

REPLY

'Ideology' in educational theory - A reply to Ivan Snook

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As one who has consistently maintained that any serious and/or worthwhile account of educational issues must both confront the matter of ideology and be informed by a theory of ideology, it might be expected that I would welcome the appearance of Ivan Snook's "Ideology' in Educational Theory" more with open arms than grave reservation. And yet it is the grave reservation which finally prevails; for Snook, as I read him, has not advanced our understanding of 'ideology' in educational theory at all, but rather has taken it backwards through attempting (although not succeeding) to link 'ideology' to objective truth, and more specifically to a correspondence theory of truth; and by failing to understand, and thus offering a misplaced critique, of the argument I advance in *Education and Knowledge*.¹ These issues are hardly unrelated since it is largely through the critique of my position that Snook chooses to mount his own case. (In fact he pays no attention to, nor directs any of his critique towards, any other source in the now vast literature on the subject of 'ideology'.) I therefore feel the need both to defend what I have said (where it can be defended), and to point out what I take to be the deficiencies in Snook's case.

Snook's position appears to rest on two foundations. First, there is an underlying commitment to objective truth, as revealed by statements such as: "What is desperately needed, of course, is some non question-begging account of truth and some criterion of truth that is not itself rooted in a dubious theory"; and "educators, by and large, are professionally committed to the power of ideas and the importance of truth";² and by his conclusion that it is "the commitment to objectivity" which gives "the critical attitude which is so central to the practice of education ... its point". Second, there is the concern to distinguish science from ideology; first expressed as something Marxists need to do, and later generalised as a concern facing non-Marxists as well.

Now it is not unusual to find the issues of 'truth' and the 'science/ ideology distinction' taken together in the literature on ideology; and the usual (although not universal) ploy when they are taken together is to establish criteria for distinguishing science from ideology by linking science with truth and labelling that which is ideological as necessarily false: thus a theory of truth serves both to make the distinction and to categorise ideology as being false. I will say more about this general ploy shortly, but here I must point out that it is extremely unclear as to why Snook treats these issues together or what relationship he sees as operating between them. On the one hand it appears as though he is adopting the ploy outlined above, and he states quite categorically: "We need to sharpen (not remove) the distinction between science and ideology. The obvious way to do that is to take the correspondence theory of truth seriously." However, when he comes to list the three things "Any legitimate use of 'ideology' in educational theory must stress", truth and falsity appear to have gone out the window for neither is mentioned. Instead, we are told that ideology (i) has a general political and interest serving function; (ii) that it is usually inarticulated and subtle; and (iii) that it tends to be held dogmatically and defended irrationally and to involve attacks on the motives of opponents. Regrettably, the first of these points is commonplace, and the second and the third take the debate on ideology back about twenty years. Out since ideology is not characterised by Snook as being either false or non-scientific (other than that the third point is supposedly

representative of a non-scientific attitude) what, I am inclined to ask, was the point of the entire preceding discussion?

I think there is a fairly obvious answer to that. In *Education and Knowledge* I put forward an extended discussion of ideology which shies right away from the sort of ‘truth talk’ Snook wants to engage in, and which also trades heavily on not making the ideology/science distinction. I thus desert many popular camps and stand as an obvious target for criticism from many directions; and it’s perfectly understandable that Snook, in the tradition of championing truth, objectivity, and rationality, should answer the challenge. The pity of the matter, however, is that while Snook seems to understand some of my dilemmas extremely clearly, he has quite failed to recognise the position I have argued for, and thus the large brunt of his attack is misdirected. Before showing how this is so perhaps I should briefly indicate three of my central concerns in compiling *Education and Knowledge*.

