Dit alles neemt niet weg dat hetgeen Mannheim over de werkwijze van de sociologie in een interdependente samenleving te zeggen heeft, de moeite van het bestuderen zeker waard is. Zijn uiteenzettingen zijn, zoals zo dikwijls bij hem het geval is, tamelijk moeizaam geschreven. Een rechthijng denker is Mannheim niet. Maar zijn beschouwingen zijn rijk aan inzichten en prikkelen tot verdere bezinning; veel meer, dan uit een schematische samenvatting zoals wij hier beproefd hebben, kan blijken. Ons overzicht had dan ook geenszins de pretentie de studie van Mannheims eigen werk overbodig te maken, doch alleen om deze te stimuleren en wellicht iets te vergemakkelijken.

KARL MANNHEIM AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

door JEAN FLOUD

The recent publication of Professor W. A. C. Stewart's reconstruction of Karl Mannheim's Introductory course on the sociology of education (given in 1947 during his lamentably brief tenure of the chair in that subject created for him in the University of London) tempts me once again to try to assess his contribution to this now quite well established branch of sociological studies. In this short paper I want firstly to recapitulate the main contentions of my earlier attempt to place his abundant references to education in the context of his wider preoccupations as a sociologist; secondly to review briefly the present state of studies in the sociology of education in order to draw up some sort of provisional or interim balance of our intellectual account with Mannheim, to see what and how much we already owe to his inspiration and what if anything more we can gain from his thought about the matters which interest us.

In considering Mannheim's writings the comparison with Durkheim can hardly be avoid. Both men were professors of sociology and education; both were haunted by an acute sense of social crisis and both sought in education the solution to the intractable problem of consensus in modern society. Their approaches to the solution through education were profoundly different; yet, in my view, one should not make too much of the differences. For in the end, Mannheim's subtlety, the Marxist strain in his intellectual pedigree, and his strong feeling for social change, do not prevent him from succumbing to the logical implications of his primitive diagnosis of the basic problem of social

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integration in a state of advanced division of labour. This diagnosis he shares in essentials with Durkheim; and in the outcome, the thought of neither man on education is satisfactory. Durkheim's is more rigorous and leads more directly to a satisfactory sociology of educational institutions. Mannheim's makes up in subtlety what it lacks in rigour, and leads to the heart of the matter, the social psychology (or, as he would have preferred, the 'sociological psychology') of educational processes and institutions.

But both men emerge as utopians, and moreover, as utopians of the Right. Durkheim favoured the inculcation through the formal agency of the schools and the teachers, as representatives of 'society', of a new morality of social discipline. Mannheim favoured a Platonic solution of much broader sweep and imagination; the use by an intellectual elite of education as a 'social technique', as 'a strategy', for inducing in the masses the acceptance and introjection of a common set of values which would be the basis of social integration in a so-called 'democratic society'. Although Durkheim made valuable gestures in that direction neither he nor Mannheim really sought disinterestedly to develop a sociology of education — to apply their professional expertise directly and systematically to the study of educational institutions and processes. Both gave short measure of close scrutiny to this part of social structure; both took short cuts to their common goal of what Durkheim termed a *practical theory* of education (what we should term *principles* of education) to serve the needs of an industrial society in a state of moral dissensus and social disorganization. Neither made a direct, systematic and substantial contribution to the sociology of education — not as Durkheim for instance contributed to the sociology of religion, or Mannheim to the sociology of knowledge.

If we want contributions to the sociology of education from Durkheim or from Mannheim we must look for pickings and gleanings, by-products of a larger enterprise, partial analyses undertaken fairly light-heartedly to serve the formulation of a 'practical theory' based on a characteristic view of the nature of man and of the structure and functioning of the wider society.

Mannheim's lectures on the sociology of education clearly constitute such an attempt to derive 'principles' of education from an account of the nature of man, of the processes by which he is inducted into the life of society and of modern social structure.

