousness of agents, to operate as if the constructions that the scientist must produce to understand and account for practices were the main determinants, the actual cause of practices”. (Bourdieu 1998: 133)

So, always the optimist, Bourdieu points out there is a way to minimize if not overcome this scholastic fallacy. Bourdieu argues that researchers must know the limits of theoretical knowledge and must accompany all scientific accounts with an account of the limits and limitations of scientific accounts: theoretical knowledge owes a number of

¹⁹³ Johan Heilborn, in his very good discussion of Bourdieu’s reflexivity in *Reflexivity and its Consequences* (1999), describes Bourdieu’s engagement with *skhole* as an epistemological matter, one concerned with “how the scholastic condition affects the very thinking process it enables” (1999: 300).

its most essential properties to the fact that the conditions under which it is produced are not that of practice and that fact ought to be recognized. This clearly means that science should make it its aim not to adopt practical logic for itself, but to reconstruct that knowledge theoretically by including in the theory the distance between practical logic and theoretical logic. This involves taking a theoretical viewpoint on the theoretical viewpoint and drawing out all the theoretical and methodological consequences of the fact that, vis-à-vis the situation and the behaviors that she observes, the sociologist is not in the position of an active agent, involved in the action, invested in the game and its stakes. Yet Bourdieu points out it that it is rare for this difference in viewpoints, and in the associated interests, really to be taken into account in the analysis. Bourdieu argues that this requires a constant effort of reflexivity, the only means, and itself scholastic, of fighting against scholastic inclinations.

This theoreticist or intellectualist bias that Bourdieu wants to defeat consists of forgetting to inscribe in the theory we build of the social world the fact that it is the product of a theoretical gaze, a 'contemplative eye.'¹⁹⁴ Given all of this, Bourdieu develops and promotes an active, constructive, reflexivity. For him, this reflexivity is a necessary step for intellectuals and researchers constantly to guard themselves against what he calls the epistemocentrism, or this 'ethnocentrism of the scientist,' which consists of ignoring everything that the analyst injects into his perception of the object by virtue of the fact that he is placed outside the object, that he observes it from afar and from above.

Reflexivity is, then, a counterpart or opposite of the pre-reflexive habitus.

¹⁹⁴ For Bourdieu, one of the main difficulties of sociological discourse lies in the fact that, like all language, it unfolds in strictly linear fashion, whereas, to escape oversimplification and one sidedness, one ought to be able to recall at every point the whole network of relationships found there.

Bourdieu points out the relation between habitus and the field to which it is objectively adjusted form a sort of ontological complicity, a subconscious pre-reflexive fit. This complicity manifests itself in what we call the sense of, or 'feel' for, the game, an "intentionality without intention which functions as the principle of strategies devoid of strategic design, without rational computation and without the conscious positing of ends". (Bourdieu 1990b: 108) Bourdieu draws on the Stoics here, to say that what depends upon us is not the first movement but only the second one. It is difficult to control the first movement of habitus, but reflexivity allows us to alter our perception of the situation and thereby our reaction to it, thus to control, up to a certain point, some of the determinants that operate through the relation of immediate complicity between position and dispositions. Bourdieu points out that habitus can be practically transformed through awakening of consciousness or reflexivity. Failing to be reflexive on the subtle determinations that work themselves out through dispositions, "a researcher becomes accessory to the unconsciousness of the action of dispositions, which is itself the accomplice of determinism". (Bourdieu 1992b: 137)

Based on this insight by the Stoics and on his own insights from empirical work in Algeria and training in the philosophy of science, Bourdieu wants to promote a new way of doing social science, a new way of practicing the craft of sociology, a new way of producing knowledge. Against the methodological orthodoxy of neutrality, Bourdieu points out that the researcher can and must mobilize her experience, that is, her past, in all her acts of research. But she is entitled to do so only on the condition that she submits all these returns of the past to rigorous scientific examination. For what has to be questioned is not only this reactivated past, but one's entire relation to this past which, when it acts outside the controls of consciousness, may be the source of a systematic

distortion. Only a genuine reflexion on this relation, “profoundly obscure to itself, can enable us to achieve the kind of reconciliation of the researcher with himself and his social properties¹⁹⁵. (2004a: 291)

Reflexivity is, for Bourdieu, first and foremost a tool to be used by researchers in order to advance the progress of social scientific work. Bourdieu sees in reflexivity the road that leads to more freedom from various types of hidden determinations, ones linked to a researcher’s social position, ones linked with the doxa of a particular scientific field, and ones linked with the skhole of the scholastic field¹⁹⁶. Reflexivity, by facilitating a reflection on these social determinants, allows researchers to understand the impact of all these interlinked scientific errors. Bourdieu points out that reflexivity can lead to questioning the specific logic and the social conditions of possibility of scientific knowledge in the social sciences.

For Bourdieu, thus, social science cannot break with common criteria and classifications and disentangle itself from the struggles of which they are both end and means, unless it takes them explicitly as its object instead of letting them infiltrate scientific discourse. Bourdieu (1988b) points out that any position adopted towards the social world orders and organizes itself from a certain position in the world, that is to say, from the viewpoint of the preservation and augmentation of the power associated with this position. Bourdieu does think that each individual conquest of reflexivity, such as the

¹⁹⁵ This reflexivity employed by Bourdieu while carrying out ethnographic research at about the same time in Kabylia and in Bearn, in a far-away colony and in his home village, had the effect of leading him to examine as an academic his own milieu of origin, at once popular and provincial.

¹⁹⁶ Several authors write about these three aspects of Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity, see Johan Heilborn’s *Reflexivity and Its Consequences* (1999), Jane Kenway and Julie McLeod’s *Bourdieu’s Reflexive Sociology and ‘Spaces of Points of View’: Whose Reflexivity, Which Perspective?* (2004), Jeffery Everett’s *Organizational Research and the Praxeology of Pierre Bourdieu* (2002), and especially Tony Schirato and Jenn Webb’s *Bourdieu’s Notion of Reflexive Knowledge* (2002) for further interesting and useful discussions of these aspects.

discovery of the scholastic illusion, is destined by the logic of competition to become a weapon in the scientific struggle, and so to become a necessity for all those engaged in it. He maintains that no one can forge weapons to be used against his opponents without having those weapons immediately used against her by them or by others. Bourdieu follows “it is from this social logic, and not from some illusory, sanctimonious deontology, that one can expect progress towards greater reflexivity, imposed by the effects of mutual objectification and not by a simple and more or less narcissistic turning of subjectivities upon themselves”. (1999: 119)

Bourdieu argues (1999) that it is because we are implicated in the world that there is implicit content in what we think and say about it. For Bourdieu, the unconscious is history, the collective history that has produced our categories of thought, and the individual history through which they have been inculcated in us. He says, for example, that it is from the social history of educational institutions, and from the history of our singular relationship to these institutions, that we can expect real revelations about the objective and subjective structures under the guise of classifications, taxonomies, hierarchies, etc., that always, in spite of ourselves, orient our thought¹⁹⁷.

Bourdieu continues to explain that when scientific work is done about the scientific field and what it implies, the results it obtains can be immediately reinvested in

¹⁹⁷ Bourdieu (1999) adds that one would be falling into a form of the scholastic illusion of the omnipotence of thought if one were to believe it possible to take an absolute point of view on one’s own point of view. And “that the imperative of reflexivity is not some kind of rather futile point of honour, that of the thinker who would like to be able to occupy a transcendent viewpoint with respect to the empirical viewpoints of ordinary agents or his competitors in the scientific world, radically and definitively separated, as if by an initiatory break, from his own empirical viewpoint as an empirical agent, engaged in the games and the stakes of his universe”. (Bourdieu 1999: 119) While Bourdieu asserts this position once or twice during the course of his career, I believe it is by far the most undeveloped aspect of his work on reflexivity. Too often one is left with the implicit impression that a given author can effect a thorough reflexive return on his blind spot.

scientific work as instruments of reflexive knowledge of the conditions and the social limits of this work, and can become one of the principal weapons of epistemological vigilance. Indeed, Bourdieu argues that perhaps we can only make our knowledge of the scientific field progress by using whatever knowledge we may have available in order to discover and overcome the obstacles to science which are entailed by the fact of holding a determined position in the field, and not, as is so often the case, to reduce the reasons of our adversaries to causes, to social interests. Bourdieu maintains that we have every reason to think that the researcher has less to gain regarding the scientific quality of his work from looking into the interests of others, than from looking into his own interests, from understanding what he is motivated to see and not to see. Or, in other words, “that we may well have some chance of contributing to the science of power if we renounce the attempt to turn science into an instrument of power, above all in the world of science”. (Bourdieu 1988b: 16)

Bourdieu goes further when he appeals to Marx in suggesting that, every now and then, some individuals manage to liberate themselves so completely from the positions assigned to them in social space that they could comprehend that space as a whole, and transmit their vision to those who were still prisoners of the structure. Bourdieu points out, in fact, that the sociologist can affirm that the representation that she produces through her study transcends ordinary visions, without thereby laying claim to such absolute vision, able fully to grasp historical reality as such. In *Homo Academicus* (1988) Bourdieu argues that taken from an angle which is neither the partial and partisan viewpoint of agents engaged in the game, nor the absolute viewpoint of a divine spectator, the scientific vision represents the most systematic totalization which can be accomplished, in a given state of the instruments of knowledge, at the cost of as complete

as possible an objectification both of the historical moment and of the work of totalization.

Bourdieu warns in *Pascalian Meditations* (1999) that it is their habits and ambitions of thought that lead some philosophers to denounce the concern for reflexivity as the ambition of an individual who seeks to attain a position of absolute knowledge¹⁹⁸. Quite the contrary, for Bourdieu, to practice reflexivity means questioning the privilege of a knowing 'subject' arbitrarily excluded from the effort of objectification. It means endeavoring to account for the empirical 'subject' of scientific practice in the terms of the objectivity constructed by the scientific 'subject', by acquiring a more acute awareness and a greater mastery of the constraints that can be exerted on the scientific 'subject' through the links which bind it to the empirical subject, its interests and presuppositions¹⁹⁹. Bourdieu asks "how can one fail to recognize that the 'choices' of the 'free' and 'disinterested' subject are never totally independent of the mechanics of the fields and therefore of the history of which it is the outcome and which remains embedded in its structures, principles of vision and division, concepts, theories and methods applied, which are never totally independent of the position he occupies within the field and the associated interests?" (1999: 120)

Bourdieu hopes that his critical reflexivity will enable scientific reason to control itself ever more closely, in and through conflictual cooperation and mutual critique, and so to move progressively towards total independence of constraints and limitations. Bourdieu summarizes this project of his by stating that "only if we know 'what the

¹⁹⁸ Actually, Bourdieu points out in more cases than one, to enable science to progress, one has to establish communication between opposing theories, which have often been constituted against each other.

¹⁹⁹ This means among other things for Bourdieu studying the structure of the university field, the position different faculties occupy within it, the structure of each faculty, and the position that the different disciplines occupy within it.

sociologist does', to use Saussure's terms, can [we] adequately read the product of his operations". (1988b: 21) So reflexivity is not only a tool, among several others, contributing to the betterment of the scientific enterprise, but it is characterized as an indispensable pre-condition of sociological work. Bourdieu places his concept-practice of reflexivity at the very heart of his vision for the practice of sociology. The next section will discuss some of the implications of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology.

Section Four: From Reflexivity to Reflexive Sociology

Bourdieu is first and foremost interested in the progress and betterment of social scientific work and reflexivity comes to occupy the dominant role in his vision for sociology. In this fourth and final section of the chapter I discuss several implications of Bourdieu's concept-practice of reflexivity, from the very craft of research, education, writing, and presentation, all turned into a new vision for the discipline under the name of sociology of sociology, or what he calls a reflexive sociology. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role played by participant objectivation, auto socio-analysis, and, finally, the important political implications of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology.

