

Social Reconstructionist Philosophy of Education and George S. Counts

- observations on the ideology of indoctrination in socio-critical educational thinking

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Abstract

This article comprises three parts: The author first outlines the principles of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education related to educational activity and social philosophy. After this, he describes the educational philosophy of George S. Counts, the most important developer of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education, and his most essential texts connected with the social reconstructionist philosophy of education. The third part focuses on the systematic problems involving social reconstructionist philosophy of education and George S. Counts' educational thinking. The postscript at the end of the article introduces the reader to the common and differing educational philosophical principles of social reconstructionist philosophy of education in relation to critical pedagogy, especially the educational thinking of Henry A. Giroux, and John Dewey's educational philosophy.

Keywords: Social Reconstructionism, George S. Counts, Critical Pedagogy, John Dewey

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Introduction

Progressive Education refers to the educational philosophical discourse that arose in the United States after the mid-19th century which discusses the relationship of educational interaction in the context of the changing society. Social Reconstructionism or the Social Reconstructionist Movement developed from the early 1930's as part of the educational philosophical discourse of progressive education. The social reconstructionist philosophy of education is made especially interesting by the way in which Marxist social philosophy can be adapted to educational thinking and by the conflicts into which social reconstructionist philosophy of education is drifted in terms of critical educational thinking in assuming the dogmatic social theory as its educational philosophical basis and indoctrination as the method in which educational interaction works.

My article comprises three parts: I first outline the principles of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education related to educational activity and social philosophy. After this, I describe the educational philosophy of George S. Counts, the most important developer of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education, and his most essential texts connected with the social reconstructionist philosophy of education. The third part focuses on the systematic problems involving social reconstructionist philosophy of education and George S. Counts' educational thinking. The postscript at the end of the article introduces the reader to the common and differing educational philosophical principles of social reconstructionist philosophy of education in relation to critical pedagogy, especially the educational thinking of Henry A. Giroux, and John Dewey's educational philosophy.

Social Reconstructionist Philosophy of Education

The roots of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education lie in the critique of the child-centred education of progressive education. The American society drifted into a political and financial crisis at the end of the 1920's due to the Great Depression. The American society faced a depression of several years, leading to considerations of the relationship between capitalist society and social or just society. How was this to be seen in educational philosophical thinking? The child-centred education advocated by progressive education was now seen problematic because, despite a time span of several decades during which child-centered education had been implemented in American schools, child-centered education had not been successful in preventing society from drifting into the social problems caused by market economy or capitalism (1). A discourse began within progressive education about the contents of education. From the early 1930's onwards, child-centered education advocated by progressive education was called into question in enabling democratic and just social development, as the curricula emphasized education based on the child's own interests and not on the social conditions of education (2). The educational philosophical discourse took a turn to consider how the social problems produced by capitalist society could be removed by means of education. The production of a new social order was thought to be possible through education (3). (Tanner & Tanner 1990, pp. 215; see also Bowers 1969, pp. 106-109; Kliebard 1987, pp. 183-187; Stanley 1992, pp. 11.) This educational philosophical basis of progressive education in which the position of education is promoted as a force to change society we can call the *social reconstructionist philosophy of education*.

Social reconstructionist philosophy of education introduced two issues connected with the relationship between education and society to the educational philosophical discourse: firstly, educational activity shall be an activity that socializes the educatee (Socialized Education). This refers to a social situation between the educatee and the educator in which an effort is made to produce in the activity of the educatees social thinking and an ability to act justly and morally in social situations. The basis for educational activity is formed by projects related to communal and social activity that are interesting from the

educatees' point of view. The purpose of educational activity is to join the educatee's activity with the social practices and with discourses critically evaluating these practices. Secondly, educational activity aims at producing in the educatee's thinking an idea of social realities. The relationship between education and social reality is manifested in the objectives of education: as a result of being educated, the educatee should be able to evaluate social reality and to change social practices as appropriate. This is based on the idea of a just and critical society in which the most important individual way of action is solidarity with others in society. The goal is a democratic and loyal society in which the criterion of political and financial activity is not the self-seeking individual, but individual activity in which social problems are solved through the rational thinking of individuals. (Tanner & Tanner 1990, pp. 217-218; see Bowers 1969, pp. 112, 128.)