In the first place I was trying to get completely away from ‘truth talk’ (especially in the correspondence sense that Snook wishes to resurrect) because I believe that we are always fallible, that what we know or take as ‘true’ is necessarily socio-historically variable, and that we do not have and cannot have a “non-question-begging account of truth”. In attempting to do this, however, I found myself locked into a conceptual scheme and language which was not suitable to the task - this being a good example of the legacy noted by Snook which is of serious concern to me. I was able, through systematic editing, to virtually strip the text of the words ‘true’ and ‘truth’,³ but other words and phrases had to keep cropping up if I were to continue writing comprehensible English. Thus everywhere there are references to ‘reality’, ‘errors’, ‘that which is the case’, ‘correct interpretations’, ‘misrepresentation’, etc.; and especially to ‘false consciousness’ which I had to take the trouble to define specifically since the concept was so central to my argument. I wanted, and still want to break free from a particular context of ‘truth talk’, since I believe this to be a positive way forward concerning both epistemology and ideology.⁴

Second, I wanted to deny, or at least consider unproblematic, the science/ ideology distinction for many reasons. (i) Modern philosophy, and especially philosophy of science, has highlighted the point that delineating criteria which distinguishes the production of scientific theory from all other theoretic production is as yet unsettled (even if past ages thought they had settled it), certainly not easily settled, and quite probably unable to be settled. (ii) I wanted to avoid suggesting in any way that Marxism alone is scientific whereas all else is ideological. In adopting a Marxist stance I did not want to then presume I was thus conducting a scientific enquiry. (iii) The science/ideology distinction all too often comes down to ‘science = true, ideology = false’, and to accept that could have thrown me back into the context I was seeking to avoid. (iv) While it is commonplace to regard an ideology as necessarily false, I could not go along that line either because, as I point out in the book (and below) one of the infuriating things about many ideological statements is that they are, damn it all, ‘true’.⁵ (One most regrettable feature of *Education and Knowledge*, however, concerns my inconsistency over the ideology/science distinction, for at times I claim the distinction can’t be made, and at other times that it can.)

Third; I did not want to stand guilty of “the grossest hubris” which Snook describes. I wanted to leave open continually the possibility that my position might not be correct, that it could be the result of deception, that it was open to anyone to come up with a better one now and/or explain mine away, and that everything I said was at least at the mercy of future theoretic production. In other words, I wanted to build ‘fallibility’ into my own position. As Snook acknowledges, I do have an antipathy to dogmatism; and I do want to create or leave open a place for critical thought, even if not exactly of the sort espoused by liberal educators; and even though I do not exactly retain a “liberal’ commitment to truth”. Rather, I take, as three of my starting points, that any theory can be replaced by a better one, that the search for better theoretical constructs with which to understand the world is the primary critical consideration, and that it is a commitment to changing the world for the better which gives the critical attitude its point.

The best means of accommodating all of these concerns seemed to me to lie in developing the Lakatosian approach tempered with some Bachelard and Althusser. In this way I was able to get away from epistemological certainties and speak instead a language of critical preference, while at the same time focusing on the social dimension of theoretic production whenever judgments had to be made: thus being able to say 'A is better than B' without having to say 'A is true whereas B is false' and without being driven into a position of saying 'A is scientific whereas B is not'. The move was not entirely successful,⁶ but on the other hand both the details and the overall enterprise are not really touched by Snook's critique, which I have claimed to be misdirected. It is necessary now for me to show why this is so. And since much of the problem with Snook's critique arises from his attempt to squeeze my argument into a framework he finds more acceptable for discussing 'truth', it might be well to begin at the point late in his paper where he attempts to link the problem of the science/ideology distinction with the correspondence theory of truth. This is done so forthrightly as to bear re-quoting.

We need to sharpen (not remove) the distinction between science and ideology. The obvious way to do that is to take the correspondence theory of truth seriously.

And thus are our differences exposed. Actually despite what I have said above I am in some sympathy with the first claim. If, despite the problems involved, the science/ideology distinction can be sharpened, I suspect this could be far more fruitful than my attempt to render the issue unproblematic, for as Snook and others have noted, my tactic does cut the ground from under my feet in some pretty central areas.⁷ There is certainly merit in sticking at the problem; but it's far from obvious how taking the correspondence theory of truth seriously is going to be of any assistance in solving it. I, however, have a prior problem – namely that of taking the correspondence theory of truth seriously at all; or as Snook puts it succinctly – "Harris makes it clear that he will have nothing to do with a correspondence theory". However, since I don't make it clear in quite those terms in *Education and Knowledge* let me clarify my position here.