The paradigm of such an exercise is *The Republic* of Plato. To achieve a twentieth century counterpart — an equally comprehensive, sustained, elegant and forceful formulation — would indeed be a feat; it would be merely invidious to make the simple and direct comparison of Mannheim with Plato. A more imaginative comparison, of the elements of the problem confronting the two men and of the resources at their disposal for reaching a solution, would be more to the point.
As Durkheim reminds us,\(^3\) a practical theory is worth only as much as the sciences from which it borrows its fundamental notions. In the case of education, the relevant sciences are psychology and sociology. What, we may ask, had Mannheim got to work with that was not available to Plato — or indeed to his immediate predecessor, Durkheim? This is a question that would repay extended investigation. Here I must confine myself to brief comment. Mannheim undoubtedly thought that he had a great deal. His enthusiastic stock-taking in the social sciences convinced him that, despite the formidable problems presented by the scale and disorganisation of modern society, not merely a practical theory of education but a viable plan for a 'democratic' social consensus was feasible. Few would share his virtually unreserved optimism; but I am not concerned to dispute it except in respect of two fundamental matters: the nature of consensus, and the role of education in modern societies. The former and admittedly crucial matter I merely mention in order to put aside as beyond the scope of this paper, the purpose of which is to consider Mannheim's contribution to our understanding of the latter.

It is interesting that, writing at the turn of the century, Durkheim should have been at great pains to disentangle as the object of study formal educational institutions and processes from the diffuse notion of the educative environment; whereas, writing some 40 years later, Mannheim should exclaim enthusiastically, 'one of the most decisive discoveries of our age is that social education is even more powerful than formal education and that the educational value of a changing social context has hardly ever been adequately appreciated'.\(^4\)

By the same token, we find Durkheim writing a treatise on moral education\(^5\) which is in fact an examination of the school as an educative society and a discussion of the ways in which a teacher can improve his techniques of moral education by manipulating various features of the school environment, including not least the curriculum. Mannheim on the other hand, wrote ecstatically of education 'as a strategy', and formal agencies (schools, colleges, and universities) figure only in relatively minor role in the overall educative plan he envisages for producing and sustaining the democratic society. Nor is this role explored in any detail at all.

These quite divergent approaches illustrate the dilemma inherent in the study of education indicated by Meyer Fortes when he wrote: 'The problem presented (to the social analyst) by this (educational) function of society is of an entirely different order from that presented by the religious or economic or political system of a people. The former is

\(^3\) Education and Sociology, Glencoe, Ill, 1956, p. 102.
primarily a problem of genetic psychology, the latter of cultural or sociological analysis'.

However, the dilemma is undoubtedly less acute for the anthropologist dealing with pre-literate societies than for the sociologist dealing with modern industrialised societies in an advanced state of the Division of Labour. The anthropologist has not generally been confronted with specialised agencies of formal education; the notion of the educative impact of all social arrangements is for him a meaningful and manageable approach to understanding socialisation processes. But is is less satisfactory as societies become more complex and differentiated, and this for two reasons: in the first place, the mere existence of explicitly educational institutions with their own personnel and partial autonomy in relation to the wider social structure necessitates our distinguishing them for purposes of investigation from other less formal and specialised agencies and influences. This point was appreciated by Durkheim and is fundamental to his approach to the study of education.

If we really want to understand socialisation in a differentiated society we need a systematic sociology of education in which manifest and latent functions, formal and informal structures, unanticipated and planned consequences of various educational arrangements are all distinguished — a sociology of educational institutions and processes which is not confused with or swallowed up into an amorphous sociology of childhood.

In the second place, as the industrialisation of society advances, educational institutions cease to function exclusively as socialising agencies but come to perform other social functions, in particular in relation to the economy and to the processes of social selection and differentiation. These as it were extrinsic functions of educational institutions in industrial societies must be understood even if we are only concerned with socialisation, for as is well known, they readily complicate, overlay or impede the more strictly educational or socialising activities which are the raison d' être of the school and higher education systems.

