



Dag Østerberg

The Dialectics of Post-Positivism

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abstract: This short biography sketches the professional itinerary of Professor Dag Østerberg (1938–), a colleague very well known, respected and much quoted in his native Norway, as well as on the Nordic scene and beyond, as a sociologist, philosopher and musicologist. Østerberg's academic career spans the years as a student from 1957, magister 1961, doctorate 1973, and employment as assistant, associate and professor (in 1981). During several decades of not being employed he devoted his time to free study and writing. In practising a 'frugal freedom', he maintained his independence as an intellectual, upholding his original programme as a 'critic of society' and of sociology as a whole. The biography is written along Bourdieuvian lines, in seeking to understand his career through the various fields he has passed through. Unlike many others, he has had the boldness of spirit to withdraw, time and again, from situations and fields that did not fit with his programme. A critical spirit, he was one of the initiators of the local Norwegian Positivismusstreit, and, although in changing form, has maintained like stands ever since a critical, interpretive sociology, 'post-positivism'. The best known of his English books is *Metasociology* (1987).

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Les événements biographiques se définissent comme autant de placements et de déplacements dans l'espace social (Bourdieu)

Professor Østerberg's first published text (1961b) concludes with the central statement: 'The task of sociology is to be the critic of society'. In terse form, I believe this expresses his long-term goal or basic value, his life's main project – in other words, following Sartre as he so often does himself – *son projet originnaire*.

However, right from the start he was keenly aware that sociological reflections, his own and those of the entire profession, were 'liable to raise disputes, to create conflicts'. This is well illustrated by the following anecdote when, at a congress of Nordic sociologists about 15 years ago, Professor Robert Erikson (2005) conducted a survey asking:

... what book or article the respondents [i.e. Nordic sociologists] regarded as most important among those published in the last ten years. In each country one author was mentioned much more often than any other, in Norway Dag Østerberg by one fourth of those answering ...

The survey was never published, but the main results were presented at a plenum of the congress. Surprisingly, its author went on to deplore Østerberg's high standing and to suggest that we ought to choose better role models for the future.

No new survey has been done, but the impression is that Østerberg's standing, as a sociologist, philosopher and musicologist, has kept on increasing ever since. However, his critics seem to have reinforced their positions, so obviously the tensions, disputes and conflicts are likely to continue. Here, I try to keep track of a few basic ones, going right back to the start of Østerberg's career.

Malraux is credited with saying that the biography genre is popular because we all search fellow sufferers (*compagnons d'infortune*). An ironic breach with more conventional views, that what we search for is rather role models, even in the Bible, let us now praise famous men. Irony or not, it is a fact that Østerberg (in conversation, 2005) stated that 'I see my life as one continuing series of defeats'.¹ Not, I take it, when it comes to his professional itinerary, yet very much so when it comes to the global political and social changes in his lifetime.

He was born (1938) and brought up in Trondheim, a cathedral town in mid-Norway, by upper middle-class parents in a well-to-do neighbourhood. At about 10 years of age, his seeing the world as bound for general equality, prosperity and social liberalism, may have had to do with his parents being Radical Liberals or with the general optimism of the immediate post-World War II years.² Of course, he may just have been an independent and strong-minded person from very early on.

In the following, I try to refrain from hypotheses of historical causes and adapt Bourdieu's final words to the Collège de France, 'Esquisse pour une auto-analyse', making an effort to practice his own 'L'Illusion biographique' (Bourdieu, 1986). I endeavour to place our subject in the fields – in the sense of Bourdieu – in which he took part and was viewed dialectically³ in relation to his various companions, opponents and counterparts (as far as we know them), or, as Bourdieu himself would have phrased it, seeing him in *ludos*, his *illusio* at work and in alteration. Indeed, a characteristic movement of his entire itinerary would appear to be a strong determination, followed by a sharp and unexpected turn as obstacles started to appear, not however as retreat or ceding but in order to protect the essence of his initial determination.