My principal objection to the correspondence theory, and one sufficiently significant to warrant complete rejection of the theory, is that it is a pretty (and petty) piece of logic, and apart from that nothing more than a seductive trap for the unwary seeking to know the world. Snook illustrates the theory thus:

'The cat is on the mat' is true if the cat is on the mat.

I would prefer to continue with my own example, not because Snook's is 'inconvenient' or because I object to the cat being on the mat, but rather because so much of the supporting argument for my example has already been given in *Education and Knowledge* itself (pp. 10-18). The correspondence theory would have it, and here I correct Snook slightly by introducing the biconditional, that:

'There are three people on the university oval' is true if there are three people on the university oval.

and it follows, of course, that the statement is false if there are two, or four, or five people on the oval. So far, so good; but unfortunately so far is nowhere. All we have is a logical condition for determining the truth of a statement - but what if we want to get down to the serious business of finding out whether or not the statement is true? At this point there's no way out of it: we've got to go down and count the people on the oval'. Now even though this is something I've said enough about already, three of my conclusions bear repeating here. First; at any specified time there is no 'given' number of people on the oval. Second; it is the observer (us) interacting (through theory and methodology) with the object (the oval and its occupants) who determines/postulates the number of people on the oval. Third; using different but equally plausible theories and related methodologies, different observers could determine/postulate with equal justification that there are, respectively, two, three, four or five people on the oval. This being the case, what earthly use is the correspondence theory to us, especially if as Snook recognises, "He cannot as it were, 'take a peep' and check our beliefs against a world."⁸

Notwithstanding this recognition Snook suggests ‘two lines of argument along which progress is possible in re-instating a tenable correspondence theory.’ The first, inspired by Bush, is absurd, and lures Snook into numerous diabolical places. Unperturbed by the obvious points that Bush’s argument is empirically dubious, based on questionable extrapolation, and question-begging in its reference to “the real world”, Snook somehow accepts its language of “beliefs” and “expectancies” and from this concludes that: “The claim that ‘all observation is theory laden’ is false”.⁹ He then states that the science/ideology distinction rests somewhere in “institutional awareness” and attitudes, accompanied by methodology (which can be unsuccessful), which in fact bluntens the distinction he wants to sharpen, and represents a regression to naive pre- and early Popperianism. But this too is short-lived, as Snook quotes and endorses Bush’s amazing long out-dated claim about science devising “crucial experiments” in order to test theories. Finally Snook admits: “We are all fallible, truth is never assured but we can try harder”, which is a position fairly close to mine and which could hardly derive from, or generate, confidence for a correspondence theory of truth.

The second line of argument derives from Papineau and only a short paragraph is devoted to it. From what is written there I find no support for a correspondence theory (nor do I find any in my reading of Papineau himself) - rather I find Snook tending to accept certain Lakatosian notions he previously held up to question, as well as adopting the language of the “research programme” which was earlier dismissed as “an aberration”. I’m afraid that nothing has emerged from Snook’s paper which will incline me to take the correspondence theory seriously or see it as the “obvious way” to sharpen up the science/ideology distinction.

Having correctly identified my position with regard to the correspondence theory, Snook’s next move violates the law of the excluded middle. With correspondence ruled out, Snook declares that: “Any criterion of truth, then, must rest on a form of coherence.” It doesn’t, of course; but let that be as it may and examine what happens when Snook tries to squeeze me into this coherence mould. Snook says as follows:

[Harris] sums up a lengthy discussion with the uncompromising claim that ‘facts are established as such only in terms of a theory that constitutes them as facts in the first place’. There are no facts independent of a theory. Facts cannot be the test of a theory for they exist only in the theory. And truth cannot consist in the conformity of thought with reality for the ‘reality’ presupposes the thought.

This ‘explication’ of my position then leads Snook into various critiques. The problem, however, is that the ‘explication’, made up as it is of direct quotation and paraphrase, misrepresents what I say, and so much so that the ensuing critiques end up as being completely misdirected.