Perhaps this is to put the point over-sharply; it is obvious that even in pre-industrial societies, formal educational institutions in so far as they existed, functioned in relation with the economy and class structure. Nevertheless, under conditions of advanced industrialism, the relationship undoubtedly becomes closer and more complex; education ceases to be simply a dependent variable in social change as it moves

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from a peripheral to a central position in the economy and class structure. In particular, the conservative and adaptive assumptions underlying the notion of education as induction into and transmission of the cultural heritage become less appropriate as it is drawn into the service of an economy dependent on applied science, continuous innovation and a highly qualified, mobile and adaptable labour force. Education in an advanced industrial or technological society is as much concerned with inducing change as with conserving a social heritage. At any rate, the traditional business of education with socialisation has to be conducted in quite novel circumstances, which Durkheim for obvious historical reasons never suspected (but which anyone working to his blueprint of a sociology of education would be forced to attend to) and which Mannheim never sought to analyse (although he was certainly aware of them in general terms, and, familiar as he was with a substantial tradition of macroscopic structural analysis, well-equipped intellectually to deal with them).

Clearly, it is impossible to be sure why Mannheim should have so conspicuously neglected to explore the implications for education of the structural changes in the wider society associated with the development of modern technology. My own view, expounded at length elsewhere, is that he was deflected into the dubious role of social physician by the force and emotional impact of political upheavals of which he was personally thrice the victim in his life-time; that he abandoned diagnosis for prescription, taking for granted a somewhat commonplace analysis of the principal features of modern social structure and their implications scale, rationality, social mobility, bureaucratisation, the decline of primary groups, a 'value crisis', etc. Education as a social technique (social education: the planned educative impact of a variety of social arrangements) is central to his prescription for 'democratic planning' but although he is characteristically ingenious in uncovering the many ways in which the social environment makes its impress on the individual psyche, and offers many suggestions for a planned social education, designed to produce a democratic personality apt for participating in and sustaining a democratic society, these do not take account of the transmogrifying pressures of the wider society on the structure and functioning of the educational system itself.

This insistence on equating education with the full range of socialising activities and processes and neglect of the structural position of formal educational agencies have always seemed to me to impose very serious limitations on Mannheim's contribution to the sociology of education — limitations which do not inhere in Durkheim's position at all.

Be this as it may; I think that as one surveys current developments in the sociology of education, one is aware of an emphasis and a conceptual approach showing some affinity with Mannheim's own preoc-

1 In Judges, The Function of Teaching, ibid.
cupations and his tentative moves in the direction of what he called, interchangeably, the 'sociology of the mind' or the 'sociology of culture'. I should like briefly to discuss these developments.

The social basis for the perpetuation of common understandings (i.e. the classical problem of consensus) is at the centre of Mannheim's sociology, just as of Durkheim's. His fundamental concern is with processes of sociation which influence the creation and flow of ideas, and with the social formation of motives. The creation and flow of ideas he held to be mainly dependent on the formation and continuity of 'elites'; and the degree and quality of consensus both within these elites and in the wider society he held to be a function of the social formation of motives. Of course, this is a tautology, but it is a useful one in that it represents a dynamic formulation of the relationship between social action and thought processes; and it opens the way for a more probing social psychology (which Mannheim chose to term 'sociological psychology' in order to emphasise that he had in mind much more than the traditional study of the nature of the social bond — that he had in mind, in fact, the social genesis of meanings).