Østerberg's life as a professional sociologist started in 1957 with his student years in Oslo. The field and the Institute of Sociology were at the time very small, diverse and diffuse. The Professor, Sverre Holm (1910–96), was a deep structuralist, a follower of Lévi-Strauss, but most of his staff and students, just like their engineering fellows in Trondheim, were enthusiastic, committed to rebuilding the country, solving social problems, and more. Holm was surrounded by students whom he accepted and mentored yet rarely felt theoretically close to. He would probably much have preferred seeing Norway as the next French *département d'outre-mer* than as what in the opinion of many really happened, i.e. as a next pretending state of the USA.

One towering younger figure in this field was Johan Galtung, a brilliant lecturer, a logical positivist and radical – as a conscientious objector he actually served a period in jail for his convictions. These were the hard years of the Cold War, when Boris Vian wrote his *Monsieur le président* and John von Neumann said 'why not bomb them today?' Other pretending stars of promising but yet to flourish brilliance had a hard time measuring up to Galtung.

Through this field, Østerberg proceeded in no more than four years in passing his *magister* finals in 1961 with a thesis entitled, *Den sosiale realitet* [The Social Reality] (1961a), still much read today; a making up of accounts with (largely) United States positivist sociology as practised in the 1950s – and still, however, opposed.

The neighbouring field of university philosophy had Arne Næss Sr. (1910–) as its sovereign ruler, at the time a logical positivist and only much later a sceptic Spinozean cum environmentalist. This is where Østerberg met fellow Hans Skjervheim (1926–99), a brilliant student



who, in briefly quoting Sartre in a paper (1957/76), heralded his life-long fascination with the French philosopher's works. A basic point developed from Skjervheim in *The Social Reality* is the essential difference between social and natural sciences; the researchers take part in their processes they study in the first but not in the second. A difference of kind, then, not of degree, having profound consequences for the methods and subjects applicable.⁴

Næss, Galtung and Skjervheim were to play continuing roles in Østerberg's career, i.e. recurring dissociation from Næss and Galtung with Skjervheim in a more mixed role (cf. Østerberg, 2004).

Østerberg's first published text (1961b) may be seen as a condensed version of *The Social Reality*, with which it is contemporaneous. Published in the leading local journal, then in its second volume, by an author aged 23 it was a token of his now being regarded as a promising junior colleague, the subject of great expectations, but not yet in a leading or decisive position.

'The task of sociology is to be the critic of society.' But how and where does one look for support, income, a life, a career? Who will feed a critic of society, politics, higher civil service, journalism, the university? One road was closed right from the start, that of Kierkegaard, Weber, Simmel relying on family wealth. He did try politics, although not very hard and on a modest level for a while, and he did and does practise journalism as a free debater. But politics spells compromise, and full-time journalism at odd times keeping one's counsel and at others overstating it. The civil service involves giving orders but also taking them, a pawn or at most a bishop in Weberian-type bureaucracy – which leaves the academic (researcher) career – well, possibly, because there colleague and student support is often mixed with back-biting and hidden scheming. This leaves the itinerary of *freischwebende Intelligenz*, the role of a Sartre, the author-philosopher supporting him/herself with his/her published texts. Norwegians are world record book and newspaper readers living in a very small country where the role of intellectuals is ambiguous, something between genius and egghead, even crank. So, in the end, for prolonged periods of his career Østerberg came to practise what I call the frugal person's freedom, namely, getting by on a meagre budget but so maintaining one's independence. Not a viable road for many, yet one that is always open for the really determined. Less viable it is, however, for the determined with no external support. So supporters have to be mentioned, such as his first publisher, Pax Forlag, and later others, notably (Oslo) University Press, while colleague Rune Slagstad was a leading editor. Longer established and well-healed publishers were slow to follow, profiting from rather than contributing to Østerberg's establishment.

The Social Reality criticizes mainstream sociology but is not a fully-fledged work of non- or post-positivism; it is a programme of what *not* to do, and not so much pointing out a better course.