Early in *Education and Knowledge* (p. 7) I lay out one of my central theses thus:

...I take it that there is a crucial difference between properties of the world, and knowledge statements about those properties: I shall therefore refer to the former as ‘facts’, and to the latter as facts (without quotes), while at a later stage some confusion will be eliminated by referring to the former as phenomena or instances.

I also accept even earlier (pp. 3-4) that there is a real world of phenomena and instances – ‘reality’ if you like – in which we act and live; and which, like those things we have chosen to name ‘Mt. Everest’, the planet Mercury’, and ‘the Canterbury Plain’, exists without presupposition of thought.

What Snook has failed to either recognise or acknowledge properly is that when he quotes me he is quoting the sense of facts without inverted commas. If the proper sense of what I say is recognised then Snook’s paraphrase of me is accurate up to his last sentence: but the last sentence itself then goes haywire, regardless of whether it is intended as an explication of my position, an extension, or a critique. It is a totally misrepresentative appendage, and thus any later critique directed back towards this proposed position of mine is quite inappropriate.

Give the confusion that has arisen it might be well if I indicate once again just what it is that I am actually saying. Put very simply, so as not to repeat the argument of my first chapter, it goes like

this: (i) there is a real world; (ii) our knowledge-statements about the real world are theory-laden or theory-dependent; therefore (iii) while the real world exists independent of theory our knowledge statements about it don't. This being the case it is hardly surprising that, as a philosopher, I am very interested in the problem of "the conformity of thought [knowledge statements] with reality", but I never suggest in any way that "'reality' [my quote sense] presupposes the thought".

Perhaps it might be of some value here to make the point again through a new example. Deep in the Waimangu Cauldron (a short trip from Palmerston North) there is a spot which the Europeans have, from the context of one particular theoretic matrix, very appropriately named 'Boiling Springs'. The Maoris, however, long before had another name for it, which, very freely translated, goes something like: 'Even in such inhospitable conditions there is life'. The Maori untrammelled by the concept 'boiling', and awed by life, picked out the wonder of the tiny mosses hanging in there amid the turbulent steaming Cacophony of water; the European overlooked the tiny life forms and drew Attention to the steaming waters bursting from the ground. Both named the World, and both generated knowledge statements (just as in naming Mercury a 'planet' we generate a knowledge statement and make possible the generation of further related ones) but neither created the reality either in the first place or in the act of naming it. In no way does reality pre-suppose the thought – rather, how we think will determine how we perceive, describe, and talk about reality. We produce knowledge statements about the world through our interaction in and with the world, and in so doing name things and determine/postulate such things as the number of people on an oval, that Mercury is the nearest planet to the sun, or whether or not a cat is on the mat. The world does not presuppose thought; making knowledge statements, however, presupposes both. And these knowledge statements are quite categorically theory laden. It might be worth pointing out here that my entire argument has been cast in terms of knowledge statements (either expressed or just thought) deriving from perception/ interaction with the world. I dare not guess what goes on in the heads of animals or primitives, but since they do not articulate knowledge statements as we recognise them they cannot be considered as legitimate counter-examples in the issue of the theory-ladenness of observation.

Snook's misunderstanding/misrepresentation of my position then leads him into his most sustained argument against my discussion of ideology, and in order to put matters straight it is important to follow through and comment on his critique.

Snook recognises, correctly, that I wish to avoid idealism and relativism, and then states: "He must then find a way to reconcile his extreme version of theory-dependence with a commitment to objectivity." At this point I must comment that my version of theory-dependence is 'extreme' only in the sense that it is an 'all or nothing' version; but as this is the only tenable version with regard to all knowledge statements (including those which various commentators might label as 'scientific'), then 'extreme' is an inappropriately pejorative description.¹⁰ I should also add that I never express a commitment to 'objectivity' in the sense that Snook is apparently using it. Nevertheless, Snook continues: "His attempts to do that are best approached through his treatment of ideology"; and this is followed by a brief summary of my argument (pp .47-9) which is fair apart from the point that I do not "[hold] out the possibility of judging the truth of an ideology" since, at that stage I am following Lakatos's notion of determining critical preference rather than truth. But Snook then claims that the "promise fares badly from the start" and continues thus:

.... Harris says that ideologies can present a distorted picture of the world yet function in an efficient way. Thus the judgement must be made 'with regard to the ideology theory-series itself, and not in terms of how well the particular ideology functions in a particular society. When it comes to ideology, the best theory and the best functioning theory can be two different things'. This seems decidedly odd.

