Editorial

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One of the more interesting moves in recent theorising on education is the distinction between knowledge and knowers, chased rigorously by Karl Maton in his latest book that is about to come out – *Knowledge and knowers: towards a realist sociology of education* (2012). Lying at the heart of the distinction is a recognition that specialisation works with both knowledge forms and identity. For most of us this seems obvious – you are always working with a real live student in front of you – and your task is not only to induct her into specialised knowledge forms but to ensure that she develops professionally as a person. The two are tied together, specialised knowledge does not only have an effect on your cognitive capabilities and technical skills, it transforms your being. So why is the knower-knowledge distinction causing such a stir then? It's done something perennial in the world of theorising; it has sutured a theoretical distinction that split the world in two unequal halves. Just before Bernstein died he brutally cleaved the world of knowledge specialisation in two with the distinction between hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures. Bernstein was a scientist stuck in a sociologist's frame who hated how his home discipline of Sociology had a whole menagerie of theoretical languages based on the latest and greatest theorists. Students in sociology of education for example, would learn language after language, moving from Althusser to Bourdieu to Foucault, to (heaven forbid) Deleuze and Badiou. He longed for a systematic building up of knowledge that stood, like the pyramids, against time, rather than blowing in the wind. He felt that hierarchy was the essential driving force in education, that the task of an educational theorist was to show up explicitly where hierarchy was, so students could climb its heights, rather than wander around blindfolded with shouted encouragements like 'I know you can do it, just try hard'. The problem was that his distinction between hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures left hierarchy out of horizontal knowledge structures. The very term – horizontal – reveals the loss, it's the opposite of hierarchy, and as such is poorly chosen. The theoretical distinction cut out and discarded a massive portion of educational reality, the reality of thousands of years of detailed work on the interior hierarchies of the soul. Karl Maton worked out how to stitch it back in. If hierarchy was found in knowledge structures within the sciences, then it was also found in knower

structures within the arts and humanities, where the dispositions of students are worked on, where a specific kind of identity with a particular kind of gaze is built up. This should immediately result in an inclusive recognition that both science and the humanities work with knowledge **and** knowers in different ways rather than cutting knowledge into hierarchical and horizontal disjunctions, with hierarchy the preferred half.

You can get a sense of this by taking a look at Dante's Purgatory, where a learning soul travels upwards, systematically building on what has been learnt in the past, climbing higher and higher, not only on a ladder of knowledge, but a ladder of being, where it is the soul that learns, as well as the mind.
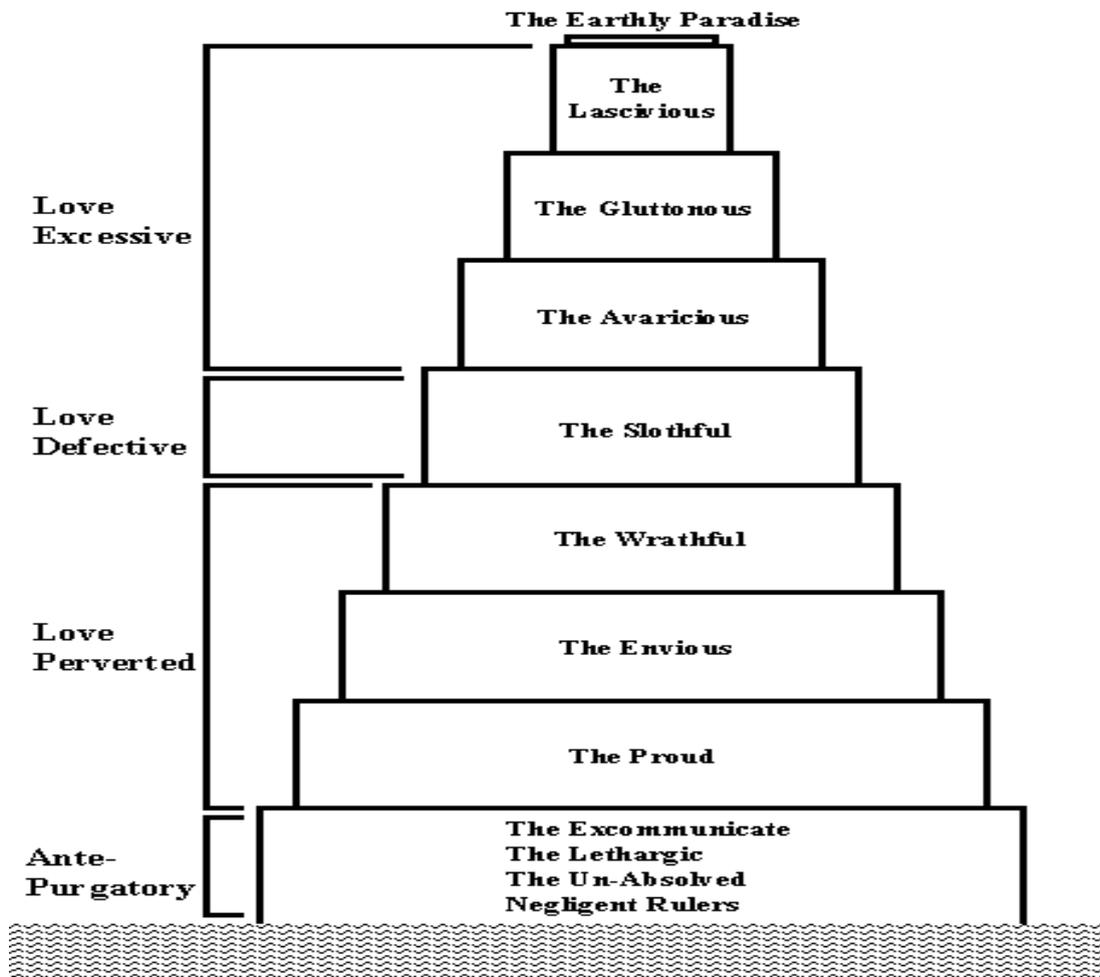
It's also sweet, by the way, to put the lascivious on top of a hierarchy for a change. Maton managed to open out for the Bernsteinians what was clear to anyone steeped in the humanities without scientific prejudice, that hierarchy