The next longer text was first published in mimeo form only, *Meta-sociological Essay* in 1963⁵ and for many years did not make much of a stir. It was a pioneering work, however, a programme for (self-)reflective social science anticipating Bourdieu, Giddens and others. Students brought it that very year as a gift, a memento, to Copenhagen, where hard-core positivism still ruled supreme under Kaare Svalastoga and (then) star student Aage Bøttger Sørensen.

By now, Østerberg had received his first state scholarship and was active at Oslo's Institute of Social Research, where he had a small office on the ground floor while living with his family in a not much larger room on the second, the loft floor. This is where his first real professional success came to pass, *Forståelsesformer* (Forms of Understanding), published in 1966. This short (c. 100 pages) text had an immediate impact and was even a sales success. The author had found his voice, a plain succinct language expressing demanding concepts, rendering them attainable to a multitude.⁶ In a matter of months, students, the brilliant and the not so brilliant, were heard applying Østerberg's new concepts – externalist, identity and internalist modes of

thinking, definite versus indefinite possibilities/impossibilities, transcendence from within and negation from within. Such concepts promised solutions to the problems of the social sciences merely criticized in earlier texts. Action as project (projet) cannot be analysed in terms of means and aims or values (Zweck- and Wertrational); in innovative action they meet, interact, change, come into being *during* the process. The internalist mode of thinking '... in paradoxical form: cognition is recognition for the first time' (1966: 64), a societal dialectics from within, attainable for the erudite and others alike.

Østerberg was now established and no longer just promising, a local genius on or above par with any other. A decisive victory was a clash with Johan Galtung during a 1967 debate over the Future Research propounded by Galtung and others such as the RAND Corporation. Østerberg's opposite stand was that positivism could not predict or explain basic change (transcendence). So trying to, despite this, implies that political power more than ever before had been monopolized by a minority who tried to secure its position by planning, i.e. determining the future development (1967a: 42).

If not a defeat, this was at least a long-lasting setback for Galtung and his followers, the radical as social engineer. The winning, opposite position of Østerberg and his now much increased following was termed by some the 'cultural critic', although better expressed, once again, as the critic of society – learned, but from within, on equal, not on expert terms.

Both his book-length texts up to this point in time were critical of society and largely so of other researchers' analyses of society, i.e. in a sense indirect or on a meta-level. Kalleberg (1997: 35) is right that there is no contradiction in that; society can be criticized by criticizing theories of society because good theories form part of the social fabric. Yet another contemporary text on this point is, 'Om rettferdiggjøring av inntektsforskjeller' (On the justification of income differences; 1967b), while its follow-up (1997) was more of an object-sociology, a learned plea for egalism and a criticism of social inequality, not (only) of *theories* of (in-)equality. Proposed justifications such as the importance, difficulty, trust, etc., of certain high social positions are all convincingly repudiated.

There is, however, a telling appendix to a re-edition (1975: 28) of this text, where Østerberg states that his command of Marxism as of 1967 was less than adequate. That signals a revised approach. Up to c. 1970 he remained, not unlike Bourdieu, something of a dialectic phenomenologist, influenced by Husserl, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and others, but not yet influenced very much by Marx's works. Sartre's great *Critique de la raison dialectique*, only just out in 1960, was instrumental in bringing about the inclusion of (neo-)Marxism, to which his *A Preface to Marx Capital* (1972) testifies, summing up critically in no more than c. 60 pp. Marx's c. 2,500.

Building on this, his expanding on Sartre's conception of the practico-inert field, Østerberg's *socio-materiel*-worked matter in the role of co-actor, is now a mainstay in nearly all his later works. This precludes future works of the likes of Daniel Miller and the journal *Material Culture*, of Bruno Latour and his ANT or actor-network theory, and of Donna Haraway and her cyborgs, etc. Yet Østerberg's approach remains the more solidly based philosophically, even if perhaps applied less often.