This is followed by a barrage of rhetorical questions, three of which I shall list and discuss along with the above quotation for they are grounded in the same misreading which gives rise to what is found to be "decidedly odd". Snook asks (the numbering is mine):

1. If theories (including ideologies) are to be judged as “research programmes” why renege and judge them in some other mysterious way?
2. ... why must an ideology be judged overall and not in terms of how it functions in a particular society?
3. What reason do we have for accepting that the best theory and the best functioning theory are very different?

Now the problem with all of this is that Snook has either misread or overlooked my critique of Lakatos which appears (pp. 46-7) just before the section he summarises; and in the paragraph displayed above he miscontextualises the words of mine which he quotes. Snook writes: “Thus the judgment must be made ‘with regard to ...’; whereas what I actually say is quite different (and here I add emphases): ‘the favourable judgments we might make in Lakatosian terms must be made with regard to ...’ (p. 49).

Let me put all of this a little more clearly. What I argue is that, if we stick to Lakatosian terms, we have to judge an ideology theory-series itself in those terms. What I also argue, however, is that Lakatosian terms, while useful are ultimately deficient; that in all cases it is necessary to go beyond Lakatos; and that Lakatos’s criteria for determining critical preference are neither totally appropriate nor adequate in the realm of ideology where the best theory and the best functioning theory ‘can be two different things’. I also discuss at some length where Lakatos is deficient and what other criteria might usefully be considered in judging ideologies. I never say that ideologies must be judged overall solely according to Lakatos’s criteria for critical preference: rather I say the opposite, and argue for the consideration of other additional factors. Thus there is no renegeing or smuggling in of “mysterious ways” of judgment. So much for questions 1 and 2 (and also for any suggestion that I am “over-impressed” with or “captivated by” Lakatos). This leaves question 3, and that matter which Snook finds “decidedly odd”.

Question 3 is actually posed in a slightly unfair way. I don’t say “the best theory and the best functioning theory are very different”; I simply say (here with added emphases and context-placement) that ‘When it comes to ideology, the best theory [in terms of Lakatos’s criteria for critical preference] and the best functioning theory can be two different things. (p. 49). This, rather than being “decidedly odd”, is one of the major points, if not the lynch-pin, in my overall argument. But rather than argue for it again here, perhaps a simple example will do the trick.

As I write this an economic recession is gripping Australia and New Zealand (and other places as well). The best theoretical account of why this is occurring {in terms of Lakatos’s criteria} is undoubtedly Marxist economic theory, and in comparison with the Marxist account liberal neo-classic economic theory matches up very poorly on a ‘Lakatos scale’. But which account is being promulgated through the legitimated channels, and which account is more widely accepted by Australasians? Please, don’t tell me the Marxist one. It is clearly in the service of certain interests that the Marxist account be not legitimated, accepted or embraced by the vast mass of the population, and towards this end a worse theory (on the ‘Lakatos scale’) is made to prevail’ and at present, like the ‘dole bludger’ theory of its day, it is functioning. extremely well. Similarly, the critically unpreferable theories that schooling serves to ameliorate the social inequalities which children bear, that standards are declining in our state schools, and that teachers are to blame when their pupils can’t get jobs, are functioning far better at this present time than are their respective critically preferable counterparts. If this seems in any way odd to my readers then I would direct them, in the first instance, to Chapters 2 through 5 of *Education and Knowledge* which are very largely devoted to accounting for how, within liberal democracies, critically unpreferable theories come to penetrate the consciousness of the majority while certain critically preferable alternatives are unable to function according to their merit. What does seem odd to me is that Snook can find my position “decidedly odd” and yet himself recognise that ideology or critically preferable theory can fail to ‘win minds; and/or result in appropriate practice. Not only does he admit that “four million Frenchmen can be wrong”, but he also recognises that “massive unemployment and poverty does

not lead to the abandonment of capitalism" - if he also accepts that the best going account of the cause of massive unemployment and poverty is capitalism, and yet the prevailing view is otherwise such that we lay the blame elsewhere (e.g., at schools, teachers, dole bludgers, unreasonable unions) and not abandon capitalism, then he makes my point for me.