is deeply entrenched in its operating mechanisms, you just needed to look into the depths of a learning soul.

This edition of JoE to some extent repeats the distinction between knowers and knowledge in its selection of articles. Three of the papers are on Youth Identity, the other three more strongly focussed on various types of knowledge structures.

Crain Soudien starts us off with his own heartfelt attempt to reconstruct the development of youth identity in South Africa. At the core of his article lies the tension between the formal and collective attempt to educate our young and the fluid forms of modern youth identity that flood through and overwhelm our official systems. South African youth face a particular struggle to negotiate the path from Apartheid to Democracy along with the path from Local to Global in a field that is structured with all sorts of racial, class and gendered tensions. He gives accounts of students across these tensioned lines that show up how they negotiate the terrain in a world that is turbulent, dynamic and always more complex than simple race, class and gender distinctions. Soudien has both strong narrational and theoretical tendencies, he wants to tell a story, and he wants the story to catch the complexity of youth identity formation in subtle conceptual ways. It's a strong opening paper that sketches the importance of Youth Studies for our more stodgy formal preoccupation with educational structures and systems.

If Soudien provides the imaginative and impressionist opening then Carolyn McKinney provides a blow by blow account of how this is playing out in the trenches of the classroom. Across South Africa many Model C schools have experienced a rapid shift from a predominantly white to black student body, whilst still keeping the same teaching staff (read white). It's the most complex of lived and pedagogic spaces and McKinney provides us with a detailed and fascinating case study of one such teacher (white, ex Zimbabwian, middle-aged, middle class, suburbian) working with her black students. The first thing that jumps out for me is just how good a teacher she is. There is continuous feedback in the lessons, with the teacher both allowing turn taking and questioning but continually attempting to keep the lesson focused on the subject English. She attempts to make the lessons contextually relevant by using examples that resonate with the girls' lived reality, but the problem is she does not really have a detailed grasp of what that exactly is, and this lack skewers the lessons in telling ways. It makes for tough reading, as my sympathies partly lie with the teacher, who, as far as I can tell, is doing a great