So far nothing less than continuing success for our critic of society, but resistance was now imminent. The late 1960s, years of open and inclusive discussion and experiments, were coming to an end, i.e. hippies and other groupings that formed the student movement, of which Habermas said 'the student revolt and the neo-conservative reaction that it provoked' (1992: 162). That, however, took over a decade to gain full force; in the shorter run, sectarianism and excesses won the day, at least in Norway. The small but very energetic Marxist-Leninist (m-l for short) movement not only disliked, they managed for some years to ostracize and defame all political thinking at odds with their wildly orthodox m-l doctrine. This led to a marked rupture, with Østerberg resigning from his university scholarship in 1973, well ahead of time, because 'the strong position of the "Maoists" made the place feel meaningless for me' (1997c:



24); an independent and strong-minded decision indeed. And, at the time, nobody could foresee the m-l movement's own rupture taking place just two years later, when it gave up university activism and directed its cadres into industry, competing for shop steward positions, and the like.

Before Østerberg left, however, one major but slim work appeared, arising from of his lecturing from 1967, i.e. *Makt og materiell* [Power and Materiel] (1971). Years later he said 'The concept of materiel gave me the solution to a theoretical problem . . . (that) the apparent legitimacy of authority (Herrschaft) . . . in most cases was based on *powerlessness* mediated by the materiel' (1985: 7). The central essay was subtitled 'a warning against Max Weber' (1971: 55), indicating that his solution was intended as an alternative to the latter's well-known types of legitimate authority, i.e. traditional, legal and charismatic. We seem to accept power because worked matter tends to make us powerless to protest, even if we have every reason to.

Shortly after his resignation, his development of the socio-materiel concept led him to apply for the position as lecturer at Oslo's School of Architecture in 1973. Shock and bitterness followed when he was rejected in favour of a lesser scholar, but of the right, i.e. m-l, theory and convictions: 'a gross passing over, a *Berufsverbot* on a political basis' (Østerberg, 1985: 7).

There followed nearly a decade of frugal freedom, but nonetheless a very productive one. His interpretation of Durkheim (Østerberg, 1974) was instrumental in his attaining a doctorate that year. A series of textbooks followed, first *Sosiologiens nøkkelbegreper* [Key Concepts of Sociology], (1977), by 2003 in its sixth edition, then *Handling og samfunn*⁷ [Action and Society], (1978), and again *Samfunnsformasjonen* [The Societal Order], (with Engelstad, 1984), published after years of delay.

By now another conflict with a movement, this time the radical feminist movement, had occurred. *Samfunnsformasjonen*, written as a college and preliminary academic textbook, aroused the wrath of movement members. Hence publication was delayed for several years. Only after legal assistance did it finally appear. No one except the parties know what (non-)concessions were made from one or either of the sides in the final published text. Safe to say though, no rupture this time, only success for Østerberg, however belated.

This book is more notable for being his major venture into object- not meta-sociology. The authors rely heavily on statistical analyses (cf. also Østerberg, 1997b), without ever reverting to 'sociography' (cf. below on Østerberg, 1988), since the accompanying interpretations are totalizing, broadly and firmly based in critical social theories.

Norway and the entire Western world were on the verge of political change in the late 1970s, from left-leaning populism to a revived and very self-confident neo-liberalism. Much of Østerberg's work, his own, interpreted or edited, marks a continued critique of society based on the fact that all classical theorists, Tönnies, Simmel, Weber, Durkheim, Cooley, Mead and others, made their sociologies as an *alternative*, a conscious opposition to utilitarianism, liberal economics and RAT (rational action theory):

Therefore one can hardly believe one's eyes when sociologists like Homans, Blau and Coleman make their return to utilitarianism . . . Collective amnesia? Fashion crase? New advance for the military-industrial complex, or on the contrary, breathing their last?

Such was his conclusion, creating a major stir in 1979, in an article published in a widely read periodical, *Samtiden* (Østerberg, 1979), criticizing three publications from the government's Power Survey, headed by Gudmund Hernes, a sociologist follower of Coleman, soon to practice what his survey preached in turning from research to Social Democrat government minister. A wave of books and papers criticizing the Power Survey followed, jokingly referred to as an industry of its own.⁸

In retrospect, we can see that this wave of criticism in the longer run had little effect on the swelling Right Wave, RAT and TINA (because 'There Is No Alternative' to neo-liberalism, its

rational choice and market models). One effect is indubitable, though – and this helped win Østerberg his first full, tenured professorship at the University of Oslo's Department of Sociology. Of course, his published textbooks carried considerable weight, but his continued position as social critic was also appreciated. Just in time, I might add, because not many years later this was to count as a liability, not an asset. Anyhow, from 1981 on he worked with the full responsibilities of professor, researching, teaching and writing, and acting head of the department, although only briefly. He was unquestionably a professional model and a leader despite opposition from staff minorities, mostly aging or right-leaning, even envious.