It would appear, from Snook's continuing critique, that not only does my promise fare badly from the start but also that it continues rapidly downhill before ending up rather badly bogged in the sands. I shall attempt to demonstrate now that this is not so, and that Snook's critique is based on a misreading of my argument along with a continuing attempt to squeeze my position into a context where it does not belong and was never intended to belong.

Snook's next claim is that I am "clearly ... oscillating between a pragmatic and a correspondence criterion", of truth, presumably; and after detailing my continuing "contradiction" he states:

If 'true' means 'serving my interests' then a particular ideology would be both true and false: true for one class and false for the other.

Snook's introduction of "true" here is something of a conjuring trick. Ideology I argue, is interest serving; it serves the interests of one class while working against the interests of another class. I most certainly do not want to say that it is "true for one class and false for the other" - a point which Snook but in his recognition he forces a strange imperative on me:

Since Harris apparently does not want to say this he must provide criteria for assessing the truth value of ideologies. He makes four main attempts:

It must be said very clearly at the outset that there is no way in the world that I must "provide criteria for assessing the truth value of ideologies", and that what are described (and discussed) as my four main attempts to do this are really nothing of the sort. Perhaps they do not measure up to the job Snook wants them to do; but since they were not intended to do this job, and since there is no justifiable requirement that the particular job in question must be done, it is the critique rather than the endeavour which is misplaced. Again let us examine what is really going on in context.

All of Snook's critique derives from part (more precisely pp. 110-7) of a section of mine headed 'False Consciousness'. It is important, however, to recognise what I say in my introductory discussion of this notion. The whole text (pp. 108-10) is vital, but rather than repeat it here one selection must suffice:

... if our consciousness results from a theory or research programme that can be shown to be more progressive than another theory or research programme, then consciousness that is generated from the latter can be said to be 'false' ... But when we come to ideological issues the matter becomes far more complicated for many reasons, most of which have been indicated earlier ...

The ensuing discussion (viz. pp. 110-7) then examines how well three theories account for a single instance, in each case beginning with the attempt to determine progressiveness and then moving into the complications that arise. The "main attempts" which Snook points to are not directed towards providing criteria for assessing truth value; they are, rather, illustrations of different ways of attempting to come to grips with the varied problems which arise when one wants to 'justify' saying 'X is a better account of A than Y is' in cases where critical preference is not so easily established. Important also to note is the caveat put at the end of the discussion (p. 118) where I argue that 'false', in the sense in which it is being used, is at the least historically variable and certainly never absolute, and is thus not the antithesis of the standard sense of 'true'.

That, however, is not the end of the matter, for Snook's critique of each of my four "main attempts" also warrants some attention.

The first "attempt" is concerned with 'falsifiability', but this issue hardly presents the problems which Snook suggests it does. Although falsifiability looms large in Lakatos's theory as I outline it (p. 43), it has all but disappeared in my critical modification (p. 49). I still accept, however, that an ideology must be falsifiable in principle before Lakatos's criteria for critical preference can be

applied to it; but accepting that much, while remaining wary of the need to modify the application of Lakatos, hardly leaves me open to the sorts of charges Snook makes. Admittedly on p. 111 I do not add the words 'in principle' but prior discussion (e.g., p. 36) might have allowed us to take this as read – but note also how, on p. 111 I use Lakatos and falsifiability 'on the one hand' and very quickly move on to the other criteria. 'Falsifiability', in context, is an important but passing consideration.