In the educational philosophy of progressive education, the thematics of education and society involve two premises: firstly, it is the function of education to socialize the educatee for loyal and just social activity. Secondly, as a result of education, the educatee should be able to evaluate and change social reality for a "new social order". The aims of educational activity referred to above are shared by the representatives of progressive educational philosophy. In terms of how these goals of education are to be achieved, progressive education comprises two principles of educational activity that are contrary to each other: experimentalism represented by John Dewey, and indoctrination represented by the social reconstructionists. (Tanner & Tanner 1990, pp. 219-222; see Bowers 1969, pp. 75, 79, 155, 197.)

The fundamental philosophical principle in the experimentalism of progressive education is to use Dewey's principles of experimentalism to solve social problems. According to the experimentalists, knowledge is produced by means of an experimental method through new experience (1). The production of new knowledge takes place through experience, as a person discovers a new thing in his or her experience (2). As s/he has discovered a new thing in his/her experience, it becomes possible to anticipate an activity in the future (3). The process of learning a new thing is comprehensive and involves individual emotions, attitudes and motivation (4). The experimental method and democratic activity were understood to contain a similar idea of an action model in which an effort is made to solve social problems by experimenting with things in social activity (5). In experimentalism as advocated by progressive education, the reality changing society is always connected with issues in communal practices. Changes to communal activity presuppose rational individual activity, in which the individual discovers solutions to problems in the activity through his or her own intelligent activity. In the experimentalism of progressive education, the purpose of educational activity is to produce the educatee into an intelligent actor. It is not enough for a person to act routinely following a learnt way of action (Tanner & Tanner 1990, pp. 220.) This is what Tanner & Tanner (1990) say about the relationship between society and experimentalism:

Experimentalism sees the school as the instrument for creating a society that will be guided by the experimental method in its continuous reconstruction. This means a society composed of individuals with experimental minds who realize that specific solutions will need to be discovered by experimental procedures for each of the social problems in our society. p. 219

According to Tanner & Tanner (1990, pp. 220-221), the representatives of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education of progressive education think the educational philosophical foundation of the experimentalists cannot be trusted to produce the "new social order" of society. The social reconstructionists criticize the advocates of child-centered education, the experimentalists, for their lack of a "social mission" for which social reality the children are educated. The social reconstructionists' objectives in education are crystallized in

two ideas: firstly, the function of education and the contents of educational activity are built through an analysis of society in which society is considered critically and an effort is made, by means of a critical reconstruction related to society, to achieve the goal that educational activity is aiming at. Secondly, the goal of education is not meant to be guessed at or experimented with, as advocated by experimentalism, as an idea of the future of society is formulated through critical evaluation of society. The critically reconstructed new social order, society, is the goal of educational activity. Thus the goal of educational activity is not subject to guesses or experimentation, as the goal of education is planned and justified in advance. Tanner & Tanner (1990) outline this as follows:

The educational task, they (social reconstructionists, A.S.) argued, was a fundamental reconstruction of the social order. The idea *planned* new social order (a concrete program on which to base a curriculum) seemed them a better and safer bet than the idea of a *planning* society at a time when intellectuals were speculating whether the nation would go Communist or Fascist. p 221

According to Gerald L. Gutek (1988, pp. 299-300; see also Gutek 1984, pp. 124), the social reconstructionist philosophy of education emphasizes that theories and practices related to education are always tied to a time and place. According to the social reconstructionists, there is no theory of education that is detached from a given political and social context that would direct the educator's educational activity. The social reconstructionists think that theories of education and educational practices are not based on "speculative philosophy", on abstract theoretical description of education, as theories on education are formulated in relationship to social and political viewpoints. This is what Gutek (1988) says about the idea of the advocates of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education on the social and political connections of educational philosophy:

For the Reconstructionists, educational theories are products of particular historical periods and cultural contexts. Rather than being abstract or based on speculative philosophy, educational theories, Reconstructionists contend, should shape social and political policies. p.300

According to the social reconstructionist philosophy of education, an analysis should be made of the workings and tradition of modern industrialized society, and the elements producing political and economical crises should be reconstructed. A new social order in which political and financial crises can be kept under control can arise through an analysis of the social ways of action, in which the cultural heritage is analyzed critically (1), the main principles of the target society are formulated based on the critical analysis (2), the social reform – more specifically, revolution – produces a new social order in society (3), and the new social order is realized in social activity (4). The new social order can arise through social reform, in which a central position is occupied by education and institutions providing education, such as the school. According to the social reconstructionist philosophy of education, education should produce students who think critically about culture (1), who are capable of reaching the set or reconstructed social situation (2) by means of a social reform or a revolution (3) and to accomplish the new social order (4). (Gutek 1988, pp. 300-301; Gutek 1970, pp. 74-75.) Gutek says;