Another very productive period followed, with texts too numerous to detail,⁹ but two stand out: *Fortolkende sosiologi* [Interpretive Sociology] (1986) and *Metasociology: An Inquiry into the Origins and Validity of Social Thought* (1988), his major English text. The first is an anthology of some original, some re-published, papers of his, most notably perhaps one introducing his concept amphibious interaction (*amfibisk samkvem*) as an improvement over Merton's latent function, replacing the unintended and not recognized by *ambiguous intentions*, plus the final essay, which introduces the work of Ernst Cassirer.

The second, not to be confused with the similarly entitled shorter text (1963), is in his own words 'a work of erudition', a display, an exposition and a synthesis of his social theorizing, or social criticism, not at all readily summarized; it is a review, an evaluation, of all of sociological theory at the time. Two points are much too meagre yet hopefully will give an impression of the book's wealth: First, it distinguishes sociology from sociography, which deals:

... with the facts which support and are produced by administrative processes ... marked or constituted by a certain conformity or even conformism (i.e. compulsive conformity ...) ... Sociography ... designates social research that neither does nor pretends to go beyond description of social life couched in administrative or common sense language. (1988: 32–3)

One is reminded of Bourdieu's dubbing French official statistics *une science sans savants*, or even of the *Polizeiwissenschaft* rediscovered by Foucault during his prison research, and of course on our quote supra (1967a).

Second, the basic thesis on which *Metasociology* is built is that the social theories (as against sociography) of (socio-)liberal society are locked in internal contradictions; there is no way¹⁰ out other than breaching with its basic tenets. So, with socio-liberal sociology, however erudite, locked in stalemate, part two of his book analyses theorists who have managed to go beyond that, Sartre (once more), Foucault, Deleuze, Touraine and Luhmann, single anarcho-conservative among these five – an audacious stand indeed, but also promising in opening up new paths and visions.

Østerberg remained a full professor for little over a decade, popular with students and (most) colleagues and productive as ever.¹¹ His final lecture series introduced Hegel's *Phenomenology* to sociology students. He had been reading Hegel for years, yet this testifies to his extraordinary capacity continually to expand his philosophical perspective: His first book suggests leaving questions about Heidegger to the experts, while in mature years he has joined the expert ranks himself, not only of Heidegger, Hegel, Marx and Sartre, but, as new works appear and older ones resurface, also of Bergson, Bourdieu, Cassirer, Deleuze, Foucault, Natorp, and others, becoming a philosopher as much as a sociologist. Interestingly, in recent years, a renewed interest in Husserl is evident, as inspirer of Sartre and others, but no less in his own right.

Østerberg's last rupture occurred when he resigned from his university chair in 1991. The Right Wave, with its management by objectives, had now reached academia full strength. Joining with other distinguished seniors he first objected, in writing and in lectures, before finally leaving the university in protest.¹² Twenty years earlier he shunned opposition from



the Left. In the interim, that had faded almost completely, while opposition from the Right had gained immensely in force. The effect was the same – he was back in his frugal freedom or *freischwebende Intelligenz* once more.

