

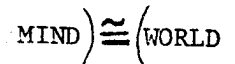
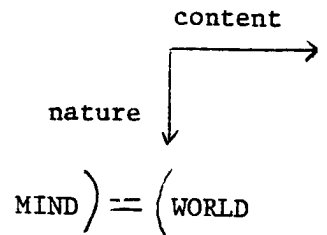
THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL SHIFT AND SOME THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS
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I. THE PROBLEM AS I SEE IT.

1. The epistemological question in the social sciences.
 - Convergence of interest in the social sciences in epistemology.
 - The current paradigm shift.
2. The effect of the social sciences on theological thought.
 - Our interest in developing integrated mazeways, and rejection of mental schizophrenia.
 - Fuller's interest in integration and willingness to take the social sciences seriously.
 - School of World Mission's acceptance of the social sciences.
3. The need for a theological critique of the social sciences.

II. THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL SHIFT IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES.

1. Kuhn's concept of paradigm shift.
2. Distinction between content and nature of knowledge.
3. Naive Realism: Umpire 1—"I call it the way it is."
 - 3.1 Knowledge is a formal structure:
 - One-to-one symmetrical correspondence between mind and reality. The mind passively reflects reality.
 - Therefore knowledge = reality = law = truth.
 - No slippage or interpretation needed.
 - Therefore knowledge = absolute.
 - Therefore knowledge = additive, static, unchanging, timeless.
 - Therefore disagreements produce war over who is right, and distrust of those who disagree with you.
 - 3.2 Knowledge can be organized into clear, precise systematic wholes.
 - Therefore there are no loose ends. Knowledge is bounded.
 - Therefore there can be no internal inconsistencies within a system of knowledge.
 - 3.3 Knowledge is an end in itself. It need serve no other purpose. It need not be applied (note Marx's critique of positivism).
 - 3.4 Knowledge has authority.
 - 3.5 Challenge to Naive Realism:
 - Psychology: Piaget, Kohlberg and developmental psychology.
 - Linguistics: Korbzinbsky, Chase, Stewart, Hayakawa and Chomsky in formal linguistics; Sapir, Whorf, ethnoscience, cognitive anthropology in descriptive linguistics.
 - Anthropology: cultural variance and relativism.
 - Analytical philosophy: Wittgenstein, Habermas.
 - Social sciences as a whole: the awareness of the hermeneutical nature of knowledge of human beings.
4. Critical Realism: Umpire 2—"I call it the way I see it."
 - 4.1 Distinguishes between knowledge and reality, and realizes the selective, biased, subjective nature of knowledge.
 - 4.2 Knowledge is a substantive or material analogy, not a symmetrical, one-to one correspondence with reality.
 - In an analogy there are points of correspondence between the two elements.
 - In an analogy there is also a negative analogy, points in the analogy not in reality.
 - In an analogy there are neutral elements found in reality and not in the analogy.



- 4.3 Knowledge is a model or map.
- It must be accurate on the essential information necessary to do the job for which the knowledge is intended.
 - It is limited in the information it conveys. It does not picture the total of reality.
 - It is not absolute in itself, nor totally accurate, but is an approximation. Therefore one of its critical tests is its "fit" to reality. Other tests are their usefulness, inclusiveness, uniformity, logical consistency, simplicity, aesthetic beauty and balance.
 - It is dynamic--it grows as the map is extended by means of new information, or refined through corrections of previous errors.
 - This approach "absolutizes" reality (it is the given) not subjective experience.
- 4.4 Order in knowledge.
- Some of the order is found in reality itself. (Watson, Harris)
 - Some of the order is found in the perceptual process. (Bateson)
 - Some of the order is created in the mind. (Tylor, Chomsky, etc.) For example, the mind generalizes from experiences, which are all unique, and forms categories based on sets and fuzzy sets, taxonomies, procedural rules, etc.
 - An example of the interaction of these three is found in the recent color studies of Berlin and Kay.
- 4.5 Approximate vs. Relative: These two are quite distinct.
- Relative is arbitrary. There is no fixed reference point or absolute.
 - Approximate has a reference point it is trying to approach. There is an "absolute" or given in the picture. In that sense it is asymptotic.
- 4.6 Disagreement leads not to a dogmatic polemic on who is right, but to a common search of the given or reality. It does not lead to a playing of the "heretic" game.
- 4.7 Allows for unity and cooperation on the basis of a common goal, not on uniformity. Therefore a body can incorporate variety within itself.
- 4.8 Authority lies in the reality or given, not in knowledge.
- 4.9 Knowledge is perceived as limited, open-ended, and unbounded. There is a much more humble view of knowledge. In Naive Realism, the mind is deified, in Critical Realism it becomes a servant.
- 4.10 Knowledge of humans is hermeneutical. (See Table 1 for some of the implications of this.)
5. Idealism: Umpire 3-- "It isn't anything until I call it."
- 5.1 Recognizes the subjective nature of knowledge and the problem of perceiving the external world. MIND) → (WORLD
- 5.2 Absolutizes the mind. Theory, culture and world view create my world. I can't know for sure about the external world, if it exists, so I deal only with what I can know, namely what is in my mind. The Mind becomes god.
- 5.3 Ultimately relativistic. Each person creates his own world. A person can really communicate only with those who become his disciples and enter his world. There is no common reference point, no common denominator making communication with others useful.
- 5.4 Agreement is based only on uniformity--others must enter my world.
- 5.5 Disagreement leads to rejection or no communication. There is no common starting point.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGY

1. Need for theologians to study the paradigm shift.
 - Theologizing always occurs in a cultural context. It borrows its epistemology from its times.
 - Systematic theology explicitly borrowed from the sciences, and claimed itself to be a "science."

TABLE 1

HIEBERT

TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE	FIELDS	BASIC ASSUMPTIONS AND PROBLEMS
EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE	PHYSICS	1. <u>Unbiased</u> . a) value free; b) detached observer (he is outside the system he is observing); c) etic analysis; d) data unaffected by the observation or by the mind.
	ASTRONOMY	2. <u>Closed system</u> . One analyses a set of variables while controlling for all other variables and external inputs.
	GEOLOGY	3. <u>Empirical</u> . One need deal only with sense experienceable data. One need not infer rational minds independently operating behind the system.
	CHEMISTRY	4. <u>Deterministic</u> . Objects act in accord with external principles.
	BIOLOGY	5. <u>Reductionistic</u> . One seeks to reduce all observations to basic causal factors.
		6. <u>Rationalistic</u> . The goal is a complete system of rationally ordered knowledge. Affect is not given serious consideration, nor is intuition.
		7. <u>Quantitative Methodology</u> . One seeks to measure a real world for sense experiences are potentially measurable.
		PROBLEMS:
		1. What are the limitations of observation (empirical)?
		2. Where does the distinction between object and subject take place?
	3. What role do the sensory systems and the mind play in creating or molding knowledge.	
HERMENEUTICAL KNOWLEDGE	PSYCHOLOGY	1. <u>Personalization</u> . Observer is part of the system. In passing judgment on others, he passes judgment on himself. Knowledge is affected, and, indeed created by the observer.
	SOCIOLOGY	2. <u>Open system</u> . One can never control for all variables because a) the number of them is too great, b) the system is too large to permit the observer to see the whole thing, and c) not all actors are predetermined objects.
	MEDICINE	3. <u>Interpretive</u> . One must look behind experience to minds that are beyond direct observation. Cognitive systems become important, and we must take other people's thoughts seriously. Our own knowledge is always interpretive and based on analogies. Etic and etic analyses are both important.
	ANTHROPOLOGY	4. <u>Indeterministic</u> . Explanation consists not of showing absolute laws, but in showing that it is rational for people to do what they do. It is not causal but evaluative. Strategy theory and transactional theory arise.
	POLITICAL SC.	5. <u>Reflexive</u> . Knowledge and activity is not one way, it is interactive between beings. Therefore the observer must be aware of how others see and react to him, and of his own self image and how he communicates it to them.
	HISTORY	6. <u>Construct nature of knowledge</u> . It is not a reflection of nature but an interpretive map or model created by the mind.
	ART	7. <u>Historical</u> . History and development must be taken into account.
	MUSIC	8. <u>Ethical</u> . The question of morality arises, as does that of involvement.
		9. <u>Wholistic approaches</u> . The goal is not to reduce, but to include all dimensions including affect, intuition and belief.
		PROBLEMS
	1. What is the nature of knowledge? And what are its limitations?	
	2. How does one learn to know what is in the mind of another?	
	3. What are the reasons behind the world of empirical observation?	