Hence, Reconstructionists education should cultivate: (1) a critical sense in examining the cultural heritage, (2) a commitment to work for deliberate social reform, (3) a planning attitude that is capable of plotting the course of cultural revision, and (4) the testing of the cultural plan by enacting programs of deliberate social reform. p. 301

For the social reconstructionists, the goal of education as a contentual issue means criticism of the capitalist economic system and a discourse on the socially polarizing influence of capitalism that produces rich and poor people. What was said above means that the task of the teacher at school is to make the pupils conscious of the problems in modern society and to indoctrinate the pupils into new social activity. This new social order and activity does not fulfill the laws connected with economy and politics in capitalism, in which the people who own money are in control of social activity. It is about new social activity in which an essential role is played by the class struggle to achieve the “collective ideal”. The social reconstructionist philosophy of education is based on Marxist social philosophy, in which the production of the social order of Marxist philosophy takes place in education through indoctrination. The change of the capitalist social order into a society with the “collective ideal” takes place fastest through a revolution. The extreme leftist wing of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education advocates educational thinking in which the teachers at school indoctrinate the pupils to accept a revolution in the capitalist society. This revolution by the teacher and pupils will transfer social activity as quickly as possibly into a society described by Marxist social philosophy. (Tanner & Tanner 1990, pp. 220-222.)

The essential objective of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education is to try to change and control social, political and economic reality by means of education. As the social reconstructionists have a clear idea of planned social reality based on Marxist social philosophical thinking, it is logical to think that the next generation is educated for this social reality teleologically or finalistically. In this way indoctrination is the nature of the interaction related to education in the social reconstructionist philosophy of education. Indoctrination refers to manipulation of the rising generation for a pre-designed social, political and economic social reality. (Guttek 1988, pp. 311.)

George S. Counts

The most important developer of social reconstructionist philosophy of education was George S. Counts (1889-1974). The academic career of George S. Counts within educational philosophy started at the University of Chicago under the supervision of Charles Judd in 1913. Counts' dissertation is an educational sociological study made at the University of Chicago. Counts' early scientific influences are connected with the application of quantitative methods in the human sciences. His scientific thinking was also influenced by the University of Chicago sociologists Albion W. Small and William I. Thomas. Small and Thomas emphasized the meaning of sociohistorical phenomena in the research of education (Dennis & Eaton 1980, pp. 1-2; Graham 1967, pp. 63; Guttek 1970, pp. 58-59.) George S. Counts pursued his working career as professor at Teachers College at Columbia University in New York from 1927 to 1955. Some of his colleagues working at the same time included John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, Boyd Bode, John Childs, Merli Curti, Harold Rugg and Edward Thorndike. (Dennis & Eaton 1980, pp. 3,14.)

Counts' educational philosophical thinking can be divided into three different periods. The first stage comprises the 1910's and 20's. At this time, focal issues in his educational philosophical thinking included the child-centered educational philosophy of progressive education, and Deweyan instrumentalism. At the second stage after the mid-1920's, Counts became interested in the Soviet Union's social and educational system. His educational philosophical thinking began to focus on social philosophical issues and their relationship to education. In the early 1930's, Counts started to formulate the main principles of social reconstructionist philosophy of education. We can say that Counts presided over the birth of social reconstructionist philosophy of education in giving the paper called “Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?” in the Progressive Education Association in 1932. The 1930's marked the golden age of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education, and the main discussion forum was the educational journal called “The Social Frontier”. At the end of the

1930's, the development in the Soviet Union and Europe led to the rise of dictatorships, which meant a move in Counts' educational philosophical thinking to the third stage; he began to draw away from the Soviet social and educational system, and lost his interest in applying it to the American society. After the mid-1940's Counts was highly critical of dogmatic models of social thinking.¹ (Dennis&Eaton 1980, pp. 3-5, 8; Gutek 1970, pp. 61-63, 73-85, 250-252; ks. Graham 1969, pp. 64, 82, 115.)

“Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?”

“We live in troublous time; we live in an age of profound change; we live in an age of revolution” (Counts 1932b, 38).