The first step of the reflective analysis of the tools of analysis, according to Bourdieu, is an indispensable pre-condition of scientific knowledge. This involves a systematic reflection of the researcher on her social position, on the doxa of the field(s) she operates in, and on the scholastic point of view, skhole. Beyond these three, perhaps the most fundamental presupposition that the sociologist owes to the fact that she is a social subject is the presupposition of the absence of presuppositions which defines the ethnocentrism of the intellectual. This makes the sociologist vulnerable to the illusion of immediate self-evidence or the temptation unconsciously to universalize particular

experience when she forgets that she is the cultivated subject of a particular culture and when she fails to subordinate her practice to a continuous questioning of this relationship. “But warnings against ethnocentrism count for little if they are not constantly revived and reinterpreted by epistemological vigilance”.²⁰⁰ (Bourdieu 1991b: 72) Bourdieu insists that, “reflexive sociology, in the case of the professionals of knowledge, is the instrument of knowledge par excellence, the instrument of knowledge of the instruments of knowledge”. (1990b: 16)

Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology is a sociology of sociology in that it turns the instruments of social science back upon itself²⁰¹. A genuinely reflexive social science, then, gives its practitioners appropriate motives and appropriate weapons for grasping and fighting the social and historical determinants of scientific practice. Bourdieu argues that one cannot avoid having to objectify the objectifying subject. It is by turning to study the historical conditions of his own production, rather than by some form or other of transcendental reflection, that the scientific subject can gain theoretical control over her own structures and inclinations as well as over the determinants whose products they are. In this way, he can gain the concrete means of reinforcing his capacity for objectification.

Bourdieu continues that “far from leading to a nihilistic attack on science, like certain so-called ‘postmodern’ analyses, which do no more than add the flavor of the month dressed with a soupçon of ‘French radical chic’ to the age-old irrationalist rejection of science, and more especially of social science, under the aegis of a

²⁰⁰ Bourdieu mentions that, paradoxically, this reflexive disposition is not self-evident, especially for philosophers, who are often led, by the social definition of their function, and by the logic of competition with the social sciences, to refuse as something scandalous the historicization of their concepts.

²⁰¹ Where I see quite a bit of continuity between earlier writings by Bourdieu calling for a sociology of sociology and later writings calling for a reflexive sociology, Karakayali (2004) argues that the change in language marks a shift in focus for Bourdieu away from clearing sociological thought from the categories of spontaneous knowledge to warning social scientists against imposing their own categories upon their objects.

denunciation of ‘positivism’ and ‘scienticism’” (1988b: xiii), his reflexive sociology aims to demonstrate that sociology can escape from the vicious circle of historicism or sociologism. In pursuit of this end, reflexive sociology need only make use of the knowledge which it provides of the social world in which science is produced in order to try to gain control over the effects of the social determinisms which affect both this world and scientific discourse itself. In other words, far from destroying its own foundations when it brings to light the social determinants which the logic of the fields of production brings to bear on all cultural productions, reflexive sociology, for Bourdieu, claims an epistemological privilege that is conferred by way of being able to reinvest its own scientific gains in scientific practice in the form of sociological increase in epistemological vigilance.

Bourdieu (1988a) argues that the tendency to forget to program into the complete theory of the world analyzed the gap between the theoretical and the practical experience is compensated for by the reflexive sociological analysis of the social conditions of sociological analysis. This starts with a sociology of the system of education and the intellectual world because education contributes to our knowledge of the subject by introducing the unthought categories of thought which limit the thinkable and predetermine what is actually thought, whose specific product is an homogeneous programme of perception, thought, and action.²⁰² The educational system is also a great producer of taxonomies. This is why Bourdieu says that the teaching of professors is the worst obstacle to the development of scientific thought because instead of teaching things openly, in a supple, elastic and multiple ways, they spend their time making dichotomies and classifications. Bourdieu explains in *Thinking About Limits*, “there we have one of

²⁰² Bourdieu is fond of saying: “The eye is a product of history reproduced by education”. (1984: 3)

the antinomies of thought: if we are not educated, we cannot think much at all, yet if we are educated we risk being dominated by ready-made thoughts". (1992a: 40) The task of teaching sociology is to produce, if not a 'new person,' then at least a 'new gaze,' a sociological eye. In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu argues that "this cannot be done without a genuine conversion...a mental revolution, a transformation of one's whole vision of the social world". (1992b: 251) Thus, for all these reasons, education should be a focus of this reflexive sociology.

Beyond education, a reflexive sociology must also rethink the sociology of intellectuals, one that Bourdieu labels participant objectivation. This entails breaking with the deepest and most unconscious adherences and adhesions, those that quite often give the object its very 'interest' for those who study it. This involves objectivation of the observer by the observer, a radical auto-critique. Bourdieu argues that "the sociologist cannot succeed this objectivation if he does not submit to objectivation not only what he is, his own social conditions of production and the limits of his mind, but also his objectivation work, the hidden interests invested in it, and the profits that it promises". (2001: 400)

Bourdieu lays out participant objectivation as a work to be carried out at three levels. First, one has to objectify the position of the subject of objectivation in the overall social space, his or her original position and trajectory, his or her membership of and commitment to social and religious groups²⁰³. Then, one has to objectivate the position he occupies within the field of specialists (and the position of this field, this discipline, in the field of the social sciences), as each discipline has its own traditions, its obligatory problematics, its habits of thought, its shared beliefs and self-evidences, its rituals and

²⁰³ Bourdieu claims this is the most commonly perceived factor of distortion and thus the least dangerous

consecrations, its constraints regarding publication of findings, and its specific forms of censorship, not to mention the whole set of presuppositions inscribed in the collective history of the specialty (the academic unconscious). Third, one has to objectivate everything that is linked to membership of the scholastic universe, paying particular attention to the illusion of the absence of illusion, of the pure, absolute, 'disinterested' point of view. The sociology of intellectuals brings to light the particular form of interest, which is the interest in disinterestedness.

In short, scientific objectivation is only complete when it includes, in addition to the point of view of the objectivizer and the interests she may have in objectivation, the historical unconscious that she inevitably engages in her work. By historical, and more precisely academic, unconscious, Bourdieu means the set of cognitive structures that can be attributed to specifically educational experiences and that are therefore largely common to all the products of the same educational system or, in a more specified form, to all the members of the same discipline at a given time. Bourdieu contends thus that his participant objectivation shows that one knows the world better and better as one knows oneself better, that scientific knowledge and knowledge of oneself and of one's own social unconscious advance go hand in hand, and that primary experience, transformed in and through scientific practice, transforms scientific practice as well as vice versa.²⁰⁴

This is why, in Bourdieu's view, the history of sociology, understood as an exploration of the scientific unconscious of the sociologist through the explication of the

²⁰⁴ In order to demonstrate this process of auto socio-analysis, Bourdieu uses this methodology on himself in the very last work he produces before his death. In *Esquisse pour une Auto-Analyse* (2004b), Bourdieu lays out an anti-biography, insofar as autobiography is about what makes an individual unique and Bourdieu's work is about showing the social conditions that make him part of a collective set of fields. His book is both an attempt to test the outer boundaries of reflexivity in social science and an enterprise in self-knowledge. He tells the story of the path he followed from this point of view, that is, by trying to supply the elements of a sociological analysis of the development of his work. If he has done so, it is also because this sort of self-analysis is part, he thinks, of the preconditions of the way his thinking has developed.

genesis of problems, categories of thought, and instruments of analysis, constitutes an absolute prerequisite for scientific practice. Bourdieu suggests that all research in the social sciences, when one knows how to use it to that end, is a form of socio auto-analysis²⁰⁵. This means a researcher can now constitute her own point of view, and understand it better by understanding the field within which it defines itself as occupying a certain position, a certain point. Bourdieu contends that if the sociology he proposes differs in any significant way from the other sociologies of the past and of the present, it is first and foremost that it continually turns back onto itself the scientific weapons it produces. It uses the knowledge it gains of the social determinations that may bear upon it, and particularly the scientific analysis of all the constraints and all the limitations associated with occupying a definite position in a definite field at a particular moment and with a certain trajectory, in an attempt to locate and neutralize their effects.

Bourdieu warns that one must not expect that thinking about limits will enable one to think without limits²⁰⁶. Bourdieu contends that the limits of human understanding must be defined, not in universal terms, but in terms of their social constitution. At every moment, we are limited by social censorship. However, among the most rigorous censors, among those which are most difficult to get around, there are the internalized censors, the categories of thought which make a whole collection of things unthinkable, the categories

²⁰⁵ Bourdieu finds this especially true for the history and sociology of education and intellectuals. He writes in *Esquisse Pour Une Auto-Analyse* "I never tire of quoting Durkheim's 'the unconscious is history'" (2004b: 96).

²⁰⁶ Bourdieu believes that he discovered that one becomes a sociologist, a theoretician, so as to have an absolute point of view, a *theoria*; and that, for as long as it is unrecognized, this kingly, divine ambition is a tremendous cause of error. But the fact of knowing it, of knowing that one is investing personal impulses, linked with one's own whole life story, in her research, gives the researcher some small chance of knowing the limits of vision. In short, the problem of foundations cannot be raised in absolute terms, it is a question of degree and one can, according to Bourdieu, construct instruments to disentangle oneself, at least partly, from the relative. For him, the most important of these instruments is self-analysis, understood as knowledge not just from the point of view of the scientist, but also of his instruments of knowledge in their historically determinate aspects. That is why Bourdieu advocates that the analysis of the university in its structure and its history is also the most fertile of explorations of the unconscious.

of thought which determine that there is only black and white, and that grey areas do not exist. So, defining the limits of thought is not at all an exercise in pure speculation. There is nothing more practical for Bourdieu. At every instant, enormous scientific errors, which are never exposed in the texts on methodology, are born out of this internal censorship. This thinking about limits is not in any way an end in itself. Rather, it is, for Bourdieu, absolutely vital to the process of knowledge production. Each new development in the sociology of science tends to reinforce sociological science by increasing our knowledge of the social determinants of sociological thought, and thus the effectiveness of the critique that each person may bring to bear on the effects of these determinants on her own practice and on that of her rivals²⁰⁷.

Bourdieu disputes what he characterizes as classical philosophy's long-standing belief that we must look within the 'subject' for the conditions of objectivity and thus the limits of the objectivity he or she institutes. Reflexive sociology, on the other hand, teaches us that we must look within the object constructed by science for the social conditions of possibility of the 'subject' and for the possible limits of the intellectual's acts of objectivation. For Bourdieu, this sociology compels us to repudiate the absolutist claims of classical objectivity, but without being forced into the arms of relativism, since the conditions of possibility of the scientific 'subject' and of the scientific object are one and the same. Bourdieu argues that to be able to apply objectivating techniques to their own practice as they apply to others, sociologists have to convert reflexivity into a disposition constitutive of their scientific habitus, a reflexivity reflex, capable of acting not ex post, on the opus operatum, but a priori, on the modus operandi.

²⁰⁷ This is exemplified in Bourdieu's work *Homo Academicus* (1988a), where he sought to objectivize some of the social conditions of the academic field, revealing various types of social determinants.

This again is different than narcissistic reflexivity and could be called instead reformist reflexivity because it is not something done by one person alone; it can exert its full effect only if it is incumbent upon all the agents engaged in the field. Each researcher can apply on her own behalf the sociologically armed epistemological vigilance that can only be strengthened by generalizing the imperative of reflexivity and spreading the indispensable instruments for complying with it. This alone, according to Bourdieu, can institute reflexivity as the common law of the field, which would thus become characterized by a sociological critique of all, by all, that would intensify the effects of the epistemological critique of all, by all. Only then, he goes on, can there be a thoroughly reflexive sociology. This reformist conception of reflexivity, embodied in the collective, becomes a principle of epistemological prudence, making it possible to anticipate the probable chances of error.