RAISE QUESTION
OF ETIC/EMIC

2. Nineteenth and early twentieth century theology = Naive Realism.
 - Theology = Bible = Truth. One-to-one correspondence.
 - Systematic, static, and additive.
 - Authority lies in theology because it = Bible. Therefore dogmatize theological statements.
 - Disagreement leads to conflict and charges of heresy.
$$\text{THEOLOGY} = \text{BIBLE}$$

3. NeoEvangelicalism = Critical Realism.
 - Theology as a mental product is differentiated from the Bible, and the Bible is seen as only a partial revelation of God.
 - Theology seeks to be a growing approximation of the Bible.
 - Theology is based on hermeneutical knowledge.
 - Theology is a model or map of revelation: accurate on the essentials for which it is designed, not cluttered with an infinite amount of information on the whole of the universe.
 - Authority lies in the Bible, not in theology. (Even theological statements about the Biblical inspiration and authority cannot be raised above the Bible's statements about itself.)
 - Disagreement leads us to a common search, or to agreement to differ.
$$\text{THEOLOGY} \cong \text{BIBLE}$$

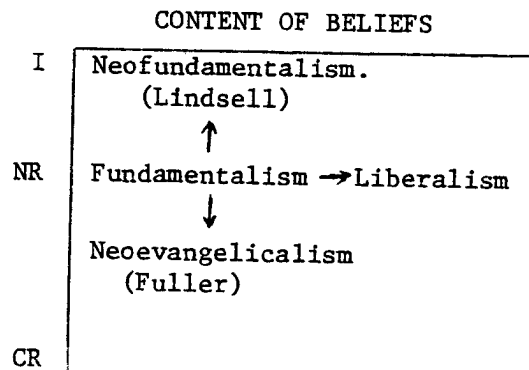
4. NeoFundamentalism ≠ Idealism.
 - Authority ultimately lies in man made statements about the Bible. It therefore defies the human mind for it is the mind which dictates what the scriptures "mean." "The Bible means what my mind says it does."
 - Disagreement leads to claims and counterclaims, to games of heresy, and to fragmentation into warring camps.
$$\text{THEOLOGY} \rightarrow \text{BIBLE}$$

IV. EXAMPLE ONE: THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURES.

1. Naive realism: View of theology and scriptures common to the 19th and early 20th century fundamentalists.
2. Critical realism: Fuller and Neoevangelicals have moved epistemologically towards critical realism. Content-wise they remain conservatives.
3. Idealists: Lindsell and his associates have attacked Fuller as becoming "liberal" (in reference to content of knowledge), which only shows his ignorance of the current epistemological shift, for in fact they have moved in epistemology, not content.

- In his reaction to evangelicals, Lindsell has moved increasingly into an idealistic position in which he places final authority in human defined and formulated statements about the Bible, rather than in the Bible's statements about itself.

- Neofundamentalism's move to idealism opens it up to modern Hindu movements for Hinduism is the classical instance of idealism.



V. EXAMPLE TWO: MISSIONS.

1. Naive realism: missions operating from this point of view are characterized by:
 - A sense of superiority for our knowledge is "right" and all other's is wrong. One does not respect the dignity or sincerity of others who disagree with oneself.
 - Missions is carried out primarily by "proclamation" in the sense that one only declares. Communication is monological.
 - Fellowship and cooperation is based on theological uniformity. The rise of Asian, African, etc., theologies is threatening for there can only be one theology.
2. Critical realism: missions operating by this point of view are characterized by:
 - A commitment by faith to Christ, but recognize that all knowledge systems begin by commitments of faith. One therefore recognizes the dignity of other individuals while strongly disagreeing with their knowledge.
 - Missions is carried out primarily by "witnessing," giving testimony to what one has experienced or believes. It is not dogmatic, but is no less committed. It is dialogical.
 - Fellowship and cooperation is based on a common Lord and a common goal. Theological variance can be accepted, and in fact, is recognized as a source for our own growth, so long as we agree on a common Lord.

VI. EXAMPLE THREE: RELATIONSHIPS.

1. Naive realism: Monocultural people.
 - Assume only their culture is right.
 - Often unaware of other cultures, or do not recognize the fundamental differences between cultures, or the validity of other cultures.
 - Ethnocentric in their relationship to other cultures.
 - Live abroad in monocultural ghettos. Unable to identify with people of other cultures.
2. Critical realism: Bicultural people.
 - Awareness of and acceptance of cultural variety.
 - Willing to identify with people in another culture.
 - Have learned to deal with ethnocentrism both at the intellectual and the affective levels.

VII. EXAMPLE FOUR: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES.

1. Naive realism: homogeneous groups.
 - Fellowship only with those like themselves.
 - Ethnocentric in their relationship to others. Relationships characterized by rejection, hostility, war.
 - Colonial in nature.
2. Critical realism: heterogeneous groups.
 - Fellowship also with those who are different from themselves.
 - Willing to identify with others.
 - International in nature.