Counts' educational philosophical thinking is based on the indoctrination of the rising generation into the desired social order. Which are the educational philosophical roots of the nature of indoctrination in Counts' education? Counts (1932a, pp. 257; Counts 1932b, pp. 12; Counts 1932d, pp. 5-6; see Bowers 1969, pp. 14) approves of child-centered educational thinking, in which the child's own activeness and freedom are the basic starting-points for education. Counts (1932a) says;

It (the Progressive Education Movement, A.S.) has focused attention squarely upon the child: it has recognized the fundamental importance of the interest of the learner: it has defended the thesis that activity lies at the root of all true education: it has conceived learning in the terms of life situation and growth of character: and it has championed the rights of the child as a free personality. All of this is excellent: but in my judgment it is not enough. It constitutes to narrow a conception of the meaning of education: it brings into the picture but one half of the landscape. p. 257

Counts does not reject the idea of the freedom of human activity, and specifically of the freedom of human thinking. Freedom is, however, only part of human activity. Counts (1932a, pp. 261; Counts 1932c, pp. 40; see Bowers 1969, pp. 15; Graham 1969, pp. 24; Gutek 1970, pp. 24) finds that the capitalist society has led into the disappearance of true human individual freedom. It has been replaced by an economic system that exploits people both mentally and economically. A fundamental change has taken place as a result of the industrialization of society, whereupon the accumulation of capital has given rise to a “selfish” group of people that is in control material property. This propertied class wants to privatize everything from merchandise to art and religion. Capitalism has developed into a system that is inhuman towards the individual and “cruel” towards society. Counts (1932a) describes the selfish operation of capitalist society as follows:

In the present form of capitalism it is not only cruel and inhuman: it is also wasteful and inefficient. It has exploited our natural riches without the slightest regard for the future: it has made technology serve the interests of the profit motive: it has chained the engineer to the vagaries of the price system: it has plunged the great nations of the world into a succession of wars, ever more devastating and catastrophic in character: and only recently, it has brought on a world crisis of such dimensions that millions of men in all of the great industrial countries have been thrown out of work and a general condition of paralysis pervades the entire economic order. p. 261

¹Gutek (1984, pp. 131) points out that George S. Counts' social reconstructionist philosophy of education is based on opposition to conservatism, Social Darwinism, economic individualism and uncontrolled capitalism. The social values that Counts finally ended up in were related to democracy, Rooseveltian liberalism (The New Deal), John Dewey's experimentalism and Charles Beard's historical relativism. Equality, democratic ethics and scientific technological development to solve social problems are essential to Counts' social philosophy (Gutek 1984, pp. 132).

Counts' conclusion about the achievements and development of capitalist society is not elevating: the capitalist economic system only causes problems that cannot be solved by the means of the capitalist system itself. In his analysis of the capitalist, mostly American society, Counts (1932a, pp. 261; see Counts 1932c, pp. 39-40; Counts 1932d, pp. 43-53; see also Bowers 1969, pp. 15; Graham 1969, pp. 65; Stanley 1992, pp. 13-16, 31) reaches the conclusion that society can be changed into something better in the form of systematic social thinking. This means changing the private capitalist market economy system into a fairer and better society through a reconstruction effected by the various cooperating parties in society. Reconstruction of society means the change of "private capitalism" into a "socialized economy". New social ways of action, a socialized economy, are the result of a reorganization of the utilization of the achievements of science and technology. The aim is a society with a "harmony with the real facts of life". The ideal society is based on genuine cooperation between individuals and not on self-seeking. Cooperation between individuals also provides security for the individuals' welfare which enables true freedom of the individuals as they function in society. Counts (1932a) says:

Obviously, the growth of science and technology has reached a point where competition must be replaced by cooperation, the urge for profits by careful planning, and private capitalism by some form of socialized economy". "There merely remains the task reconstructing our economic form and of reformulating our social ideas so that they may be in harmony with the underlying facts of life. The man who would live unto himself alone is now a public enemy: the day of individualism in economic sphere is gone." "Freedom without a secure economic base is simply no freedom at all". p. 216