Some would perhaps hold that he would have been better to have stayed and resisted, not resigned – a difficult decision, no doubt for himself as well. But in support, as for the last period 1971–81, what followed was another prolonged period of productivity, including major, weighty books. First a new much expanded edition of his *Fortolkende sosiologi* [Interpretive Sociology I–II], (1993b, 1997a), an anthology of his own essays, some old, some revised, some new. As an example, his¹³ repudiation (1993b: 179–93) of Nobel laureate Herbert Simon’s mathematical proof that exact predictions, for example of final election outcomes, were possible even though published pre-election survey predictions influence the outcome. Of course, survey predictions are not alone in influencing voters, but to the extent they do, if Simon is right, election results become perfectly predictable – and democracy void. Simon’s mathematical argument is mistaken, yet in actual fact one might wonder whether spin-doctor stratagems have not come a long way towards that very end in practice. The victory goes to who pays the spinners best, not to public opinion un-spun as it were.

His biography of Sartre appearing in the same year (1993a) was not just a much admired work but a revision of that genre itself. Very briefly, Sartre is cast as something of a Deleuzian *dividual*, a person viewed through fragments – philosopher, artist, political activist, private person – yet a person, a *projet originnaire* throughout. One is reminded of the quip that all biographies are self-biographies.

After four years of many shorter texts and re-editions, two new books followed in 1998, both remarkable innovations. *Arkitektur og sosiologi i Oslo*¹⁴ was Østerberg’s first full-length text in urban sociology and history. The preface states that it originated from Oslo University’s Urbanism seminar, an interdisciplinary undertaking lasting many years. Here, for the second time, he takes the step decisively from meta to object sociology, this time without statistics. Not that theories and theorists are neglected, but they are introduced mostly ad hoc as the author writes his way through the sediments of Oslo’s history and present everyday city life. Only in conversation does he point out that Husserlian phenomenology is the general inspiration applied throughout.

This book was heavily criticized, not I think on account of errors of fact and interpretation, although a few were pointed out (Otnes, 1999 has a review in English), but simply that factually based analyses are much easier to criticize than theory. Oslo’s urban facts are experienced by hundreds of thousands, while Hegel readers, for example, count perhaps in the hundreds, and experts among them not many handfuls.¹⁵

Even more heavily criticized was *Statskvinnen. Gro Harlem Brundland og nyliberalismen*, co-authored with Håvard Nilsen (1998). Here Gro, now a national icon, was under fire, her Launcelots showing no mercy. The book is in fact a sober text, not without traces of irony yet firmly based in sources. The problem posed is why and how a leading social democrat, a female Norwegian pre-Blair Blair, could become instrumental in converting Norway to neo-liberalism. The authors take their departure in Heidegger, yet in the end I believe they emerge more as Bourdieuvians; the interplay of a habitus and a field is what does the trick, ‘le mystère des ministères’. On the road, we find terse critical analyses of neo-liberalism and its antecedents as systems quite on a par with Bourdieu’s *Contre-feux* (1998, 2001), only more thorough. In the end, neo-liberal Norway is depicted in Sartre’s terms as a *serial society*.

Lamentably, space limitations allow only brief mention of *Det moderne. Et essay om Vestens kultur 1740–200* (Østerberg, 1999) and his biography on Brahms (2003), both major mature texts.

In summary, Østerberg has indeed been a critic of society throughout, sometimes in subdued, sometimes in outspoken, almost harsh forms, with marked ruptures, yes, but

continuing, not changing course. And, it seems, he is no less a critic cautious with age, because some of his most recent texts are just as critical as his earliest. Take for example his review of a recent textbook in Public Economics, 'Om Erik Grønn: Forelesninger i offentlig økonomikk' (2001). Compared to the preceding textbook, *Leif Johansen: Offentlig økonomikk* [Public Economics] Grønn is criticized for giving neo-liberal theories free rein vis-à-vis new generations of students, while Johansen, a brilliant economist recognized internationally, was a firm supporter of a socio-liberal public sector in his modelling, and in his private life even as a Communist party member.