He states that reflexivity serves not one, but two important purposes. The first, which has been covered extensively already, is a scientific function: reflexivity is not an end in itself, but a tool for the betterment of science.²⁰⁸ The second is where, for researchers reflecting upon and trying to understand the doxic elements of the scientific field through a study of classification systems, taxonomies, symbolic power, cultural capital and language, among other elements, reflexivity becomes inherently an emancipatory tool from the domination of ‘taken-for-granted’ and naturalized ideas. Bourdieu links his reflexivity to what he calls a responsible politics, both inside and outside academia. He is fond of quoting Bachelard that “there is no science but of that

²⁰⁸ Bourdieu differentiates his use of reflexivity from the forms of ‘reflexivity’ that he sees popular in the United States, especially in anthropology (he points to the books by Rosaldo (1989)) and in the sociology of science (he mentions Latour and Woolgar (1986), Latour (1988)), that he sees culminating in a sort of relativist nihilism.

which is hidden.” (Bourdieu 1989: 23) Bourdieu hopes that this effect of unveiling, carried out by reflexive sociology, will contribute to neutralizing mechanisms of occultation and misrecognition, particularly since the collective unconsciousness of intellectuals is the specific form taken by the complicity of intellectuals with the dominant sociopolitical forces. Bourdieu points out that the blindness of intellectuals to the social forces that rule the intellectual field, and therefore their practices explains how, collectively and often under quite radical airs, the intelligentsia contributes to the perpetuation of dominant forces.

For Bourdieu, intellectuals’ work is political through the reflexivity of questioning doxa. Doxa is present through the classification systems in society that embody a particular set of vision and division that can be otherwise²⁰⁹. Bourdieu argues that through the framing it imposes upon practices, the state plays an important role by establishing and inculcating common forms and categories of perception and appreciation, social frameworks of perceptions, of understanding or of memory, in short, state forms of classification. “It thereby creates the conditions for a kind of immediate orchestration of habitus, which is itself the foundation of a consensus over this set of shared evidences constitutive of (national) common sense”. (Bourdieu 1998: 54) By questioning doxa, intellectuals are doing their part in showing that things could be otherwise. The scientific function of sociology is to understand the social world, starting with the structures of power. This operation cannot be socially neutral, and undoubtedly fulfils a social function. Instead, by conceptualizing the space of the struggle for

²⁰⁹ He argues in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* that law “does no more than symbolically consecrate – by recording it in a form which renders it both eternal and universal – the structure of the power relation between groups and classes which is produced and guaranteed practically by the functioning of these mechanisms”. (1977: 188)

classification as it really is, and the position of the sociologists in this space, the sociologist becomes involved in the struggle for the construction and imposition of legitimate taxonomies. This implies a revision of the role of the sociologist.

This struggle is one over symbolic power. Bourdieu argues that intellectuals are involved and play an important political role partly because they hold a lot of symbolic power²¹⁰. The theory of knowledge is a dimension of political theory because the specifically symbolic power to impose the principles of the construction of reality, in particular, social reality, is a major dimension of political power. Symbolic power, for Bourdieu, borrowing Nelson Goodman's notion, is this power of 'worldmaking'. This entails "‘setting apart and putting together, often at the same time’, and which tends, when the social world is involved, to construct and impose the principles of division likely to conserve or transform this world by transforming the vision of its divisions and therefore of the groups which compose it and of their relations”²¹¹. (Bourdieu 1999: 186)

In a sense, it is a politics of perception that Bourdieu advocates, a politics aimed at maintaining or subverting the order of things by transforming or conserving the categories through which it is perceived, the words in which it is expressed. For Bourdieu, the effort to inform and orient perception and the effort to make explicit the practical experience of the world go hand in hand, since one of the stakes in the symbolic struggle is the power of knowledge, that is, power over the instruments of knowledge, the

²¹⁰ Related to this notion of intellectuals' symbolic power, Catherine Colliot-Thelene discusses in *La Sociologie Reflexive, l'Anthropologie, l'Histoire* (1995) the role of ethics in Bourdieu's reflexive sociology and highlights a distinction between his and Weber's approach to the separation of facts and values.

²¹¹ In *Distinction* (1984) Bourdieu further discusses this phenomenon and argues that principles of division, inextricably logical and sociological, functions within and for the purposes of the struggle between social groups. In producing concepts, they produce groups, the very groups which produce the principles and the groups against which they are produced. What is at stake in the struggles about the meaning of the social world is power over the classification systems, which are the basis of the representations of the groups and therefore of their mobilization and demobilization.

principles of division. At any given moment, these instruments and principles determine the vision of the world and hold the power to make see and make believe that this power of knowledge implies. This is the case for Bourdieu because “all power owes part of its efficacy - and not the least important part - to misrecognition of the mechanisms on which it is based”²¹². (Bourdieu 1993: 14)

For Bourdieu, the power of imposing a vision of social divisions on others depends on one’s possession of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is a credit that stems from other forms of capital such as social, cultural and economic capital and is granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition. This imposition of recognition, or misrecognition, is the power of worldmaking, the power of constitution, the power to construct doxa and the limits of the thinkable and unthinkable, the power to justify how things are. It refers to the symbolic power to legitimate the distribution of other forms of capital and, with that, legitimate various forms of domination²¹³.

Bourdieu points out that this symbolic power is greatly exercised through language. What we consider to be social reality is, to a great extent, representation or the product of representation, in all senses of the term²¹⁴. Furthermore, the sociologist’s language plays this game all the time, and with a particular intensity, derived from its scientific authority. For instance, Bourdieu argues that if, speaking with authority, an intellectual says that social classes exist, she contributes to making them exist. Also,

²¹² Bourdieu (1990b) argues that the science of classifications represents one of few chances we have of moving beyond the limits inscribed in a historical tradition.

²¹³ See Thomas Meisenhelder’s *Pierre Bourdieu and the Call for a Reflexive Sociology* (1997) for a more detailed discussion of Bourdieu’s use of various forms of capital, namely social, cultural, and economic, how they are converted into symbolic capital and the role it plays in the struggle for symbolic power.

²¹⁴ Bourdieu is fond of the saying: “when dealing with the social world, the ordinary use of ordinary language makes metaphysicians of us”. (1990b: 54)

according to Bourdieu, language poses a particularly dramatic problem for the sociologist. It is in effect an immense repository of naturalized preconstructions, preconstructions that are ignored as such and which can therefore function as unconscious instruments of construction. Language is full of taxonomies, age groups, young and old, or gender categories, for example, which sociologists use without thinking about them too much because they are the social categories of understanding shared by a whole society. As such, Bourdieu points out that for the progress of social scientific work, intellectuals need to pay particular attention to the language they use through the use of reflexivity.

Given this, according to Bourdieu the struggle to know reality scientifically must almost always begin with a struggle against words. Very often, in order to transmit knowledge, one has to use the very words that it was necessary to destroy in order to conquer and construct this knowledge²¹⁵. As such, Bourdieu advocates the use of 'open concepts' as a way of rejecting positivism. It is, to be more precise, a permanent reminder that concepts have no definitions other than systemic ones, and are designed to be put to work empirically in systematic fashion. Notions such as habitus, field, and capital can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation. For Bourdieu, sociological language cannot be either 'neutral' or 'clear'. In *Sociology in Question* he offers the example that the word 'class' will never be a neutral word so long as there are classes, for the question of the existence or non-existence of classes is a stake in struggle between the classes. The work of writing that is necessary in order to arrive at a rigorous and controlled use of language only rarely leads to clarity, or

²¹⁵ Bourdieu points out, ironically, that "you can see that inverted commas are pretty insignificant when it comes to mark such a major change in epistemological status". (Bourdieu 1990b: 54)

Bourdieu writes “the reinforcement of the self-evidences of common sense or the certainties of fanaticism”. (1993: 21) Thus, for Bourdieu, the need to resort to an artificial language is perhaps more compelling for sociology than for any other science. In order to break with the social philosophy that runs through everyday words, and also in order to express things that ordinary language cannot express, the sociologist has to resort to invented words, which are thereby protected, relatively at least, from the naive projections of common sense. To change the world, one has to change the ways of making the world, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced.

This implies for Bourdieu that sociologists need to be actively involved in the political struggle for symbolic capital and symbolic power²¹⁶. Sociology must unveil all that capital accomplishes, even if this means problematizing what capital accomplishes for sociology. A reflexive sociology is one that allows sociologists to free themselves from their presuppositions and from the misrecognition of their own positions and their interests. This freedom is a relative freedom from the social determinants that affect the conduct of research. This is the scientific contribution of reflexivity. The political contribution of reflexivity lies in revealing to people the things that determine them, and in doing so, opening up the possibility of identifying true sites of freedom. Reflexivity provides this freedom by drawing our attention to the very existence of constraints and limits on our thinking stemming from our habitus and our field. By endeavoring to

²¹⁶ Meisenhelder (1997) calls this Bourdieu’s general theory of power. He writes “a sociology of symbolic power works at revealing how the process of ‘misrecognition’ legitimates existing relations of domination. Symbolic forms—incorporated in the habitus-- shape how the world is di-visioned into significant or meaningful component classifications. Bourdieu emphasizes that the constitution of a meaningful representation of reality is the consequence of the struggle for symbolic power and that the various forms of capital are resources used in that struggle” (Meisenhelder 1997: 171).

intensify awareness of the limits that thought owes to its social conditions of production, and to destroy the illusion of the absence of limits to, or of freedom from, all determinations that leave thought defenseless against these determinations, reflexivity aims to offer the possibility of a real freedom with respect to the determinations that it reveals.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the history, nature, and role of Pierre Bourdieu's use and understanding of reflexivity. This was accomplished by looking at a broad selection of Bourdieu's work, from his empirical studies in Algeria and France, his contributions to the practice of Sociology, and to his more theoretical work. A substantial amount of writing, very diverse in nature, was analyzed through the prism of his development of the concept-practice of reflexivity. Bourdieu develops his reflexivity as a necessary tool for the advancement of social scientific work, as a way to return to the dispositions and presuppositions and pre-notions that intellectuals bring with them to their research through their social position, their academic habitus, and the influence of the intellectual field. Bourdieu seeks in reflexivity a mechanism that allows one to bring into consciousness what was previously only unconsciously present. However, his reflexivity also has a strong political dimension in that it helps problematize the naturalized vision of classification systems, taxonomies, symbolic power, symbolic capital, and language, on which various forms of domination rest. Reflexivity thus becomes an important emancipatory tool in the fight against misrecognition.

Building a Sociological Practice

This dissertation puts reflexivity to work by using it as a lens to ‘make sense’ of Mannheim’s, Garfinkel’s, Gouldner’s and Bourdieu’s sociology. I did not construct the accounts around the history, nature, and role of concept-practice of reflexivity within their respective sociology from an Archimedean point of view. I am not an impartial intellectual historian who holds no preconceived notion about what reflexivity is or is not, and simply describes the authors’ work as they ‘truly are’. I began this research with a definition of reflexivity that is one where the author acknowledges his or her own limitations and that recognition is reflected within their work. This definition stems from a reading of Mannheim’s writings on the perspectival nature of all knowledge, and from a humanist reading of Niklas Luhmann’s theory of distinction, where no accounts can escape that they are accounts from particular locations. This definition informed not only my choice of the topic of reflexivity as the potential key to unlocking the way to a non-foundational approach to sociology, but also my reading of each of these authors’ sociological careers. Whereas I started with a definition, my understanding of reflexivity broadened to include other and more varied formulations of the concept and practice from an engagement with these authors’ work.