Counts (1932a, pp. 257-258; see Gutek 1970, pp. 27-28) understands that education is essential in an activity in which the product of education is new communal activity. The function of education is, in one way or another, to have an influence on not only the educatee's learning process but also on social development "To be progressive", as Counts (1932a, pp. 257-258; Counts 1932b, pp. 12; Counts 1932d, pp. 6, 17-18, 37; see Bowers 1969, pp. 14-15; Stanley 1992, pp. 26) says, educational activity needs to have a direction that it aims at. If the direction of educational activity is not defined, the cause of this activity remains unclear. Setting a goal for educational activity forces the educators to discuss educational activity. The above is, according to Counts (1932a, pp. 257-258), the core of educational activity: the educators need to discuss what good education is all about, how education can produce good human beings (1). Good education and good human beings are in solid connection with communal activity (2); good education is a characteristic of a good community. According to Counts (1932a, pp. 257-258; Counts 1932b, pp. 14; Counts 1932d, pp. 18; see Gutek 1970, pp. 53, 118; Stanley 1992, pp. 27, 29), educational activity is tied to communal activity, and the implementation of educational activity always reflects the goals and objectives of communal activity. In this way educational activity and communal activity are in a solid connection with each other. Counts (1932a) describes the relationship between education and communal activity as follows:

You may argue that the movement (the Progressive Education Movement, A.S.) does have orientation, that it is devoted to the development of the good individual. But there is no good individual apart from some conception of the nature of the good society. Man without human society and human culture is not a man. And there is also no *good* education apart from some conception of the nature of the good society." "It (education, A.S.) must always be a function of the time and circumstances". p. 258

The change of communal activity in a better direction, in which a shift takes place from the individuals' selfish capitalist activity towards a just society that takes into account

everyone's individual needs, is the ideal or utopia that Counts' social philosophical thinking is aiming at. Educational activity has an essential role to achieve this goal. Counts (1932a, pp. 259; Counts 1932b, pp. 13; Counts 1932c, pp. 39; Counts 1932d, pp. 19; see Stanley 1992, pp. 31) points out that it is up to the educators to reconstruct new communal activity. This reconstruction shall be based on an analysis of the problems in the community's social reality and on possible solutions to these problems. A special attention is given in Counts' (1932a, pp. 259; Counts 1932c, pp. 39) analysis to the change of the largely agricultural form of life into the modern industrialized society in which new scientific observations and their technological applications direct social development. The conclusion made by Counts (1932a, pp. 259; Counts 1932b, pp. 13; Counts 1932d, pp. 9-10, 28; see Bowers 1969, pp. 15-16, 19; Graham 1969, pp. 65; Gutek 1970, pp. 66, 68, 120; Stanley 1992, pp. 27) is that education is not a child-centered activity, as the analysis of the contents of educational activity based on the principles of communal activity rests with the educators. As the contents are based on the principles of a better society, the educators have the right to transfer the principles reconstructed from communal activity to the next generation through indoctrination. This is what Counts (1932b) says about the relationship between the reconstruction of communal activity and education:

If Progressive Education is to be genuinely progressive, it must ... , face squarely and courageously every social issue, come to grips with life in all of its stark reality, establish an organic relation with the community, develop a realistic and comprehensive theory of welfare, fashion a compelling and challenging vision of human destiny, and become somewhat less frightened than it is today at the bogeys of *imposition* and *indoctrination*. In a world, Progressive Education cannot build its program out of the interests of the children: it cannot place its trust in a child-centered school... This brings us to the most crucial issue in education – the question of the nature and extend of the influence which the school should exercise over the development of the child. p. 13

Underlying Counts' (1932a, pp. , 263; see Gutek 1970, pp. 120-122) views in favor of indoctrination there are three premises: firstly, as the operations of capitalist society drift into a crisis, an opportunity arises to change communal methods of activity through a revolution. The establishment of a new social order, a better society produced through revolution, takes places through indoctrination in educational activity. Secondly, the justification of indoctrination is connected with the moral idea of reaching, through revolution and indoctrination, “a more beautiful society” than what communal activity was before. Thirdly, the educatee's relationship with the educator and the social community is always one of subordination, whereby the educator and culture are the main influencers on the educatee.

According to Counts (1932b, pp. 13-15), the relationship between the educator's educational activity and the educatee's learning can be understood similarly to cultural enculturation; cultural ways of action are internalized in the educatee as a result of activity. It is about cultural knowledge and skills being transferred to the educatee's activity. Cultural activity is the primary influencer on the educatee's process of socialization. What is the analogy between the enculturation of the educatee and education? Counts understands cultural ways of action and education as factors that have an influence on the increase of knowledge and skills in the educatee. Both culture and education can be understood to be mean direct influences, indoctrination in relation to he educatee's activity. There are two issues here: firstly, cultural enculturation is not a good or bad thing, it is just a fact. Secondly, education has a similar relationship to the educatee's enculturation as culture has.