My second strategy which Snook identifies "is to look at ideology ... in terms of interests." Actually this is my basic, constant strategy; and in Ch. 2 I argued for this as a necessary condition – in fact the crucial condition - but also recognised that it wasn't a sufficient condition (hence the continued consideration of other issues and conditions). But Snook wants to claim that the force of my argument comes from my particular example, which he rephrases as "a person's place in the social structure is a reflection of God's will", and then continues:

It is a theological claim and is scarcely a genuine empirical statement at all. If we replace it with a more obvious empirical statement such as 'a person's position in the social structure is highly correlated with his measured I.Q.' the logic of Harris's argument is revealed. For this statement has also been used to serve the interests of ruling classes. The point is, of course, that this does not make it false: a true theory can serve class interests. Unless 'true' is to have the cynical meaning 'serving the right interests' there seems little chance of producing truth criteria from the notion of 'interests'.

Four points on that. First; I didn't say that my original example was a genuine empirical statement, and it doesn't matter one way or the other whether it is or not. Second; substituting it by Snook's statement reveals nothing about the logic of my argument whatsoever, because I don't say that 'serving that interests of a ruling class' makes a theory false, but rather that this can reveal it as being ideological. Third; I do not try to produce truth criteria from the notion of 'interests', and here I am being totally misrepresented. Fourth; in stating that "a true theory can serve class interests" Snook is allowing that an ideology can be true. This is consistent with the three criteria he later claims "Any legitimate use of 'ideology' ... must stress" where, as noted earlier, truth and falseness have disappeared; but it is not consistent with the whole direction and substance of his paper and his centering on the correspondence theory of truth.

Actually if we look a little closer we find that Snook's example works for me rather than against me. It is very similar to the two I discuss at some length (pp. 100-5) under the heading 'Recognising the ideological', where I show how apparently neutral, descriptive empirical claims (and Snook's would have done almost as well as either of the two I chose) can be shown to be class interest serving and thus ideological. And the point being highlighted throughout that entire discussion is not that the (ideological) statements are false but rather that, (in the language of 'truth talk'), for all intents and purposes they really are true.¹¹

Snook's critique of my "third strategy" also misfires as a critique, for what we find here is a repetition of the earlier misrecognition regarding my two senses of facts. I do say, as quoted, that "facts are established as such only in terms of a theory that constitutes them as facts in the first place", here in each case using the 'without quotes' sense of 'knowledge statements'. But this hardly applies to 'facts' (phenomena). Of course we can appeal outside a particular theory to 'facts' or phenomena or evidence; and evidence or phenomena can touch any number of theories (which is a point I am at pains to make using numerous examples on pp. 31-4), since the theories generate the facts not the 'facts'. It is, however, important to recognise (as I recognise clearly and anything but begrudgingly) that the production of evidence is not sufficient to judge a theory; which is not to say, as I again point out many times, that the production of evidence lends no weight to our judgment of a theory. Thus, and I now also embrace Snook's comments on my "fourth criterion", plugging in evidence is neither inconsistent with my position nor question-begging.¹²

There are many more issues in Snook's paper which call out for critical comment; but at this stage I would prefer to move away from the common 'Reply-tactic' of doing a thorough demolition

job while including the occasional concession, and instead attempt to end upon a more positive note. The real issue at hand here is not how many points Snook and I can score off each other but rather advancing our understanding of ideology as it relates to educational theory and the practice of schooling. It seems to me that in this area there are two major things to be done; and possibly future papers might concentrate on the following issues.

The first thing that is required is the production of a more consistent thorough and coherent 'internal account' of the nature of ideology as theory than that which I have provided; and here there seem to me to be three fruitful paths to follow. The first is to continue with and work on the ideology/research program analogy. Regrettably Lakatos's notion has not benefitted, in the way Kuhn's notion of a 'paradigm' has benefitted, from being subjected to intense philosophic scrutiny; and while there are many things about Snook's understanding and critique of research programs which I would be inclined to take issue with I think the endeavour itself is important and indicative of the sort of thing that might be gone into far more thoroughly. The second path is, of course, to continue hacking at the ideology/science distinction. While I am as I said earlier pessimistic about the chances of finding definitive criteria of demarcation, the value of the prize itself is enough to make the continuing search worthwhile at least up until the time when the search can be declared, as I do not declare it now, utterly futile. The third path is to follow far more closely than I followed in *Education and Knowledge* Marx's theory of contradiction, and the notion of ideology serving to conceal contradictions. I suspect this last path might be the one most profitably followed.

