

# *Theories of Reproduction and Resistance in the New Sociology of Education: A Critical Analysis*

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*In the past ten years radical educators have developed several theories around the notions of reproduction and resistance. In this article, Henry Giroux critically analyzes the major positions of these theories, finding them inadequate as a foundation for a critical science of schooling. He concludes by outlining the directions for a new theory of resistance and schooling which contains an understanding of how power, resistance, and human agency can become central elements in the struggle for social justice in schools and in society.*

In the last decade, Karl Marx's concept of reproduction has been one of the major organizing ideas informing socialist theories of schooling. Marx states that "every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction. . . . Capitalist production, therefore. . . produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation, on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer."<sup>1</sup> Radical educators have given this concept a central place in developing a critique of liberal views of schooling. Moreover, they have used it as the theoretical foundation for developing a critical science of education.<sup>2</sup> Thus far, the task has been only partially successful.

Contrary to the claims of liberal theorists and historians that public education offers possibilities for individual development, social mobility, and political and economic power to the disadvantaged and dispossessed, radical educators have argued that the main functions of schools are the reproduction of the dominant ideology, its forms of knowledge, and the distribution of skills needed to reproduce the social division of

<sup>1</sup> Marx, *Capital*, I (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), pp. 531, 532.

<sup>2</sup> For a critical analysis of the significance of Marx's notion of reproduction in social theory, see Henri Lebevre, *The Survival of Capitalism*, trans. Frank Bryant (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973). For a critical

labor. In the radical perspective, schools as institutions could only be understood through an analysis of their relationship to the state and the economy. In this view, the deep structure or underlying significance of schooling could only be revealed through analyzing how schools functioned as agencies of social and cultural reproduction — that is, how they legitimated capitalist rationality and sustained dominant social practices.

Instead of blaming students for educational failure, radical educators blamed the dominant society. Instead of abstracting schools from the dynamics of inequality and class-race-gender modes of discrimination, schools were considered central agencies in the politics and processes of domination. In contrast to the liberal view of education as the great equalizer, radical educators saw the objectives of schooling quite differently. As Paul Willis states, "Education was not about equality, but inequality. . . . Education's main purpose of the social integration of a class society could be achieved only by preparing most kids for an unequal future, and by insuring their personal underdevelopment. Far from productive roles in the economy simply waiting to be 'fairly' filled by the products of education, the 'Reproduction' perspective reversed this to suggest that capitalist production and its roles required certain educational outcomes."<sup>3</sup>

In my view, radical educators presented a serious challenge to the discourse and logic of liberal views of schooling. But they did more than that. They also tried to fashion a new discourse and set of understandings around the reproduction thesis. Schools were stripped of their political innocence and connected to the social and cultural matrix of capitalist rationality. In effect, schools were portrayed as reproductive in three senses. First, schools provided different classes and social groups with the knowledge and skills they needed to occupy their respective places in a labor force stratified by class, race, and gender. Second, schools were seen as reproductive in the cultural sense, functioning in part to distribute and legitimate forms of knowledge, values, language, and modes of style that constitute the dominant culture and its interests. Third, schools were viewed as part of a state apparatus that produced and legitimated the economic and ideological imperatives that underlie the state's political power.

Radical reproduction theorists have used these forms of reproduction to fashion a number of specific concerns that have shaped the nature of their educational research and inquiry. These concerns have focused on analyses of the relationships between schooling and the workplace,<sup>4</sup> class-specific educational experiences and the job opportunities that emerge for different social groups,<sup>5</sup> the culture of the school and the class-defined cultures of the students who attend them,<sup>6</sup> and the relationship among the eco-