Counts (1932b, pp. 13-15; Counts 1932d, pp. 13-15; see Gutek 1970, pp. 119; Stanley 1992, pp. 27) uses four examples to show the direct influence of culture on the educatee's growth. First of all, every child is born in a given cultural medium which has a

certain manner of communication and using language. It is natural that a child learns the way of communication and the language in whose sphere the child is acting. The communication environment and verbal activity exist before the child's activity, and the assumption is that the child internalizes the culture of any given time as such. Counts (1932b) defines the influence of culture on the educatee's activity as follows:

One of the most important elements of any culture is a tradition of achievement along a particular line – a tradition which the group imposes upon the young and through which the powers of the young are focused, disciplined and developed”. “The child is terribly imposed upon by being compelled through the accidents of birth to learn one language rather than another, but without some language man would never become a man”. “In the life cycle of the individual many choices must of necessary be made, and the most fundamental and decisive of these choices will always be made by the group”. p. 13

Secondly, the educatee does not have any personal traits at birth, such as personal good or bad characteristics, but the potential to learn different things through a variety of influences. Thus education gets an opportunity to influence the educatee's growth through his non-determined qualities. A “good person”, “good community” or “good education” are not given properties in an educatee, but issues in cultural activity that can be conveyed to the next generation. A good community, where there is good education, can produce a good person. (Counts 1932b, pp. 14; Counts 1932d, pp. 15-16; see Gutek 1970, pp. 119; Stanley 1992, pp. 27.) Counts (1932b) describes the growth potential and education of the educatee as follows:

... the individual is neither good nor bad; he is merely a bundle of potentials which may be developed in manifold directions. Guidance is, therefore, not to be found in child nature, but rather in the culture of the group and the purposes of living. There can be no good individual apart from some conception of the character of the good society; and good society is not something that is given by nature: it must be fashioned by the hand and brain of man. This process of building a good society is to a very large degree an educational process. p. 14

Thirdly, culture does have an influence on the child's learning, so it is natural that the educators exert an influence on the educatee's learning by their value judgments. According to Counts (1932b, pp. 14; Counts 1932d, pp. 16-17; Counts 1932d, pp. 23; see Gutek 1970, pp. 144; Stanley 1992, pp. 27), it is better that teachers influence the students' learning processes through their value judgments in a positive way, as – if it can develop freely – cultural enculturation may be problematic both for the child and the activity of the community. Counts says (1932b);

My thesis is that complete impartiality is utterly impossible, that the school must shape attitudes, develop tastes and even impose ideas. It is obvious that the whole of creation cannot be brought into school. This means that some selection must be made of teachers, curricula, architecture, methods of teaching.” “I would merely contend that as educators we must make many choices involving the development of attitudes in boys and girls and that we should not be afraid to acknowledge the faith that is in us or mayhap the forces that compel us.” p. 14.

Fourthly, Counts (1932b, pp. 15) thinks that it is problematic to leave the children to develop by “the blind play of their psychological forces” and to conceal indirect influence on the child as activity “for the benefit of the child”. By the educator's indirect influence, Counts means that educators are prepared to accept the influence of cultural activity on the educatee's growth, but that they do not acknowledge the contribution of the educatees' own activity to their own growth. The above is, according to Counts, a moral dilemma connected with child-

centered educational thinking. Education is about direct influence on the child's learning. And according to Counts, it is fairer to openly acknowledge the contentual principles and methods of education taking place at the school. Counts (1932b) criticizes the educational thinking of the supporters of child-centered education in progressive education as follows:

Progressive education wishes to build a new world but refuses to be held accountable for the kind of the world it builds. In my judgment, the school should know what it is doing, in so far as this is humanly possible, and accept full responsibility for its acts.
p. 15

Conclusions and criticism

Counts' idea of the nature of indoctrination in educational activity has, according to Gutek (1970, pp. 117, 126-127), been subjected to criticism based on the analysis of interaction in educational activity. The criticism is based on three ideas: firstly, the traditional idea of the freedom of human activity and of the neutrality of education in an educational institution are principles that belong to the core of western – and thus also American – educational thinking. Indoctrination by the educator in educational activity is problematic because a finalistic, unchanged idea of issues is generated in the educatee as a result of the indoctrination. An unchanged idea of the nature of things does not enable individual activity in the changing world, but rather a drift away from the “true and changing world”. The educatee's own critical thinking cannot be constituted in indoctrination. In addition to what was said above, the world of knowledge produced for the educatee through indoctrination exists in his or her thinking, whether or not he or she wants it.