In addition to contributing to contemporary sociological uses and understandings of reflexivity, Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu all placed reflexivity at the very center of their interest in sociology. For each of them, reflexivity is linked both to the nature and foundations of sociology and to the practice and reform of sociology, and thus reflexivity is intrinsically tied to methodological, epistemological, and ontological issues. Through Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge, Garfinkel’s ethnomethodology,

Gouldner's reflexive sociology, and Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, all seek to move beyond operating with the sociological tools and frameworks they found to reform sociology itself. I will now turn to a discussion of several elements I have extracted from their work and from a broader literature review on reflexivity, and for which I find their work useful to thinking about the practice of sociology. These include: the vision each author holds for the discipline of sociology; the historical and philosophical sensibilities displayed in their respective work; a discussion of language and education; the nature of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge and the role to be played by sociologists; and the ultimate goal each of their programs seeks to achieve. This discussion chapter highlights these various insights from these authors, along with their work on reflexivity, for the purposes of promoting a responsible, productive, and value-committed sociology and a concept-practice of reflexivity as humility.

Reflexivity

Karl Mannheim suggested that distantiation, when the unambiguous alignment of meanings ceases to be performed without difficulties and leads to new interpretations and to different ways of seeing things, is what led not only to reflexivity, but also to the rise of the scientific attitude. According to Mannheim, this distantiation is thus both the source of reflexivity and the birth of science; emergence of one is tied to the other. Sociology emerges by treating this distantiation as a systemic problem. From Romanticism, Mannheim argues that reflexivity emerges when individuals are confronted more frequently with situations in which they cannot act habitually and without thinking, where they must always organize themselves anew. Reflexivity is what allows individuals to adjust themselves to new situations.

A different type of reflexivity, however, anchors Mannheim's development of the sociology of knowledge. Under the theory of ideology, what was once used to discover the 'situational determination' of adversaries' ideas now, in the sociology of knowledge, extends to the every group's thought, including one's own. The extension of the notion of unmasking weapon to one's own thought accompanies the awareness that all thought is situationally determined. This is the reflexivity that defines Mannheim's program for the sociology of knowledge. The sociology of knowledge is tasked with solving the problem of the social conditioning of knowledge by recognizing these relations, by drawing them into the horizon of science, and by using them as checks on the conclusions of our research. This is in line with more contemporary and popular uses of reflexivity, which seek to bring previously unconscious factors to the level of consciousness in order to better understand, and perhaps even control, their effects. This process holds genuine opportunity for relative emancipation from social determination, by uncovering unconscious motivations in order to make those forces which formerly ruled them more and more into objects of conscious rational decision. The sociology of knowledge is then the systematization of this reflexivity.

Harold Garfinkel has a different use for reflexivity in his program of ethnomethodology. The main type of reflexivity associated with ethnomethodology is not reflexivity as self-reflection but is the reflexivity of practical social actions. This refers to the self-explicating, self-organizing character of members' actions. Essentially, people act and their actions affect the world. This affected world appears to people as an autonomous reality. It is external and constraining. Between social actions and this affected world, each is used to elaborate the other. Every act is at once both in a setting and at the same time creates the setting in which it appears and from which it derives its

meaning. We can then say that this reflexivity characterizes the mutual constitutive nature of action and the setting. Accounts of practical actions are reflexive because descriptions can be parts of what they describe, reflexivity is circular. This is the reflexivity that ethnomethodology has in mind.

An important feature of this reflexivity is that it is taken for granted by members. Members gloss over all the work they are involved in to sustain their shared constructed reality. What Garfinkel has found is that members are 'not interested' in studying practical actions. This would involve making observable the reflexive character of their practical activities. For the members, witnessed settings have an accomplished sense, an accomplished facticity, an accomplished objectivity, an accomplished familiarity, and an accomplished accountability. These accomplishments are unproblematic, are known vaguely, and are known only in the doing, which is done skillfully, reliably, uniformly, with enormous standardization, and as an unaccountable matter. This is why Garfinkel refers to accomplishments as the uninteresting reflexivity of accounts, because to be interested in the reflexive character of social action transforms what is otherwise a practical activity into another type of activity. Thus the uninteresting taken-for-granted nature of the reflexivity of accounts helps make an activity what it is. This is why Garfinkel calls it an essential reflexivity. The role of sociology is making this accomplishment a topic of practical sociological inquiry, which involves treating the rational properties of practical activities as 'anthropologically strange' by treating it as a problematic and by making its reflexivity observable. Ethnomethodology is about locating and examining the occurrence of the reflexivity of the phenomenon in order to understand how these activities contribute to the problem of social order. Reflexivity here is again at the very heart of Garfinkel's vision of sociology.

Alvin Gouldner develops his reflexive sociology to combat what he identifies as an asymmetry, in which the behaviors of those who are studied are seen to be shaped by their surroundings while the sociologist's own behavior is held to be immune to social pressures. Gouldner rejects this asymmetry and argues for the extension of the tools of analysis used in studying others to be applied to sociologists themselves. Gouldner conceives of two important relationships where the nature of society is influenced by the social theories about it, which are in turn shaped by the social theorists who conjure those theories. This focus on the relationship between social theories and social theorists is born out in Gouldner's rejection of methodological dualism, a stance that focuses on the differences between the social scientist and those whom he observes and tends to ignore their similarities by taking them as given. Gouldner sees methodological dualism as calling for a separation of the subject and object for fear of contamination. It assumes that values, interests, and commitments can never be anything but blinders. Gouldner believes that methodological dualism entails a fantasy of the sociologist's godlike invisibility. He contrasts this with the methodological monism of his reflexive sociology, which requires that one must become aware of oneself as both knower and agent of change.

For Gouldner then, the failure of intellectuals to acknowledge their role in shaping social theory reflects a lack of reflexivity. What Gouldner is advocating is a sociology of sociology, one that deepens the sociologist's awareness of who and what she is, as a member of a specific society at a given time, and how this affects her work. For Gouldner this means proposing a Reflexive Sociology which accepts the dangers of value-commitment. It does so by confronting the problem of 'value-free' sociology from two directions. On the one hand, Reflexive Sociology denies the possibility of a value-free sociology. On the other, it sees the dangers of value-committed sociology when hostile

information is ignored. Gouldner believes that sociology is better off ending in distortion than beginning in it. The sociologist must acknowledge that her personal reality plays a role by investigating her own domain and background assumptions. Gouldner's reflexivity is again at the very heart of his vision for sociology, one that re-conceives notions of objectivity, and rejects whole-heartedly notions of objectivism.

Pierre Bourdieu also links reflexivity with awareness. However, he discusses reflexivity as an awareness of three different kinds of presuppositions on the part of scientific researchers. To start, a researcher's work is affected by presuppositions stemming from his position in the social space, such as class and gender. Then there are the influences that are constitutive of the *doxa* specific to each of the different fields, such as disciplinary fields, and more precisely, those that each particular thinker owes to his position in a field. Finally, there are the presuppositions constituting the *doxa* generically associated with the *scholè*, leisure and a particular relationship with time, which is the condition of existence of all scholarly fields. Together these presuppositions form what Bourdieu calls the scholastic fallacy. Bourdieu's conception and use of reflexivity is to combat the lack of awareness on the part of researchers of the theory-practice distinction, the intellectual habitus they bring to their research, not to mention the *doxic* elements of the intellectual field.

Bourdieu suggests that to minimize the scholastic fallacy, researchers must know the limits of theoretical knowledge and must accompany all scientific accounts with an account of the limits and limitations of scientific accounts. Reflexivity allows intellectuals to guard themselves against what he calls epistemocentrism, the ethnocentrism of the scientist, which is the counter-balance to the pre-reflexive habitus. Bourdieu suggests that one cannot control the first movement of thought, the habitus

(pre-reflexive), but one can control the second movement of thought, reflexivity.

Reflexivity is, for Bourdieu, first and foremost a tool to be used by researchers in order to advance the progress of social scientific work. Bourdieu sees in reflexivity the road that leads to more freedom from various types of hidden determinations: one linked to a researcher's social position, one linked with the doxa of a particular scientific field, and one linked with the skhole of the scholastic field. Reflexivity, by facilitating reflection on these social determinants, allows researchers to understand the impact of all these interlinked scientific errors. Bourdieu points out that reflexivity can lead to questioning the specific logic and the social conditions of possibility of scientific knowledge in the social sciences. Bourdieu places his concept-practice of reflexivity at the very heart of his vision for the practice of sociology, one that involves an objectivation of those presuppositions, and around which he develops his program of Reflexive Sociology.

Nature of Sociology

In their own way, Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu, each propose a vision of how sociology ought to be practiced and then demonstrate these approaches through the conduct of their own work. While all of these authors operate within their own particular fields, none are totally content with working within those fields and rather seek to understand the limitations of these respective fields, what they did and did not allow. Each author seeks to overcome the perceived limits in the pursuit of their craft, to build on the existing theoretical and methodological traditions. For Mannheim those traditions are historicism and Marxism, for Garfinkel, structuralism and phenomenology, for Gouldner, Marxism and structuralism, and for Bourdieu, existentialism and structuralism.

Karl Mannheim's vision of sociology is as the basic discipline of social science, one which needs to retrace the variability of social phenomena to those basic elements that make society possible, to compare those across different societies in history, and to provide a comprehensive synthesis of all the facts produced by the various social sciences. Mannheim had a long standing interest in sociology as synthesis, as trying to apprehend totality. His own sociology of knowledge was an attempt to synthesize the finiteness of the socially determined partial perspectives. In so doing, the sociology of knowledge seeks to analyze the relationship between knowledge and existence.

Reflexivity is at the heart of this approach by acknowledging the perspectival nature of all knowledge, by rejecting the false ideal of a detached, impersonal point of view. The goal of the sociology of knowledge is constantly to seek to understand and interpret particular insights from an ever more inclusive context. This takes place from a standpoint which itself is historical, an aspect that has drawn me to Mannheim's work from the beginning. Sociology is about making conscious the principles on which society's institutions mold the character of people, and with the help of systematically gathered knowledge, reorganizing these institutions.

Harold Garfinkel argues that sociology's role is to understand how the common sense world of everyday life is possible. The task of sociological inquiry is to locate and define these features that persons may not be aware of, what Garfinkel calls the background expectancies. This is what Garfinkel develops ethnomethodology to do, to study the reflexive rational properties of practical actions as they occur within actual contexts, to demonstrate that social order is constituted by members in everyday life. Sociology is about making this reflexivity observable. Garfinkel moves ethnomethodology away from being a theory of signs and representing social order, to

focusing instead on exhibiting social order by paying the kind of attention to the most commonplace activities of daily life normally afforded only to extraordinary events. Garfinkel sees ethnomethodology as working out 'what more' there is to formal analytic investigation than formal analysis has been, or will ever be, able to provide. This means investigating the 'et cetera' principle and 'ad hocing', invariant features of everyday activities, including sociological practice. Part of Garfinkel's lasting contribution to the sociological literature is showing that the practice of science itself relies on these background expectancies. What Garfinkel's ethnomethodological studies find is that despite the meticulous and detailed instructions that scientists follow, there is 'something more' involved than what is laid out in formal accounts of scientific methods. In this manner, ethnomethodology is thus a foundational discipline, for it demonstrates the ways in which various scientific practices compose themselves through vernacular conversations and the ordinariness of embodied disciplinary activities.

Alvin Gouldner is interested not only in practicing sociology, but also in proposing particular visions of how sociology ought to be practiced by others. Gouldner writes extensively about the history of the discipline of sociology and social theorists as a way to understand society itself, and sees himself as offering a critique of sociology and its dominating theoretical products. In the early part of his career, this involved amending Weber's theory of bureaucracy, then uncovering, reflecting on, and making visible the assumptions underlying Parsons' structural-functionalist approach, before ultimately attempting to 'make sense' of the contradictions and fragmentation present in Marxism. Gouldner finds sociology's mission, as found in Marxist epistemology, to be 'transformative criticism', a critique that entails demystification, a mission I wholeheartedly support. Gouldner attempts a demystification of Marxism by turning the tools

of Marxism against it, what he would eventually call his reflexive sociology. This is very reminiscent of Mannheim's own move away from the Marxist theory of ideology. Gouldner's reflexive sociology rejects objectivism, a discourse that one-sidedly focuses on the object while occluding the speaking subject. His reflexive sociology requires an understanding of the 'whole scientist', his personal reality and background and domain assumptions. The ultimate goal of reflexive sociology is this deepening of the sociologist's own awareness, bringing into focal awareness what was previously only unspoken and indeed sometimes unknown. In this way, and in others, Gouldner's vision for sociology is as a value-committed, rather than value-free, discipline. This involves, then, a re-conception of the discipline of sociology around a new form of objectivity, one which requires knowledge about oneself. In both forms of objectivity, knowledge is not a simple process of retrieval, but rather entails a measure of struggle in and with the sociologist's self. Gouldner's vision for a desirable objectivity is one firmly rooted in a form of partisanship, in a standpoint, in the standpoint of the outsider.