However, as I have already remarked, he did not apply himself directly to the study of educational institutions and of their part in the selection and formation of elites. He believed that their significance as socialising agencies was quite outweighed by other, informal dispositions of the social environment; and he did not appreciate their greatly enhanced role in social selection in a technological society. Now, in its short history as a specialised branch of study, the sociology of education has made its main contribution in examining just this aspect of contemporary social structure neglected by Mannheim — illuminating and documenting the involvement of education with the economy and with the dynamics of the class structure in modern society. That much remains to be done, need hardly be said. It is noticeable, however, that specialist students in this field are now showing some inclination to tackle the more delicate task of analysing the means and processes of socialisation characteristic of institutions at different educational levels, and particularly in higher education. There is something of a revival of the classical interest in education as socialisation, its role in the formation of elites and in sustaining consensus.

This shift of interest has perhaps gone furthest in the United States, and in the study of higher education in particular; and it is here that the affinity with Mannheim's approach is in evidence. Although colleges or universities are abstracted from the full range of inter-related socialising processes and institutions on which he laid so much stress, and are treated as more or less autonomous objects of study, in a way that he did not think appropriate, it is a feature of this recent work that all aspects of the environment within the walls of these institutions, all internal social dispositions, formal and informal, are scrutinised for their educative impact in a way that Mannheim would have entirely
approved, as being exactly analogous with the scrutiny he advocated of
the total educative environment of the wider society.
In short, educational institutions are increasingly treated as societies, as
social microcosms of social systems, rather than as associations with
academic and intellectual purposes and responsibilities expressed in
formal constitutions and exercised in the influential context of the wider
society. At the same time, there is a marked preoccupation with the
consequences of education for the social, political and intellectual life
of the nation, with the formation and circulation of elites, and of atti­
tudes and values in the population at large.
The easiest way to form an impression of the current work to which I
am referring is to look at the symposium The American College recently
presented by Professor Nevitt Sanford. This collection of some 30
papers represents the imposing first-fruits of a concerted attempt, da­
ting from 1957-'58, by psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists
under the guidance of Professor Sanford and with the active collabora­
tion of David Riesman, to arrive at a 'psychological and social inter­
pretation of the higher learning' in America. The enterprise owes its
inception to a variety of motives, as often practical as theoretical. But
there is no mistaking the profoundly political (in the widest sense of the
word) character of the motives sustaining the contributions of Professor
Riesman and his associates; nor can one fail to be impressed with the
distinctively 'sociological-psychological' (in Mannheim's terminology)
character of the contributions of Professor Sanford and his fellow-psy­
chologists. Except in so far as it presents the results of straightforward
attempts to document the striking intellectual, social and cultural diver­
sity of American student populations, the symposium is almost equally
divided between essays designed, directly or indirectly, to throw on the
influence of higher education on the quality of American social and in­
tellectual life generally, and essays devoted to problems of motivation
and personality development in late adolescence.
Three important studies in particular exemplify the recent developments
in the sociology of education to which I am pointing: the Kansas study
of student culture under Professor Everett Hughes; the Harvard Stu­
dent Study under the direction of Professor Stanley King; and the
Mellon Studies at Vassar College under the direction of Professor
Sanford. By way of illustrating the sort of enquiries subsumed under
each of these three substantial projects of investigation, I may mention

8 New York, 1962, 1,084 p.
9 I resist the temptation to digress at this point into further discussion of the
tensions implicit in these divergent emphases and of the problem of bringing
into fruitful relationship the very different lines of investigation implied re­
spectively by a sociology of education (i.e. of educational institutions and pro­
cesses) and a sociology of childhood or adolescence (i.e. of the genetic psy­
chology of socialisation). It is not clear to me that by paying attention to both,
where Mannheim neglected the former, we are much nearer, in The American
College, to a solution of this central dilemma of the sociology of education.
the following: at Kansas, Professor Hughes' team of sociologists and anthropologists are studying, mainly by the method of 'participant observation', the prevailing level and direction of academic effort among the students of this large mid-western state university and, in particular, the influence on their performance of the 'grade-point-average' method of academic assessment. 'Instead of asking what independent variables of personality or social position account for grades, we have been more inclined to search for the effects of a system of grades and averages of the student's level and direction of academic effort'. 10 As part of the Harvard study 11 the dynamics of the educative impact of 'residence' are being investigated. Two sociologists are making a close and rigorous study of the well-known 'houses' at Harvard, which differ among themselves (despite administrative efforts to provide a cross-section of the student population in each) in the degree to which they involve students both in an autonomous social life and in informal relations with their teachers. At Vassar, an attempt is being made to assess the influence on 'campus culture' (the bearing on student life and on the behavioural attitudes of academic and administrative staffs) of cultural influences and pressures deriving from United States society-at-large. These are shown to play an integral role in student life and 'two contrasting lines of development suggest themselves; a professoriate, isolated and ignored, but faithfully preserving in a kind of monastic seclusion faintly echoing the Dark Ages, the academic ideals, traditions, and essence of Western civilisation as contained in the liberal arts; or an ultimate blending and fusing of student and faculty cultures as both take most of their coloration from the larger social order'. 12