Secondly, in an educational process in which the educator indoctrinates the educatee there is no need to take into account the educatee's point of view or his or her human rights to be an individual (Gutek 1970, pp. 126). Counts' idea of the nature of educational activity has been crystallized in the transaction between the educator and educatee to be such that the educator's intentional activity, the contents to be indoctrinated in the educational process by the educator, are transferred as such into the educatee's activity. The idea described above does not take into account the educatee's own experience and his or her temporal-local position in relation to the world, in which the educatee should understand the knowledge as intended by the educator. This is ultimately about the educatee's relationship between the individual and the world not being given any attention in the educational process.

Thirdly, Counts defines the new communal method of activity based on his own social philosophical views. According to Gutek (1970, pp. 126), this gives rise to the problem who is ultimately given the right to determine the contents of educational activity. The issue is who shall decide on the “new social doctrines” that will finally lead to the “salvation of the world”.

Snook (1972, pp. 19) points out that the idea of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education about indoctrination in education and about the educatee's growth into a democratic actor is conflicting; at the same time as the educatee is given an opportunity for free discussion and The social reconstructionist philosophy of education is here in conflict with its own theoretical premises. Bowers (1969, pp. 107) sees the same logical problem in the relationship between democratic activity and educational indoctrination; the educatees should be able to develop communal activity democratically by means of education that is using coercion as a tool of education. An undemocratic education cannot produce a democratic actor.

Bowers (1969, pp. 48-51; ks. Stanley 1992, pp. 57) criticizes the premises of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education due to its weakness of social analysis; the

advocates of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education believe that education can unambiguously and causally change communal activity in a better direction. This is, according to Bowers, only about the emotional appeal of people for radical activity to accomplish an “ideal social order”. They wish for happiness and social equality both politically and economically. The achievement of improved communal activity is one of the goals of numerous educational philosophical movements. Bowers presents four ideas that the social reconstructionist philosophy of education has not been able to achieve despite the goals it has set; firstly, the advocates of social reconstructionist philosophy of education have not presented any systematic social analysis that would provide the outline for new communal activity. Secondly, they have not presented how the educator should act, if a social analysis was presented and if it was found to be realistic to put into effect. Thirdly, which is the true operational forum for decision-making by the teachers? Fourthly, the teachers' analysis of social problems and their solution, which are transferred to teaching activity, is too slow a method to solve current social problems. The advocates of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education only present their hopes for a utopia in which the values of the capitalist economic system are changed to give rise to a “new social order”.

Post Scriptum: the social reconstructionist philosophy of education, critical pedagogy and John Dewey's instrumentalism

According to William Stanley (1992, pp. 3-9, 218), there are common contentual principles to be found in the social reconstructionist philosophy of education and critical pedagogy. Although social reconstructionist philosophy of education had the most influence on educational philosophical discourse in the 1930's, the so-called critical pedagogy that acquired a stronghold in Anglo-American discussion in the 1980's contains essentially similar contentual principles and questions as the social reconstructionist philosophy of education. Both the social reconstructionist philosophy of education and critical pedagogy focus on the possibility of social change as controlled activity (1). Social change takes place with the help of active actors in the community (2). The goal is to achieve democracy, collective democracy and a better society where the means of production are in collective social ownership, but democracy is applied to control them (3). In education, the most essential producer of democracy, the “new social order”, is the school and the teachers (4). The political basis of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education and critical pedagogy is to oppose the free capitalist economic system (*laissez-faire* capitalism) and to support the Marxist social system (5).

Despite the similarities, the social reconstructionist philosophy of education and critical pedagogy differ from each other in that critical pedagogy has acquired influences from the European schools of critical sociology (the new sociology movement in Great Britain) and critical theory, neo-Marxism, structuralism, phenomenology, post-modernism and post-structuralism (1). In its current form, critical pedagogy includes a strong feminist thinking (2). While the social reconstructionist philosophy of education is based on collective democracy, critical pedagogy takes a critical attitude towards the basis of objective knowledge, aiming again and again to consider the possibility of education as developer of communal activity and to criticize the social conditions of the relationship between knowledge and power (3). (Stanley 1992, pp. 8-9, 218, 221.)