Pierre Bourdieu is first and foremost concerned with the progress and the limits of social scientific work. He is thus concerned with the presuppositions underlying sociological practice through the researcher's habitus and the doxa present in the discipline. The concept of habitus is also important to the development of social scientific work because it gives a new perspective on doing research; since subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing, what they do has more meaning than they know. The habitus is the universalizing mediation that causes an individual agent's practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less 'sensible' and 'reasonable'. Habitus works within the scope of fields, and these are at the heart of Bourdieu's relational sociology. His reflexive sociology is built around promoting an

awareness of the presuppositions found in the intellectual field and everything that entails. A genuinely reflexive social science, which is what Bourdieu proposes, gives its practitioners appropriate motives and appropriate weapons for grasping and fighting the social and historical determinants of scientific practice. Bourdieu argues that one cannot avoid having to objectify the objectifying subject. Reflexive sociology, for Bourdieu, is far from destroying its own foundations when it brings to light the social determinants that the logic of the fields of production brings to bear on all cultural productions. Rather, it claims an epistemological privilege that is conferred by way of being able to reinvest its own scientific gains in scientific practice in the form of sociological increase in epistemological vigilance.

This is why, in Bourdieu's view, the history of sociology, understood as an exploration of the scientific unconscious of the sociologist through the explication of the genesis of problems, categories of thought, and instruments of analysis, constitutes an absolute prerequisite for scientific practice. Bourdieu, as much as anyone else, lays out a compelling set of matters for sociologists to consider in the conduct of their own work.

Historical and Philosophical Sensibility

Another element of these authors' work I find useful in the fashioning of sociological practice is the historical and philosophical sensibilities their work contains. The sociological literature on reflexivity is full of accounts situating reflexivity at the very heart of epistemology and ontology (Sandywell 1996; Outhwaite 1999; Luhmann 2002; Doucet 2008), discussing reflexivity and its link with realism and the crisis of representation (Woolgar 1988; Délanty 1997; Pels 2000), along with discussions about reflexivity and the possibility of objectivity (Bonner 1998; Stern 2000; Letherby 2002).

In offering their own vision for the practice of sociology, Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu also each display an interest in epistemology and ontology that echoes my own interests.

The concern with *Weltanschauung* leads Karl Mannheim to become interested in epistemology. He rejects pure logic as the adjudicator of the validity of all epistemologies, and instead seeks to study the forms that epistemology takes, to make the presuppositions of epistemologies an object of sociological knowledge. His sociology of knowledge embodies the theory of perspectivity found in historicism that claims that every epoch has its own aspirations, concrete values, and standards. Those standards, including epistemology and the theory of truth, are not an absolute, superhuman and super-temporal sphere of validity, but instead are localized and dynamic. This dynamic conception of truth is at the center of Mannheim's development of relationism as a middle ground between objectivism on the one hand and relativism on the other. Mannheim proposes to re-conceive the relationship between epistemology and empirical science. He argues that new forms of knowledge grow out of the conditions of collective life and that their emergence does not depend upon previous demonstration that they are possible according to a theory of knowledge. The development of theories of scientific knowledge takes place within the preoccupation with empirical data, meaning that revolutions in methodology and epistemology follow from revolutions in the immediate empirical procedures for getting knowledge. This represents an epistemology that emphasizes the prevalence of situational determination, an epistemology whose theoretical basis of knowledge is founded on the thesis of the inherently relational structure of human knowledge. Mannheim's early discussions of epistemology are what made him the original author in my pursuit of this project.

Much like Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology comes with important ontological and epistemological implications. Garfinkel is fundamentally interested in how we conceive the relationship between the theories that we make about concrete objects and the concrete objects themselves. The answer to this question is the very heart of his development of ethnomethodology, which is a phenomenologically inspired sociology. Garfinkel rejects the correspondence theory of reality in favor of what he calls the congruence theory of reality. He adopts the latter because he argues that the perceived object of the 'outer world' is the concrete object, and that the two terms mean precisely the same thing. There is no approximated reality since the world is just as it appears; there is nothing behind it. From this perspective, the ways in which something is of interest to a witness are all of the ways in which that thing is real. Concreteness is found in the object constituted as a unity of meanings and not in the sensory characters through which the object is apprehended. Garfinkel understands the world as intersubjective, one that offers a texture of meaning which we must interpret in order to find our bearings within it. From this, the implication for social science is that in order to portray the actor's actions we need to know how things look to him, to understand what significance he attaches to the things of his world or worlds. Hence, it means rejecting any notions regarding how the world 'really' is, which for Garfinkel also means rejecting ontology designed to measure the actor's deviation from 'true reality' and 'true objectivity'. Ethnomethodology, rather than being concerned with the truth value of statements about the world, is instead attempting to determine the practices that make any statement true. This pragmatic approach to truth, as established in action, is very much in line with the type of sociology I want to practice.

Alvin Gouldner similarly rejects the platonic assumption that truth exists to be uncovered, and instead holds a vision of truth as only that which is judged by members of a theoretical community to have survived the baptism of criticism. He presents truth as practical reason, as something that can be used towards the transformation of daily life, something that can lead towards a new emancipatory sociology. Truth-claims are to be understood as proposals and counterproposals in a dialogue, and in a community, of the interested who share a culture of critical discourse. Given the concern, then, with the consensual grounding of truth-claims, the production of truth has an inescapably political dimension. This means a rejection of objectivism and re-introducing the speaker as a crucial element of the equation. This is the basis of Gouldner's own reflexive sociology, an awareness of the constitutive role played by the subject in the production of truth. Truth thus is not eternal, cannot be derived from reason and logic alone. Society's members and sociologists do not merely describe and comprehend the world, they constitute the world and order society. Gouldner's reflexive sociology requires sociologists to take responsibility for their role in the constitution of social theories, of society, and to recognize the social nature of knowledge. I will return to this notion of responsibility.

Inspired by Bachelard's philosophy of science, Pierre Bourdieu speaks of the fundamental scientific fact as won, constructed, and confirmed. The fact is won, constructed, confirmed, in and through the communication among subjects; that is to say, through the process of verification and collective production of truth, in and through negotiation. Bourdieu espouses the view that a fact truly becomes a scientific fact only if it is recognized as such, and that the construction is socially determined in a twofold way. On the one hand, it is determined by the position of the laboratory or scientist within the

field; on the other, by the categories of perception associated with the position of the receiver. Bourdieu embraces an epistemology that is intrinsically linked to practice, one that both informs and is informed by it. The conception of science Bourdieu advocates is centered on the 'epistemological obstacles' as labeled by Bachelard, which are social and mental obstacles standing in the way of scientific knowledge and also of the construction of the autonomous scientific object. One has to exercise epistemological vigilance in order to overcome these epistemological obstacles. It is this notion of epistemological vigilance from the history of science that Bourdieu imports into the sociological field and eventually names reflexivity. Bourdieu wants to promote the position that the object of social science is a reality that encompasses all the individual and collective struggles aimed at conserving or transforming reality. Truth is antagonistic. Bourdieu points out that there are social conditions for the production of truth, that is to say that there is a politics of truth. Bourdieu develops his reflexive sociology as a valuable tool for uncovering the social conditions in which sociological works are produced.

Language

Another element I am pulling from these authors that I find key in understanding the discipline is their respective discussions of language and the role some of them attribute to education. Many authors in the sociological literature on reflexivity speak about the links between reflexivity and language (Roche 1975; Lawson 1985; Steier 1991; Marcus 1994; Hertz 1996; Denzin 1997; Davies et al. 2004). Language is another element anchored in my four authors' vision of sociology that I find to be key in understanding the discipline. Mannheim does not write extensively about language, but he does argue that language and concepts play an important role in mediating the

relationships between individuals, as language brings articulation and fixation into the stream of conjunctive experience. He discusses language in the context of the constitution of the self from social existence. Alvin Gouldner is also interested in the role of language in constructing social reality and establishing the given. Part of Gouldner's solution passes through multilinguality, which he sees as enhancing our reflexivity about, and ability to elude the limits of, any one of our languages. This is so because it changes our awareness of language in terms of how communication and social reality are language constructed and language mediated. This enhanced reflexivity means a greater self-awareness concerning the rules to which one submits and leads to more autonomy. However, there are probably very definite limits on any individual's capacity to reflect upon the assumptions underlying her own use of language, just as there are limits to an individual's capacity to reflect on the assumptions underlying her own critique of other's assumptions. I will return to this notion when speaking about humility.

Harold Garfinkel speaks at length about the constitutive nature of language. Language is one phenomenon where reflexivity and indexicality are both apparent. Language is reflexive in that it is constitutive of the circumstances it describes, and it is indexical in that its meaning is derived from the context in which it occurs. Everyday language shows properties of indexical expressions whose sense cannot be decided by an author without him necessarily knowing or assuming something about the biography and purposes of the user of the expression, the circumstances of the utterance, and the particular relationship between the interlocutors. The use of natural language extends and elaborates indefinitely to the circumstances it glosses and in this way contributes to its own accountable, sensible character. Garfinkel argues that what he calls glossing practices are an inevitable phase of interactional enterprises, for example, 'et cetera',

‘unless’, ‘let it pass’ are inevitable parts of the use of language. With its reflexive and indexical character, language plays a crucial role in the intelligibility of social action to members.

Pierre Bourdieu brings attention to how symbolic power is exercised through language as another important aspect of language. What we consider to be social reality is, to a great extent, representation or the product of representation, in all senses of the term. Bourdieu points out that the divisions performed by ordinary vocabulary are full of unconscious and uncontrolled preconstructions that may find their way into sociological discourse. Language is full of taxonomies such as age groups, young and old, or gender categories for example, which sociologists use without thinking about them too much because they are the social categories of understanding shared by a whole society. So the struggle to know reality scientifically must always begin with a struggle against words. Failure to subject ordinary language, the primary instrument of the construction of the world, to a methodological critique entails the risk of mistaking objects pre-constructed in and by ordinary language for data. As such, Bourdieu advocates the use of ‘open concepts’ as a way of rejecting positivism. It is, to be more precise, a permanent reminder that concepts have no definitions other than systemic ones, and are designed to be put to work empirically in systematic fashion. For Bourdieu, sociological language cannot be either ‘neutral’ or ‘clear’. In order to break with the social philosophy that runs through everyday words, and also in order to express things that ordinary language cannot express, the sociologist has to resort to invented words, which are thereby protected, relatively at least, from the naive projections of common sense. To change the world, one has to change the ways of making the world, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced. Given this multiple

nature of truth, Bourdieu points out that all sociological statements should be preceded by a sign announcing 'it is as if' and should function in the same way as quantifiers in logic, which would continually remind us of the epistemological status of the constructed concepts of objective science.

Bourdieu expands on this constitutive role of language by speaking about the education system's key role in producing the taxonomies and categories of thought with which ordinary language is imbued. The task Bourdieu sets for sociology involves tackling the education system and the homogeneous categories of perception, thought, and action that it propagates. Bourdieu advocates for an education that produces, if not a new person, then at least a new gaze, a sociological eye, one that embraces the open, supple, elastic, and multiple ways in which to understand a phenomenon. This interest in the sociology of education is shared by Mannheim, who sees education's task as not merely to develop people who are adjusted to the present situation, but who discover their own affairs within the affairs of distant people, and who penetrate another point of view by redefining their own. The goal of education is the expansion of the self through participation in a multi-polar culture, where one individual may live more than her own life and think more than her own thoughts. This involves the education system fostering a form of skepticism understood as a state of fruitful uncertainty. Mannheim expands the realm of education beyond formal education to articulate a broader, generalized notion of social education where this should take place.