The second thing to be done is to produce a better 'external account' of the operation of ideology as theory. Marxists, and at least a significant number of non-Marxists recognise that interest-serving theories are produced, promulgated, and accepted by large numbers of people as 'the way things naturally are' (which in turn has large political ramifications); and further, that formal schooling has a significant part to play in this process. *Education and Knowledge*, relying as it does at times on crude reproduction theory, in places gives an oversimplistic account of this; and while I have modified my position somewhat in *Teachers and Classes*,¹³ the account there is by no means perfect either. Valuable work is at present being undertaken in the ethnographic mode,¹⁴ in studies of culture,¹⁵ and in the production of re-creation rather than reproduction theory.¹⁶ I suspect that it will serve all of us well to take serious note of these developments.

Notes

1. Kevin Harris (1979) *Education and Knowledge*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul) Page references to this book are given internally in the text of the article.
2. All words enclosed by double quotation marks are direct quotations from Snook's (1982) paper, *Access*, 1, 1, pp. 12-20. Page references have not been given in order to avoid a proliferation of Notes and possible confusion regarding sources.
3. It certainly is, to answer Paul Crittenden ("Philosophical Thoughts About Education", *Quadrant*, Sept. 1980, p. 49) "no accident that there is no entry for 'truth' in the index of Harris' s book".
4. I may have been better advised to have used 'propositions' rather than 'knowledge statements' both in the book and here, for as Colin Evers has pointed out in his review (*Australian Journal of Education*, June/Oct. 1980) I "plainly need a term for 'undistorted knowledge'".
5. This point is interestingly, if not definitively, accounted for by Jorge Larrain (1979) *The Concept of Ideology* (London: Hutchinson), pp. 173-211, and especially p. 210. Larrain's account was not available to me at the time of writing *Education and Knowledge*.
6. For excellent, and not always sympathetic discussion, of the overall move see Walter Feinberg's Review Essay (1980) "The Problem of Knowledge in Contemporary Marxist Educational Thought", *Harvard Educational Review*, 50, 4, 506-12. For a taste of the other extreme see P. Crittenden, *op. cit.*
7. Jim Walker (1980) has exposed this point quite nicely in his as yet unpublished thesis, *Autonomy, Authority and Antagonism* (University of Sydney); see especially pp. 474-5.

8. My second objection is simply this: if, as I concede it to be possible (p. 195) our statements do coincide with or correspond to the world and are thus 'true', how can we possibly know that this is the case when it occurs? Again, what earthly use is a theory of truth which cannot inform us as to which of our claims are true in its terms?
9. While, as I indicate below, I am not privy to the cerebral workings of animals and primitives, I can only wonder at any attempt to divorce beliefs and expectancies from theories. If animals and primitives do not have theories then in what sense can they be said to have beliefs and expectancies?
10. Hopefully Snook and I can take as common ground, if only for the purpose of the exercise, that 'All metals expand when heated' is a scientific proposition or fact (without quotes). And it is, of course, "created by theory" or theory-dependent. Disbelievers might begin with a look at A. Chalmers (1976) *What is this thing called science?* (St. Lucia: Uni. of Queensland Press) pp. 25-30.
11. This can be accounted for if we consider theories in terms of concealing contradictions, but this is hardly the place to open up that discussion.
12. It is of some interest that Snook makes this extraordinary claim at the point when he is considering my very discussion of how three different theories can pick out and account for the same 'fact' or phenomenon.
13. Kevin Harris (1982) *Teachers and Classes* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
14. Paul Willis's work is presently well known and warrants critical consideration. Jim Walker's *From School to Work? A study of Education, Work and Unemployment in the Inner-city* (expected publication 1983) is a further extremely valuable contribution to this mode, and one which bears close attention. Bruce Wilson et al., *Australian Youth in Crisis* (also about to press) is yet another fruitful investigation.
15. Prominent here is the vast production of the University of Birmingham Centre For Contemporary Cultural Studies; and the work of Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson, and Michel Foucault.
16. See, for instance, R. W. Connell et al. (1982) *Making The Difference* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin); which presents an interesting combination of ethnography with re-creation theory.