Finally, I set out to apply Bourdieu's model of biographic analyses, 'L'Illusion biographique', which warns about reading too much unity into life stories that quite often omit suppressed, painful events or periods. And even more a warning about the hagiographic temptation, i.e. writing pageants rather than scientific accounts, assuming predeterminations, and so on. In 2004, Bourdieu's somewhat longer *Esquisse . . .* (142 pp.) was published in French translated from the German 2002 original. He succeeds brilliantly in pointing out the fields and the struggles through which his itinerary passes – its accidents, surprises, random as well as strategic events. So for those who have read him (Bourdieu, 1986) as if stating that biographies are nothing but a series of ruptures, that success fades. Or rather, it becomes evident that such a reading is misleading.¹⁶ Bourdieu's autobiographic sketch, Østerberg's Sartre biography plus, I hope, the present sketch, all testify to the possibility of retaining unity in the succession of struggles in fields that make up a personal itinerary. More readily seen in retrospect than in prospect, of course, because confusing the two leads too easily into the hagiographic temptation. Yet dividual life is not without its unity, even its totality.

Postscript

In writing this article I have benefited very much from previous Scandinavian works, notably Kalleberg (1997, 2005), Sundbø (1999), Østerberg himself (1997c) and Anderson's eloquent interview (1983).

English texts: Sundbø's Østerberg bibliography (1999) contains exactly 400 items, long and short texts, comments, introductions, translations, dictionary articles, etc. A quick count finds only 14 among them written or translated into English, plus less than a handful more in French or German. Let us hope that the present sketch will help facilitate publications of his major works in English translation.

Finally, a note on readability and applications: All of Østerberg's texts are good reads in their own right. My choice above all is the Sartre biography (1993a). Of relevance for social scientists, however, I believe that even today *Forståelsesformer* (1966) and *Samfunnsformasjonen* (with Engelstad, 1984) are recommended reading, along with *Fortolkende sosiologi I–II* (1993b, 1997a), *Architecture and Sociology* (1998) and of course *Metasociology* (1988).

Notes

1. He even suggested that the newspaper *Klassekampen* (The Class Struggle) change its name to *In Retreat (På vikende front)* – not entirely a joke.
2. A local students' revue in 1947 was indeed entitled *Go Ahead*, its programme frontispiece picturing engineering students astride a rocket heading up and to the left, eager to rebuild their country in these optimistic years before the iron curtain and the Cold War became depressing, ubiquitous facts of life.
3. I hold that Bourdieu, erroneously pigeon-holed as a Marxist by many, was in fact more of a dialectical phenomenologist.



4. Personally, I have my doubts about this divide; it tends to confuse raw external Nature with the Sciences of nature, the latter being very much products of Society, not of Nature. However, this in no way weakens the Østerberg/Skjervheim thesis; it merely opens up the road for future reflections on the fundamental problems of the natural sciences, too, from *within* these sciences, i.e. following the model of non-positivist social science, cf. Husserlian phenomenology. Works such as those of philosopher of science Nils Roll-Hansen (2002, 2004) may perhaps be seen as a start.
5. An early English translation from 1976 is now hard to come by.
6. His language in this and following works has often been praised yet no less praiseworthy is his choice of examples, plain everyday situations illustrating difficult philosophical points.
7. Editor introduced, translated selections from mostly European sociological classics.
8. I take the liberty of citing only my own monograph, *Exorbitant Exchange* (Otnes, 1987).
9. All are detailed in Sundbø's excellent bibliography from 1999.
10. Yet holding some hope for Bourdieu's approach, not, however, or not much for that of Habermas and followers.
11. Numerous shorter texts published for the first time in *Sosiologisk årbok/Yearbook of Sociology*, co-founded with the present author in 1985, now in its 18th volume.
12. Or almost, because a few years afterwards he accepted a 20 per cent position as professor II of musicology.
13. Co-workers were Audun Øfsti and Karl Egil Aubert.
14. More aptly entitled in its Swedish translation, *Stadens illusioner* [Illusions of the City]. A first English translation is entitled *Experiences of Hardship and Relief. An Essay in Husserlian Phenomenology*.
15. This is also the conclusion of my review (Otnes, 1999).
16. Daniel Bertaux, in an oral presentation to the ESA congress in Murcia 2003, came close to such a reading, seeing L'Illusion . . . as an attack on his and others' life history method, *Erinnerungsarbeit*, etc. – hardly tenable remembering Bourdieu's works on Manet, Flaubert and others, field biographies as it were.

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