Theory-Practice Divide and Role of Intellectuals

Another element I draw from these authors is their work and thoughts on the nature of theoretical knowledge compared to practical knowledge and their take on the

role of sociologists and intellectuals. Many other authors in sociological literature link discussions of reflexivity to what is called the expert-lay divide (Giddens 1994b; Wynne 1996; Walker 1998; Mesny 1998; Burawoy 2005). Mannheim, Garfinkel and Bourdieu write extensively about the distinction between the practical knowledge of the everyday and the theoretical knowledge of scientists, while Mannheim, Gouldner and Bourdieu write extensively about the role of intellectuals and sociologists.

Mannheim asks why we crave theoretical knowledge of something that we already experience directly, unmarred by the intrusion of theoretical interest. He argues that we crave this knowledge because, while aesthetic, religious, and ethical experiences spring from an atheoretical realm, they nonetheless find expression through the most elaborate theoretical exercise. Theorizing, then, does not start with science, but instead takes pre-scientific everyday experience and injects it with bits of theory. As such theory finds its proper place, its justification and meaning, in the realm of immediate, concrete experience, in the realm of the atheoretical. This has important consequences when theoretical thought seeks to superimpose a logical, theoretical pattern upon experiences that are already patterned under other categories.

Harold Garfinkel is particularly interested in what gets lost in this process of translation from atheoretical to theoretical realms, and how what cannot get translated is assigned residual status in most social theories. Garfinkel distinguishes between two types of rationalities and compares the common sense rationality to the idea of scientific rationality. These distinctive rationalities are embodied in two cognitive styles, the 'natural attitude' or 'attitude of daily life', and the 'scientific attitude'. With the natural attitude an actor does not seek to understand the world simply for the sake of understanding, but rather for the sake of realizing her practical plans. Her engagement

with the world is governed by pragmatic purposes. Moreover, the natural attitude has a specific time perspective; it is what Garfinkel calls 'time-bound' in the sense that the stream of experience occurs within a temporal scheme where the inner time of memory and expectations 'intersects' with the standard time measured by clocks, as well as through the bodily movements of the actor. The scientific attitude, on the other hand, suspends the belief that the world is just as it appears rather than suspending doubt about the world as it is. This means a very different relationship with the world, one that is populated by open possibilities and minimizes the taken-for-granted elements that are such a central feature of the attitude of daily life. The world is seen as an object of contemplation, one that requires certain disengagement, focused on providing solutions to problems at hand for the sake of the solution and not for the sake of the pragmatic consequences of the solution. The actor in the scientific attitude suspends her 'subjectivity', the relevance of personal position, by depicting a world by definition.

Bourdieu speaks about the distinction between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge in very similar ways. I whole-heartedly support Bourdieu's drive not only to understand people's own understanding of their practices rather than seeking to replace them with a more thorough and complete explanation of their behavior, but also his attempt to 'make sense' of the gap between intellectual theories about, and people's own understanding of, these practices. Bourdieu labels this theoretical understanding theoretical logic, to be contrasted with practical logic, or the practical aims of practical understanding. Theory has totalizing and abstracting effects, creates more coherence than was already present, and finally, detemporalizes action. So a responsible reflexive sociology must acknowledge within its theory this gap between theory and practice.

So the sociology of knowledge proposed by Mannheim and the reflexive sociologies proposed by Gouldner and Bourdieu attribute a crucial role to intellectuals and/or sociologists. For Mannheim, intellectuals are the only group who can carry out the truly dynamic comprehensive synthesis that reflexivity and others' insights of the sociology of knowledge demand. This social group embodies a type of thought that does not arise primarily from the struggle with concrete problems of life, but through its own need for systematization, through a contemplative attitude towards the social world. It emerges out of a certain kind of distanciation from life which is the source of reflexivity. This is key to the emergence of doubt, and eventually skepticism, in the taken-for-granted nature of everyday life. The intelligentsia is thus a social group whose defining characteristic is that it possesses a multipolarity of views. This comes about through the process of education. Knowledge gained from education is the result of dedicated attention, instead of the spontaneous result of practical problems arising in everyday life. The role of intellectuals is continually to reconsider things, to see total situations where others see only particular ones, in order to make the case for self-expansion. This requires making the structure of society as transparent as possible. The purpose of intellectuals, then, is to diagnose and prognosticate, to discover choices when they arise, and to understand and locate various points of view. Due their position, their task is to offer this synthesis and a vision of the totality of society.

Up to this point, we can agree with Mannheim. This assigns a specific role to intellectuals, and insofar as it is unique, this role stems from their sociological locations. Theoretically, other individuals in society who share some of these sociological characteristics would also be able to accomplish the mission attributed to intellectuals. Where disagreement arises is with Mannheim's further characterization of intellectuals.

He argues that the modern intellectual embodies a dynamic bent, one prepared continually to revise his views in the face of new facts or perspectives. That is not something that Mannheim supports empirically. Neither is the claim that intellectuals go through common educational heritage which progressively suppresses differences of birth, status, profession, and wealth. Mannheim is famous for claiming that modern intellectuals are 'relatively' unattached, although he stresses that this group is not free of class liaisons as some of his critics have read in his work. It is however relatively unattached compared to the situation in the Middle Ages, where membership in a monopoly of the ecclesiastical interpretation of the world was far more closed and cohesive than the intelligentsia in modern time. The intelligentsia draws its members from a broader set of social strata and life-situations, and thus its mode of thought is no longer subject to regulation by a caste-like organization. That is likely true, and yet I cannot help but feel that Mannheim takes the distinction too far. I would label intellectuals as 'differently' attached more than 'relatively' unattached.

Gouldner similarly sees a special role that needs to be played by intellectuals. Gouldner's ultimate goal is the transformation of society, which must take place through a transformation of social theories about society, and thus requires understanding the role played by social theorists. Much theory-work begins with an effort to make sense of one's experience. In this regard, Gouldner develops a set of conceptual tools to study the influence of social theorists on social theories: the distinction between analytics and theory, the concept of personal realities, and the concept of background and domain assumptions. Above all, Gouldner's reflexive sociology means viewing our own beliefs as we now view those held by others. It means a certain breakdown of the sociologist-layperson distinction. Gouldner proposes the promotion of knowledge as awareness

(episteme) through access to hostile information. The promotion of this awareness is born of a capacity to overcome one's own existence, and it cannot be given or received, only facilitated. Knowing as awareness means we do not discover the truth in external world, but through experience.

This is again so far agreeable in terms of Gouldner's push towards a sociology where its proponents recognize the active role they are playing in constituting their theories and models, and as such, the social world around them. I support Gouldner's push for sociologists to create tensions with conventional definitions of social reality and open up spaces for alternative concepts of the possible. However, Gouldner, like Mannheim, goes further in laying out the necessary conditions and roles of an intellectual and theoretical community. He argues that the goal of a theoretical collective should be to establish new social and human conditions to sustain rational discourse about social worlds. According to Gouldner, theorists should seek out involvements with and on behalf of specific social strata in directions compatible with human emancipation. They should engage themselves politically in ways that bring them into tension, conflict, opposition, and resistance to established authority, institutions and culture. Theorists should collaborate with, but remain autonomous from movements or parties who share a common commitment to human emancipation. Gouldner identifies what he called the New Class in Western Europe to achieve these goals, but finds that ultimately it falls short. I believe these goals are both too ambitious and too narrow in scope. Gouldner's plan for a theoretical collective working together is I believe is both unrealistic and undesirable. Intellectuals hold different values and personal realities and use their position towards a variety of different goals. The type of theoretical collective Gouldner has in mind presupposes the existence of some common objectives to which most, if not

all, intellectuals can agree to. Contemporary debates in sociology about the very nature of discipline, and its role in society, make it clear that such a common unifying objectives are not present.

Bourdieu also proposes a sociology of intellectuals, one that he labels participant objectivation. This entails breaking with the deepest and most unconscious adherences and adhesions, those that quite often give the object its very 'interest' for those who study it. This involves objectivation of the observer by the observer, a radical auto-critique. Bourdieu lays out participant objectivation as work to be carried out at three levels. First, one has to objectify the position of the subject of objectivation in the overall social space, her original position and trajectory, her membership of and commitment to social and religious groups. Then, one has to objectivate the position she occupies within the field of specialists (and the position of this field, this discipline, in the field of the social sciences), as each discipline has its own traditions, obligatory problematics, habits of thought, shared beliefs and self-evidences, rituals and consecrations, constraints regarding publication of findings, and its specific forms of censorship, not to mention the whole set of presuppositions inscribed in the collective history of the specialty (the academic unconscious). Third, one has to objectivate everything that is linked to membership in the scholastic universe, paying particular attention to the illusion of the absence of illusion, to the pure, absolute, 'disinterested' point of view. The sociology of intellectuals brings to light the particular form of interest, which is the interest in disinterestedness. Uncovering the presuppositions of the researchers is a crucial step in the betterment of scientific practice for Bourdieu because it is only then that one can become aware of the constraints and limitations on one's own thought.

I am skeptical about all of the scientific virtues of the conduct of participant objectivation and socio auto-analysis as advocated by Bourdieu. While Bourdieu recognizes in at least two different passages during the course of his publishing career that a single researcher cannot grasp his own 'blind spot' or, in other words, cannot fully map out the limitations inherent in his field, and thus cannot overcome these limitations, through most of Bourdieu's writing one is left with the impression that an individual researcher can effect a genuine constructive return on his own field and overcome its limitations. I believe Bourdieu displays some ambivalence between, on the one hand, the ability of a single researcher to effect a return on his 'blind spot', and on the other hand, the possibility of a sociological community of researchers to effect a return on the limitations inherent in its field. Bourdieu emphasizes too heavily the amount of progress for social scientific work that can be found within the scope of the individual. He hovers too closely to what I would term an internalist accountability for sociological work, where it is within the scope of individual researchers to overcome the limitations inherent in their particular fields and from their particular habitus through the process of socio auto-analysis, participant objectivation, and reflexivity. I am much more supportive of what I would term an externalist accountability for sociological work where it would be within the scope of a community of researchers that each researcher can overcome the limitations inherent in their particular field and from their particular habitus through contestation, conflict and the debate of opposing theories. This gets to the heart of the distinction I will draw between individual and collective forms of reflexivity on the one hand, and reflexivity as transparency versus reflexivity as humility on the other. I will expand on these distinctions shortly.

Ultimate Goal(s) of Sociology

The final element from these authors to which I want to draw attention is the ultimate goal behind their respective visions for sociology. Three of these authors, Mannheim, Gouldner, and Bourdieu, have their sights set not only on reforming sociology for its own sake, but on reforming sociology as a gateway to transforming society as a whole. Only Garfinkel's goals are of a different nature: to better understand society. Garfinkel sees his ethnomethodology as a respecifying of Durkheim's aphorism, where the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental principle. Garfinkel views his program as the heir to Durkheim's neglected legacy in focusing on the problem of how social order is constituted in everyday life. For Garfinkel, sociology must ultimately turn its attention to the locally and reflexively produced, naturally accountable phenomena of order. This means studying social order in service lines, entering freeway traffic streams, pedestrian crowd street crossings, walking together, conversational turn-taking, jurors' work; in other words, everyday social interactions of all kinds. His vision of sociology is ultimately based on ethnomethodological indifference which precludes descriptions of members as irrational or inferior in any way. In fact, it precludes valuations of any kind. I do not believe ethnomethodology, or any other sociology, can claim to be a purely descriptive and not interpretive enterprise. As Mannheim points out, even syntheses are offered from particular social locations. And as Gouldner explains, everyone has background and domain assumptions, which means that value-free science is not an option. Ethnomethodologists have their own interpretive horizons that differ from society's members. Sociologists must take responsibility for their role in the production of accounts, even while attempting to produce accounts that are more faithful to the logic of practice, to borrow Bourdieu's vocabulary. In any case, I whole-heartedly

support the politicized nature of Mannheim, Gouldner, and Bourdieu's respective visions of sociology. The goal of sociology should not simply be to understand the world as it is, but to change it. Each of these three authors holds different meaning of what a value-committed vision for sociology entails, but they all argue for the practice of sociology in the pursuit of greater objectives.