Thus, whether they are studying the social basis of recruitment to college, the career-lines of alumni, the viability of the academic community in a mass higher education service, the influence of the curriculum on student values, personality change in the college years, the outcome of various academic procedures and disposition on staff-student relations, student society, student culture, and student academic performance, one never fails in all this work to sense the embodiment in a substantial empirical investigation of notions and approaches adumbrated in the context of a totally different intellectual tradition by Mannheim 30 years ago, and summed up as the sociology of 'culture' or of 'the Mind'. Of course, this is not to say that any of this is owing directly in any way to Mannheim's thought or writing; nor that these affinities with his approach on which I have remarked are peculiar to the sociology of education. On the contrary, they infuse much contemporary work in all fields of American sociology and represent the absorption and

11 No published reports so far available.
12 J. H. Bushnell, 'Student Culture at Vassar', Chapter 14 of The American College.
extension of a classical heritage of which Mannheim himself was a late — perhaps the last major — representative, and beyond which he undoubtedly indicated the way, with his attempts to construct a 'sociological psychology' of motivation. My point is simply that much current work in the sociology of education represents an important application and development of the heritage along lines of which Mannheim would surely have approved and to which he would have wanted to make his contribution.

Can one say more than this? Can we still learn from Mannheim's writings on education (clearly, the value of his other work, for instance on the sociology of knowledge, is by no means exhausted)? I am inclined to think not, and that the same is true of Durkheim, despite the perennial value of his programmatic indication of the scope and nature of the sociology of education.

The study of social consensus is the enduring matrix of all work in the sociology of education; this remains true, even when as in recent years students are apparently deflected into problems of social selection and differentiation, or their pragmatic expression in socio-political problems of equality of opportunity or the social determinants of educability. As the current revival of interest in classical problems and approaches asserts itself, it might be thought that we could with profit turn again to re-read Mannheim.

On doing so, however, one is left in little doubt that although he formulated the main problems, and often with great perspicacity, he was not given time to take them far along the road to solution. Moreover, considerable theoretical and empirical advances have accumulated since his death in 1946; new materials and theories relating to the organisation and development of the human personality and to cognition and motivation; advances in the social psychology of small groups and in the sociology of large-scale organisations and in the application of the anthropological approach to the culture and sub-cultures of modern societies, and so on. We are in a position to take advantage of all this, and to embark seriously upon the development of a fully rounded sociology of educational institutions and processes. Of course, we have still a great deal to learn from Mannheim's demonstrations of skill as a sociologist of knowledge in handling the analysis of educational ideals and 'styles'. But we are, otherwise, it seems to me, beyond reach of his help (as also of Durkheim) in this enterprise, grateful as we must be for the originality and stimulus of his thought and writing in a neglected field which, since his death, has been thrust into prominence by the hectic advances of technological society and the accompanying shift of the educational system, from a peripheral to a strategic position in social structure.

13 See, for example, the illuminating discussion of 'democratic' and 'aristocratic' education in Essays on the Sociology of Culture, London, 1956, p. 182 ff.