According to Henry A. Giroux (1988, pp. 8-11), an important advocate of critical pedagogy, the social reconstructionist philosophy of education was essentially involved with the relationship between the school institution and society; the school is not a politically free area of communal activity, as the school has an important meaning in changing communal activity – in the transformation – into a democratic, solidary and just society. It is the school's function to educate critical democratic communal actors who are able to intervene in ethical

and political questions in society. This will only succeed if the teachers in schools draw up such a curriculum that takes into account a critical viewpoint on the social justness and welfare of society and on political and economic injustice, so the students take a motivated standpoint on social problems wanting to add to the fairness of social practices. The curriculum is a reconstruction of “good society”. According to Giroux, the issues mentioned above are also essential goals and methods of action in critical pedagogy.

It is perhaps a little surprising that Giroux highlights John Dewey as the most important developer of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education. According to Giroux (1988, pp. 81-87), Dewey's significance in developing the social reconstructionist philosophy of education can be divided into four main contentual principles; firstly, Dewey emphasizes the relationship between democracy and the school's everyday activities, whereby the activities taking place at school should be connected with communal ethical democratic activity. Thus the school is not a politically neutral institution. Secondly, ethical democratic activity means activity aiming at the welfare of the community, where the intelligent thinking of individuals aims at communal moral activity, i.e. democracy. The opposite of this kind of activity is intelligent activity aiming at the individuals' own benefit. Thirdly, Dewey's educational philosophical thinking is based on the individual's experience, especially his or her social experience where learning can take place. Individuals can learn issues related to democracy through social experience, whereby something taking place in social activity can teach the individuals the ability to act communally, loyally and responsibly in society. An individual's socially intelligent and democratic activity can arise in the everyday activities of the school which are solidly connected with the operation of society. Fourthly, Dewey's philosophy of democracy includes the idea of communication with the other members of the community, whereby dialog between people presupposes listening to others' opinions. Giroux himself calls this kind of communication, where the “otherness” of people is taken into consideration, a politics of difference. Mutual understanding makes it possible for democracy and solidarity to develop.

According to Stanley, Dewey was highly critical of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education. In Dewey's educational philosophy, the school is an important place where the various operational principles of society essentially meet with the student, the educatee. This does not mean, however, that the school is a field for the operation of political opinions, ideologies or dogmas, as the educational activity taking place in the school shall develop in the educatees skills for their own problem solving, thus growing into democratic actors in their community. (Stanley 1992, pp. 48-49.) Democratic activity is based on the idea that the individual understands social activity and, further, try to solve problems connected with social activity intelligently and morally. Democracy is not, in Dewey's philosophy, a way of action tied to a given political dogma or ideology, but intelligent activity open to change and based on the thinking of individuals. Thus, Dewey does not approve of the dogmatic basis of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education of a predetermined political ideology that would be final in the social activity of the community. Dewey (LW11) states the above as follows:

To my mind, the greatest mistake that we can make about democracy is to conceive of it as something fixed, fixed in idea and fixed in its outward manifestation. The very idea of democracy, the meaning of democracy, must be continually explored afresh; it has to be constantly discovered, and rediscovered, remade and reorganized; while the political and economic and social institutions in which it is embodied have to be remade and reorganized to meet the changes that are going on in the development of new needs on the part of human beings and new resources for satisfying these needs. pp. 181-182

As Dewey does not approve of unchanged political principles related to the activity of the community in his conception of democracy, he also thinks that they cannot exist in the educator's educational activity. The Marxist social philosophy in which the advocates of the social reconstructionist philosophy of education ended is not a sensible goal for educational activity for Dewey, because then an effort would be made to transfer a certain political social philosophy into the educatee's thinking in educational activity. In accordance with Dewey's educational philosophical principles, this cannot respond to the problems that are manifested in the community's activity in the future. At the same time Dewey disclaims the cornerstone of educational activity in the social reconstructionist philosophy of education, i.e. indoctrination. Dewey's answer – instead of indoctrination – on the nature of the educator's educational activity in the context of changing society is to develop the educatee's thinking and problem solving skills by means of education. Dewey (LW11) says:

Education must have a tendency, if it is education, to form attitudes. The tendency to form attitudes which will express themselves in intelligent social action is something very different from indoctrination, just as taking intelligent aim is very different from firing BB shot in the air at random with the kind of vague, pious hope that somehow or other a bird may fly into some of the shot.

There is an intermediary between aimless education and the education of inculcation and indoctrination. The alternative is the kind of education that connects the materials and methods by which knowledge is acquired with a sense of how things are done and of how they might be done; not by impregnating the individual with some final philosophy, whether it comes from Karl Marx or from Mussolini or Hitler or anybody else, but by enabling him to so understand existing conditions that an attitude of intelligent action will follow from social understanding.” pp. 189-190

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