job, especially when juxtaposed to what is happening in many of our classrooms across South Africa. As you read the article, take a careful look at the four extracts that come from a lesson on CV's/job interviews and ask yourself how you would negotiate issues around dreadlocks, marital status/number of kids, distance from work/use of public transport, and HIV status. I experienced a split through the core of my being. I personally love dreadlocks, but my associations with it are hopelessly tied up with student experiences of drugs and alternative culture, rather than with the lived everyday reality of dreadlocks for many South African women. I know from my own deeply lived reality that having kids directly impacts on your career, and more kids more so I can only imagine. My own experience of public transport is limited but raced and classed with passive aggression towards minibus taxies. And, although I know what the correct public response is to HIV/AIDS I carry within me reluctance and fear that affects how I deal with the issue. I experienced my own racist, classed, gendered and aged self as I read McKinney, but at the same time another voice spoke as well. It was a voice that wanted a clearer recognition of the struggle of a white, middle class, suburban teacher and of how her substantial pedagogic and subject expertise was working at its limit point. Whether that voice is also raced and classed or just my own profession speaking out is not clear.

That said, the positive dynamism and humour of her students were evident, and this is supported and reinforced by Ariane De Lannoy's article that provides a rigorous and focussed analysis on how high school kids from African townships around Cape Town make educational decisions that relate to their own larger project of constructing an identity. It's a tale caught between poverty and plenty, of how these kids construct images of a future self that lives a long and successful life, even though their own familial experience is of life nasty brutish and short. De Lannoy is interested in analysing how these youths make life path decisions that get them onto the high road and the strategies that accompany these decisions. One student says 'I want to be the person I want to be' and this catches the positive choice, in the present, to orient yourself to the future. This is why education is important for them, even when their peers are dropping out of school, because it holds a future promise in the current grind. The same future orientation holds when tempted by parties and drugs.

> It's not that I don't go to parties but I would never do drugs and I would never chose to be a party animal all my life and not be on the safer side of life [. . .] At the end of the day, I have to be somewhere, so I don't see any life in that. (Noluthando).

It's a happy find, a paper that is well researched, well written, and carries a powerful positive message cutting across some of the stereotypical images we have of our youth. When we were young, we also constructed future selves we now have the privilege and responsibility of living, if only we can hold onto the fresh promise it always held.

The shift from these living and breathing accounts of our youth into the harder dimensions of knowledge structure is brutal, especially when the first is written by an Engineer who shows all the characteristic acumen of her profession. Jennifer Case provides us with a powerful snapshot analysis of the pedagogic practices currently playing out within Engineering education. Traditional models of Engineering education started off with basic science courses and then gradually stitched in Engineering science until the student was ready, in the final years, to tackle project work that worked in a complex problem solving space demanding an integration of the different courses mastered separately. Medical education, in the meantime, started to show that it was possible to work with a different pedagogic model that started with integration, rather than ended with it. If being a Doctor is all about solving difficult problems in real time, why not make that the grounding principle on which Medical Education is based. Problem-based education became a popular mantra in many medical schools across the world, especially those predisposed to progressivist and constructivist pedagogic practices. Some universities even dedicated themselves to problem-based learning with the same fervour Catholic universities dedicated themselves to Christ, Aalborg University in Denmark, for example, being most notable for its secular fundamentalism. If it worked in Medical Education, well, why not in Engineering? Both work with complex problem spaces that are outward directed, both need highly specialised but strongly integrated professionals able to work intelligently in the real world. The problem is that each specialisation has highly distinctive knowledge structures and signature pedagogies that look similar at first glance, but are actually very different when put under a pedagogic microscope. Engineering is different to Medicine, don't assume that what works in the one will work in the other. The problem is that, in Higher Education, most academics have spent their professional lives specialising in their home discipline, not education. When they stumble upon a new pedagogic approach there is a predictable split between fanatical up takers and equally resistant naysayers. Lost in the fracas are the specific demands of the specialisation in its own terms. Engineering education has historically worked with Project-based learning as its own particular way of merging hard Engineering science with real world problems.