The goal of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is ultimately what he calls planning for democratic freedom, which is built around the principle that all individuals embody the same ontological principle of human-ness. Mannheim's concern with the social implications of the transformation of society had its roots in the most recent war whose consequences were just being fully felt. The essentials of democratic planning require a vision of social life in its totality and require new institutions, new men and women, and new values. Planning for freedom means controlling the fields of social growth on which the smooth functioning of society depends, while at the same time consciously leaving free areas that contain the greatest opportunity for creative development and individualization. Planning for freedom means, with the help of science, finding out what kinds of education and social constellations offer the greatest chance of kindling initiative and the will to determine and shape oneself. This planning should be planning for the many as opposed to the few, for social justice and equality rather than privilege, planning not for a classless society, but for one that abolishes the extremes of wealth and poverty, for progress without discarding valuable tradition, for balance between centralization and dispersion of power, and for gradual transformation of society in order to encourage the growth of personality.

Gouldner's entire reflexive sociology is geared towards laying out the conditions for the transformation of society towards emancipation. It will be impossible either to

emancipate people from the old society or to build a humane new one, without beginning the construction of total counter-culture, including new social theories. Only when dominant social theories are thoroughly critiqued will individuals in society be able to rid themselves of their false consciousness and emancipate themselves. Knowledge is simultaneously one of the best hopes we have for a humane social reconstruction and at the same time acts as a historically shaped force that embodies particular limits. One of the key goals of a reflexive sociology is challenging dominant definitions of social reality as represented by news-making agencies. Reflexive sociology's task is recovering the wholeness by, paradoxically, stressing one-sidedly the repressed and silenced side of reports. This means both being critical of good news, those contributing to a social reality congenial to power which are the focus of less critical eyes, and also helping persons maintain access and accept bad news, or what Gouldner calls 'hostile information'. The goal is a transformation of society by increasing the realm of the possible.

Bourdieu's reflexivity also has a strong political dimension in that it helps to problematize the naturalized vision on which various forms of domination rest. Bourdieu argues that through the framing it imposes upon practices, the state plays an important role by establishing and inculcating common forms and categories of perception and appreciation, social frameworks of perceptions, of understanding or of memory, in short, state forms of classification. By questioning doxa, intellectuals are doing their part to show that things could be otherwise. The scientific function of sociology is to understand the social world, starting with the structures of power. This operation cannot be socially neutral, and undoubtedly fulfils a social function. Instead, by conceptualizing the space of the struggle for classification as it really is, and the position of the sociologists in this space, the sociologist becomes involved in the struggle for the construction and

imposition of legitimate taxonomies. This implies for Bourdieu that sociologists need to be actively involved in the political struggle for symbolic capital and symbolic power. Sociology must unveil all that capital accomplishes, even if this means problematizing what capital accomplishes for sociology. Reflexivity thus becomes an important emancipatory tool in the fight against misrecognition. For Bourdieu, intellectuals' work is political through the reflexivity of questioning doxa. Doxa is present through the classification systems in society that embodies a particular set of vision and division that can be otherwise.

Together these various elements, reflexivity chief among them, but also the nature, practice, and reform of sociology, the historical and philosophical sensibility, the role of language and education, the nature of theory-practice distinction and the role given to sociologists and intellectuals, and the ultimate goals underlying the various programs, inform my vision of the discipline of sociology and how it ought to be practiced. These authors are not content with operating with the sociological tools at their disposition, but instead seek to understand the history and possibilities associated with those tools, and even fashion their own. All four manifest an interest not only in history and previous traditions, but also in epistemology and ontology. They actively engage with the epistemological and ontological foundations underlying their own work, and even at times lay out the epistemological and ontological implications of their vision of sociology. Each of these authors points to language as more than representing an already existent reality, and instead as constitutive of social reality. Several highlight the nature of academic forms of knowledge as distinctive from knowledge accrued in everyday life. Associated with this, they lay out a vision for the role that needs to be fulfilled by sociologists and intellectuals, given those insights. And finally, a majority of these

authors' visions for sociology were animated by particular political motivations, something Gouldner was quick to point out in his discussion of the 'whole scientist'. Are these various accounts of sociology and reflexivity commensurable with one another? It is to this question that I now turn myself.

Commensurability

The question of commensurability has been with me for a long time. Are there fundamental incompatibilities between the reflexivity proposed by Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu? Between these and other reflexivities found in the sociological literature on ethnography, feminist, sociology of scientific knowledge, and reflexive modernization thesis? It boils down to: must we choose? Much earlier versions for the title of this dissertation were *Reflexivity: In the Pursuit of Commensurability* and *Sociology After the Disappearance of the Archimedean Point: Reflexivity*. These earlier titles speak to how my interest in reflexivity has been tied since the beginning of this process to an interest in epistemology and ontology. Certain forms of reflexivity are privileged while others are challenged or thrown away; most of the time, this has to do with epistemological and ontological issues. A given reflexivity's acceptance or rejection depends on which epistemological and ontological foundations it rests. Realist sociologists oppose or dismiss various forms of relativistic reflexivity, which they feel undermine the scientific nature of sociology and embrace various forms of relativism; while constructivist sociologists oppose or dismiss realist forms of reflexivity which they see as embodying unwanted positivist tendencies.

Mannheim, Gouldner and Bourdieu, who attempted to bridge the gap between realism and relativism, between subjectivism and objectivism, are pulled and pushed in

both ways at once. Some of their critics reject their reflexivity for being too positivist while others reject the very same reflexivity for being too relativistic. I have little interest in debating with other authors what a different author 'really' meant, but rather I prefer to mobilize these authors' conception of reflexivity towards a purpose. This purpose is developing tools for sociological practice. It involves having a pragmatic relationship with authors and their works. It is about what can be produced or accomplished. And in mobilizing their reflexivity towards such a purpose, then they 'can' be compatible with one another, whether or not they are 'really' commensurable in some ultimate sense. Each of their reflexivities can be applied to different objects, and thus co-exist within a single model.

I take from Mannheim a reflexivity that is an adaptation of the *golden rule* to do unto yourself what you do unto others, a self-exemplifying reflexivity, a reflexivity about accounts that needs to apply its analysis to itself. I take from Garfinkel a reflexivity that is a constitutive reflexivity, one which is characteristic of lived interactions and their context in everyday life, one which explains social order. From Gouldner I take a reflexivity that promotes self-awareness, a reflexivity of the researchers who probe their own personal commitments. Finally, I take from Bourdieu a reflexivity about various aspects of the scholastic fallacy, about the gap between theory and practice, a reflexivity of the tools of practice and the field of the academic and sociologist, a reflexivity of the doxa that accompanies skhole. Taken this way, these reflexivities are not mutually exclusive, but instead highlight some of the important differences about how each author understands and uses reflexivity, and how they can work at different levels.

Together they form a part of a broader typology I construct from the various conceptions and uses of reflexivity found in the sociological literature that can co-exist and operate on different levels:

- A- Reflexivity about the epistemological and ontological sensibilities one possesses
- B- Reflexivity about the social lenses one uses
- C- Reflexivity about the nature of the discipline
- D- Reflexivity about the position of academic/intellectual/social theorist
- E- Reflexivity about the personal reality of the researcher
- F- Reflexivity about the tools one uses in the conduct of research
- G- Reflexivity about the structure of everyday life
- H- Reflexivity about the reciprocity of our analysis
- I- Reflexivity about the communication of our ideas/findings

Each of the different types of reflexivity laid out in this typology has a role to play in the pursuit of an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic inspired sociology. The overarching master distinction, to use Luhmann's vocabulary, and the link to an anti-foundational sociology is reflexivity as humility versus reflexivity as transparency.

Reflexivity as transparency suggests that it is possible clearly to identify the presuppositions underlying the conduct of research, and that if we turn our gaze toward them, we can somehow control if not eliminate their effects. Reflexivity as humility instead acknowledges the existence of several kinds of limitations, some of which are known, and some of which are not, but does not claim those limitations can be fully understood or overcome. Whilst the reflexivity mobilized through self-confessional unearthing of biases and limitations supports a positivist social science, the reflexivity mobilized through an acknowledgment of the inevitable contingency and uncertainty associated with all forms of knowledge production supports an anti-foundational social science.

This does not mean eschewing the claim that reflexivity can lead to a 'better' science, but it re-frames 'better' as something other than an approximation to the positivist ideal of knowledge. It frames notions of 'better' not unlike how Haraway (1991) speaks of it, as a more responsible social science. Drawing from Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu, it means taking responsibility for the production of one's own accounts. Who observes matters. No amount of careful self-analysis, or uncovering of background and domain assumptions, or objectivation of our own presuppositions will produce value-free accounts. The belief that these various types of limitations can be fully overcome is irresponsible. Reflexivity, as advocated by Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu, is a productive tool that helps to understand that there are various types of contexts and factors that influence all knowledge-production activities. They can thus be a progressive force in the advancement of social scientific work by limiting (eliminating) claims to universality and making researchers enter a more open relationship with one another given the insights it produces. Reflexivity cannot be used to overcome the limitations of the 'point of view' in order to produce a level of 'objectivity', 'neutrality', or 'universality' otherwise unreachable.

Reflexivity thus cannot be used to reclaim the lost Archimedean point of view. Much of the reflexivity used by authors is very individual-centered. I endorse the move away from the purely philosophical (personal) to a social (communal) form of reflexivity. The idea would be to have an individual and a collective form of reflexivity in a dialectical relationship: an individual form that is born out of a collective form, and yet one that allows and pursues the collective form of reflexivity. Bourdieu does allude to the need for this type of dialogical work, but it is an under-emphasized element of his

project. No harm can come out of an individual researcher's reflexive return on the limitations inherent in her own position, unless she uses this reflexive return to make universal claims that are not warranted. But since no individual can 'see' all of the limitations inherent in their own accounts, this absolutely needs to be supplemented by broader collective forms of reflexivity. I am speaking here then of a combination of both internalist and externalist forms of accountability. This requires a focus on matters of justification.

Justification and Adjudication

Renouncing certainty changes the nature of the claims that can be made. In an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic inspired sociology, accounts can be imbued with conviction, in terms of passionately taking a stand, but not with certainty, as they lack knowledge-based doubt that one is right. It is a distinction between the 'ought' and the 'is'. Knowledge of 'is' turns into certainty, while passion for an 'ought' turns into conviction. Ontological agnosticism as a label for a sociology speaks to the impossibility of certainty associated with forms of atheism. An ontological agnosticism is accompanied with a dynamic notion of truth. This does not mean espousing philosophical relativism, since all accounts are not created equal. However, it does mean that the adjudicating cannot be done on the basis of some external universal criteria, but instead solely on agreed upon criteria.

When there is an absence of an overt justification from/for a particular account it seems to rely, by default, on reality. Once reality is no longer an acceptable adjudicator, other justifications have to be made more explicitly when offering any account. This involves a differently-oriented reflexivity and sociology. The solution is not found in

different versions of the coherence theory of truth, as advocated by Alcott (1996) and Goldman (1999), which again seek a singular ultimate means of adjudicating competing claims. Problems occur as soon as one asks who decided that coherence was the sole sufficient ultimate adjudicator, and who decides if some facts or accounts fit in the most coherent way. So how do competing narratives get adjudicated? What justification sphere is available given said belief about ontological agnosticism? For one, justification based on utilitarian ideals: it is useful to look at it *this* way to achieve *this* purpose. Another available sphere is justification based on moral or political grounds, such as advocating for this cause or that cause.

Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot, in *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (2006), offer an analytical framework for the operations of qualification and generalization. They search for common frameworks to adjudicate between competing claims, to find out under which conditions certain forms of justification come to bear. These authors are essentially interested in the construction of agreement as their object of study, the plurality of forms that agreement takes, and the forms of justification that get mobilized. Boltanski and Thevenot show a series of various principles individuals draw on to justify their actions or accounts to others such as the civic, market, industrial, domestic, inspiration and fame principles. Again those justifications work as long as they are acknowledged as legitimate in the particular context in which they appear.²¹⁷ This

²¹⁷ Accounts produced through an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic inspired sociology are not less contestable than other accounts. They are simply contestable on other grounds than their correspondence with an ultimate reality. Any account should be contested based on the types of claims it makes. It does not mean that an account cannot be found useful or interesting by a third party for some other reason than the author intended, but that the contestation should be salient to the purpose of the account or the use to which it is being put. If I make synthetic lasagna for an art show, I expect it to be evaluated and adjudicated on the basis of its aesthetic merit since that is the claim being made, that is how it is presented. If someone wants to judge my lasagna on its taste, its edibility, they can do that, but since I

adjudication cannot be done solely at the individual level but must be done at the communal level.

Reflexivity and sociology respectively do not have one finite meaning. As demonstrated in the four substantive chapters, Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu understand and use reflexivity and sociology differently because they each mobilize reflexivity for different purposes. Reflexivity and sociology are constituted by how they are put into action. They are tools that take their form in the pursuit of some objectives. These four authors exemplify the drive to not only practice sociology, but to continually examine and reflect upon the tools they use. They also exemplify that matters of reflexivity and sociology are intrinsically linked to matters of epistemology and ontology. Each author offers insights into the constitutive nature of language. Several speak about the gap between sociological accounts and activities of everyday life. Finally, while they write extensively about the history, nature, and practice of sociology, it is never for its own sake and is always in the pursuit of some ultimate goal, usually explicitly political or moral in nature. Their reflexivities are commensurable within an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic inspired sociology. The Archimedean point of view cannot be recaptured through processes of reflexivity. Reflexivity as humility is a recognition of this fact. One must take responsibility for one's own accounts and justify those accounts for the work that they do. These insights, together, form the basis of a responsible, productive, and value-committed sociology.

never claimed it was edible food and did not present it in that context, this form of evaluation or contestation (if the adjudicator deemed my lasagna to be foul tasting) would be less salient.

Conclusion

Reflexivity is widespread within contemporary sociological literature. While there is little agreement about what constitutes reflexivity, much of the writing about reflexivity is about the very nature of sociology as a discipline, how it ought to be practiced, and what kind of goals it ought to pursue. Karl Mannheim, Harold Garfinkel, Alvin Gouldner and Pierre Bourdieu are all identified as major influences in the literature on reflexivity as well as the sociological literature more broadly. While their use of reflexivity varies, each of these authors placed reflexivity at the center of their interest in sociology and linked reflexivity to both the nature and foundations of sociology. These authors were not content with simply practicing sociology; instead all were interested in reforming sociology and in offering their own vision of what sociology ought to be. For each, reflexivity played a different but crucial role in this endeavor. Their reflexivity is intrinsically tied to epistemological ontological issues.

I entered into the dissertation research with a definition of reflexivity from a reading of Mannheim's writings on the perspectival nature of all knowledge, and from a humanist reading of Niklas Luhmann's theory of distinction, where no accounts can escape that they are accounts from particular locations. So whereas I started with a definition, my understanding of reflexivity broadened to include other and more varied formulations of the concept and practice from the dissertation work. What did not change is that reflexivity, from the beginning, was the most promising thread to follow in order to figure out my own sociological practice.

This dissertation put reflexivity to work to 'make sense' of Mannheim's, Garfinkel's, Gouldner's, and Bourdieu's sociology in order to promote reflexivity as

humility and a responsible, productive, and value-committed sociology. I did this by constructing thematic accounts around the history, nature, and role of reflexivity within each author's respective sociology. This took the form of three tightly connected and yet discrete inquiries. What within the author's work led them to the development of their notion of reflexivity? What for them constitutes the nature of reflexivity? And finally, what role or purpose does the idea or practice of reflexivity play within the context of each author's ongoing sociological project?

For Mannheim, reflexivity first appears through what he calls the phenomenon of distantiation. He traces the historical emergence of distantiation and how reflexivity emerges through doubt, skepticism, and individuals facing unusual situations where habitual action is not possible. Reflexivity comes into play when Mannheim appropriates Marx and others' theory of ideology pertaining to the social situatedness of thought and extends that maxim to all thought, including one's own. This marks the shift from a theory of ideology to the non-evaluative sociology of knowledge, Mannheim's most significant contribution to sociology. It also reveals the second and deeper meaning of reflexivity present in his work, which involves applying the unmasking tools to one's own thought. The implications of this are the essential perspectival nature of all knowledge. Mannheim defends himself from accusations that his program embraces relativism, and instead speaks of relationism and a dynamic notion of truth. This implies a new and different conception of objectivity as a standard for social scientists, one very much based on his notion of reflexivity. The goal for Mannheim is a synthesis of these various partial viewpoints into the closest approximation to the whole, and, in the most controversial element of his sociology, Mannheim assigns the role of chief synthesizer to his 'relatively unattached' intellectuals.

For Garfinkel, reflexivity is at the heart of his development of ethnomethodology as a program for the practice of sociology. Garfinkel develops his ethnomethodology as a phenomenologically-inspired sociology, as the study of everyday activities and their locally witnessable, accountable, reflexive features. It involves, above all, making the reflexive character of everyday activities observable. Ethnomethodology is concerned with studying members' knowledge of their ordinary affairs, of their own organized enterprises, where researchers treat this knowledge as part of the same setting also made orderable by this knowledge. Reflexivity is here a feature of everyday activities as opposed to the quality of a theory, the quality of a research method, or the quality of an individual researcher. The meaning of social action depends on the particular context in which it occurs. Moreover, the elements of that context themselves depend on their own contexts for meaning. But finally, these latter contexts include the very social actions with which we began, so that each element in the situation is reflexively related to the others. An acknowledgement of these relationships and the study of this reflexivity are at the heart of the distinction between traditional sociological pursuits and ethnomethodology. This follows what Garfinkel believes is Durkheim's legacy, that is, the study of social order as present in ordinary society. It means investigating the reflexive and indexical properties of everyday activities systematically and empirically as a way to map out the problem of social order.

Gouldner's development of his reflexive sociology program is centered around a pair of relationships: that of society and social theory, and the relationship between social theory and social theorists. Understanding Gouldner's work through this pair of relationships leads to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the development of his reflexive sociology program. Gouldner's *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*

(1970) is a study in the sociology of knowledge about how social theorists work with a false consciousness and fail to see how their own theory, and not just those of their political enemies, is shaped by their whole social being. This is the key insight at the foundation of his conception of reflexivity. His vision for sociology is that of a sociology that embraces fully its political responsibilities, a sociology that embraces fully emancipation. For Gouldner, a reformer at heart from the very start of his career until the very end, a reform of society must pass through a reform of sociology. This involves examining the personal reality of the social theorists, and uncovering their background and domain assumptions.

Bourdieu develops his reflexivity as a necessary tool for the advancement of social scientific work, as a way to return to the dispositions and presuppositions and pre-notions that intellectuals bring with them to their research through their social position, their academic habitus, and the influence of the intellectual field. Bourdieu seeks in reflexivity a mechanism that allows one to bring into consciousness what was previously only unconsciously present. However, his reflexivity also has a strong political dimension in that it helps problematize the naturalized vision of classification systems, taxonomies, symbolic power, symbolic capital, and language, on which various forms of domination rest. Reflexivity thus becomes an important emancipatory tool in the fight against misrecognition.

In their own way, Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu, each propose a vision of how sociology ought to be practiced and then demonstrate these approaches through the conduct of their own work. While each of these authors operate within their own particular fields, none are totally content with working within those fields and rather seek to understand the limitations of these respective fields, what they did and did not

allow. In the discussion chapter, the dissertation lays out some of the elements from their respective work that together can be used as the basis of a responsible, productive, value-committed sociology. These authors are not content with operating with the sociological tools at their disposition, but instead seek to understand the history and possibilities associated with those tools, and even fashion their own. All four manifest an interest not only in history and previous traditions, but also in epistemology and ontology. They actively engage with the epistemological and ontological foundations underlying their own work, and even at times lay out the epistemological and ontological implications of their vision of sociology. Each of these authors points to language as more than representing an already existent reality, and instead as constitutive of social reality. Several highlight the nature of academic forms of knowledge as distinctive from knowledge accrued in everyday life. Associated with this, they lay out a vision for the role that needs to be fulfilled by sociologists and intellectuals, given those insights. Three of these authors' visions for sociology were animated by political motivations, something Gouldner calls value-committed sociology.

Reflexivity, as advocated by Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu, is a productive tool that helps to understand that there are various types of contexts and factors that influence all knowledge-production activities. Mannheim's reflexivity as self-exemplifying, Garfinkel's constitutive reflexivity, Gouldner's reflexivity as self-awareness, and Bourdieu's reflexivity about scholastic fallacy are not mutually exclusive; they can co-exist within an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic inspired sociology. From this epistemological and ontological approach is reflexivity leading to humility rather than transparency. Some limitations can be acknowledged and overcome, but not all limitations can be neutralized. In fact the

language of limitations itself points to the existence and/or attempts to reconstitute the Archimedean point of view. All knowledge is perspectival. This is not a flaw that can be overcome, but something that instead ought to be recognized. This implies a sociology that takes responsibility for the construction of its own accounts and justifies those accounts for the work that they do. It involves paying greater attention to various types of criteria used to adjudicate competing claims. This adjudication cannot be done solely at the individual level but must also be done at the communal level.

Reflexivity and sociology respectively do not have one finite meaning. As demonstrated in the four substantive chapters, Mannheim, Garfinkel, Gouldner, and Bourdieu understand and use reflexivity and sociology differently because they each mobilize reflexivity for different purposes. Reflexivity and sociology are constituted by how they are put into action. They are tools that take their form in the pursuit of some objectives. These objectives are not reflexivity and sociology for their own sake, but are to be used in the pursuit of some ultimate goal, usually explicitly political or moral in nature, a value-committed sociology.

Contributions

This dissertation is a contribution at three levels. First, the dissertation leads to a more nuanced, more complex, and deeper understanding of Mannheim's, Garfinkel's, Gouldner's, and Bourdieu's concept-practice of reflexivity. How reflexivity emerged as a consideration for each author, how it was defined and understood for each author, and finally what purpose it was used for, what task was it assigned by each author. Since these authors' reflexivity are identified as key influences in contemporary sociological literature, this is a significant contribution. Second, this work adds to the vast literature

using and ‘making sense’ of these authors’ sociological programs by offering an in-depth textual analysis of their work through the prism of reflexivity, thus ‘making sense’ of their work in a different light. The third contribution lies in further highlighting the close links between various conceptions and uses of reflexivity and debates and discussions about the nature of sociology, how it ought to be practiced, and what goals it ought to pursue. It does this by linking reflexivity not only to the nature of sociology itself, but also to sociology’s historical and philosophical underpinnings, its relationship with the constitutive power of language, the nature of theoretical knowledge and the role of sociologists, and to its relationship to various visions of a ‘better’ society. Mannheim’s, Garfinkel’s, Gouldner’s, and Bourdieu’s reflexivity and sociology are ‘put to work’ in promoting reflexivity as humility whose end goal is an epistemologically anti-foundational and ontologically agnostic, responsible, productive, and value-committed sociology.

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