Don't dismiss this evolution of pedagogy, I want to say to them, take it seriously and work within it, ask how it can be extended and adapted, rather than embracing fads from other specialisations. Project-based learning is very different to Problem-based learning, and the difference extends to more than four letters. But what is it? Both integrate, both take separate disciplines and get them to talk to each other around a complex problem. The difference is that problem-based learning takes real world contexts as its primary organising principle whereas project-based learning works specifically on integrating the abstract particulars of the different sciences. Integrating the world with science is different to integrating science with science. You need both, but which is your central organiser, world or science? This debate is crucial for Higher Education in South Africa, especially as we are working with students who come from 'developing' backgrounds, who do not have twenty years of pampering and all the vast capitals accrued that help negotiate more open and implicit pedagogies. It is unfair to assume that progressivist pedagogies will automatically work in a South African context, where, for many of our students, the basics have not been put firmly in place.

The point is brought home by Alejandra Sorto and Ingrid Sapire's article on the teaching quality of mathematics lessons in Gauteng schools. It is taken from a larger cross country and cross province project that explores the relationship between teacher knowledge, classroom pedagogy and learner performance, directed by Martin Carnoy (the current master of the art of combining qualitative and quantitative comparative educational research). The results are starting to come out, and they are dismal. This is no surprise, popular educational discourse is full of it at the moment, but when you get into the details of why this is happening, the depression mounts. When going through the transcripts it is very hard to find instances of decent feedback, the key indicator of pedagogic effectiveness. Much of the lessons are dedicated to procedural skills, even when the intended lesson was designed for conceptual understanding. Two issues jump out for me at this point. Firstly teachers showed an inability to work in a diagnostic way with their students. They had a basic understanding of the content, and also a basic set of pedagogic skills, but the two did not come together when they needed to – which is most of the time. The crucial space where a teacher actually works with a child's understanding, rather than merely gets them to follow an algorithm, was not in evidence. This brings up the second issue – even when teachers wanted to work conceptually they landed up working procedurally, because that was the default level very hard to break away from. What Sorto and Sapire begin to hint at, and what we need to research as a serious question, is the possibility

of there being a generic or default pedagogy that is distinct to the vast majority of South African schools. And if it does exist, the pedagogic code of this default practice needs to be carefully unpacked, both in terms of its pedagogic practices and underlying identity formations.

The final article in the set takes a long hard look at our student teaching assessment instruments. Lee Rusznayk shows how we need to keep the distinction clear between formative and summative assessment when doing Teaching Practice evaluation and try to get an instrument deserving of the complex practices engaged in when teaching as a student. Feedback needs to be complex, nuanced, flexible but still clear and explicit. A checkbox list is certainly not going to do the trick. It is embarrassing to think that, as educational professionals, our own teaching practice rubrics across the country make up a shop of horrors. At UKZN we had a particularly bad time of it, little shop of horrors actually, where we fed our students to a strange rubric made up of the Norms and Standards Seven roles of being a teacher. Remember them?

1. Learning mediator

2. Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials

3. Leader, administrator and manager

4. Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner

5. Community, citizenship and pastoral role

6. Assessor

7. Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist

We did not change anything, even though the chances of our young students getting close to being a leader or manager or specialist were remote, never mind showing their community, citizenship and pastoral role in the space of a couple of weeks. Most of my students think pastoral has something to do with sheep or falling asleep. There was no critique of the list, no interpretation of it, no adaption of it for novice teachers, just put there, on the form, in the same order with a nice blank space next to each. Rusznayk's article is thus welcome, and as a journal we would certainly be interested in publishing research on a comparison of student teaching assessment rubrics across our universities.

Standing back from the six articles and recovering from the various side splits my own being has gone through when working with them, one question remains for me, and that is the difference between identity as displayed in the Youth Studies section, and a knower, as discussed by Maton and Case. Both come in on the 'subject' side of the subject/object dichotomy that dominated early modern philosophical consciousness, and both could do with a little more Hegelian dialectical awareness, but subject identity is very different to the subject as knower. Maton is still working with knowledge structures when theorising the knower. The knowledge/knower structure is specifically directed at understanding the full hierarchical dimensionality of how we educate in knowledge, not the far more fluid identity formations that make us up as human beings. Identity is a far wider and deeper phenomenon than knowing, it's the sea knowing swims in and tries to build a raft on whilst still floating. And that final image, taken from Neurath, catches the process this edition of JoE puts us through – engage with the expansive depths of identity but build a specifically educational ship to float above, because, after all, we want to navigate, not drown.

References

Maton, K. 2012. *Knowledge and knowers: towards a realist sociology of education.* Taylor and Francis, London.

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