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review of the literature on schooling that takes the notion of reproduction as its starting point see Michael Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); Henry A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1981); Geoff Whitty and Michael Young, ed., *Society, State, and Schooling* (Sussex, Eng.: Falmer Press, 1977); Len Barton, Roland Meighan, and Stephen Walker, ed., *Schooling, Ideology and Curriculum* (Sussex, Eng.: Falmer Press, 1980); Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> Willis, "Cultural Production and Theories of Reproduction," in *Race, Class and Education*, ed. Len Barton and Stephen Walker (London: Croom-Helm, 1983), p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> Bowles and Gintis.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," *Journal of Education*, 162 (1980), 67-92.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977).

conomic, ideological, and repressive functions of the state and how they affect school policies and practices.<sup>7</sup>

Reproduction theory and its various explanations of the role and function of education have been invaluable in contributing to a broader understanding of the political nature of schooling and its relation to the dominant society. But it must be stressed that the theory has not achieved its promise to provide a comprehensive critical science of schooling. Reproduction theorists have overemphasized the idea of domination in their analyses and have failed to provide any major insights into how teachers, students, and other human agents come together within specific historical and social contexts in order to both make and reproduce the conditions of their existence. More specifically, reproduction accounts of schooling have continually patterned themselves after structural-functionalist versions of Marxism which stress that history is made "behind the backs" of the members of society. The idea that people do make history, including its constraints, has been neglected. Indeed, human subjects generally "disappear" amidst a theory that leaves no room for moments of self-creation, mediation, and resistance. These accounts often leave us with a view of schooling and domination that appears to have been pressed out of an Orwellian fantasy; schools are often viewed as factories or prisons, teachers and students alike act merely as pawns and role bearers constrained by the logic and social practices of the capitalist system.

By downplaying the importance of human agency and the notion of resistance, reproduction theories offer little hope for challenging and changing the repressive features of schooling. By ignoring the contradictions and struggles that exist in schools, these theories not only dissolve human agency, they unknowingly provide a rationale for *not* examining teachers and students in concrete school settings. Thus, they miss the opportunity to determine whether there is a substantial difference between the existence of various structural and ideological modes of domination and their actual unfolding and effects.

Recent research on schooling in the United States, Europe, and Australia has both challenged and attempted to move beyond reproduction theories. This research emphasizes the importance of human agency and experience as the theoretical cornerstones for analyzing the complex relationship between schools and the dominant society. Organized around what I loosely label as resistance theory, these analyses give central importance to the notions of conflict, struggle, and resistance.<sup>8</sup>

Combining ethnographic studies with more recent European cultural studies, resistance theorists have attempted to demonstrate that the mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction are never complete and always meet with partially realized elements of opposition.<sup>9</sup> In effect, resistance theorists have developed a theoretical framework

<sup>7</sup> Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Society* (London: Verso Books, 1978).

<sup>8</sup> Representative examples include Michael Apple, *Education and Power* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); Richard Bates, "New Developments in the New Sociology of Education," *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1 (1980), 67-79; Robert W. Connell, Dean J. Ashenden, Sandra Kessler, and Gary W. Dowsett, *Making The Difference* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1982); Geoff Whitty, *Ideology, Politics, and Curriculum* (London: Open Univ. Press, 1981); Henry A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour* (Lexington: Heath, 1977); Women's Study Group, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, ed., *Women Take Issue* (London: Hutchinson, 1978); David Robins and Philip

and method of inquiry that restores the critical notion of agency. They point not only to the role that students play in challenging the most oppressive aspects of schools but also to the ways in which students actively participate through oppositional behavior in a logic that very often consigns them to a position of class subordination and political defeat.

One of the most important assumptions of resistance theory is that working-class students are not merely the by-product of capital, compliantly submitting to the dictates of authoritarian teachers and schools that prepare them for a life of deadening labor. Rather, schools represent contested terrains marked not only by structural and ideological contradictions but also by collectively informed student resistance. In other words, schools are social sites characterized by overt and hidden curricula, tracking, dominant and subordinant cultures, and competing class ideologies. Of course, conflict and resistance take place within asymmetrical relations of power which always favor the dominant classes, but the essential point is that there are complex and creative fields of resistance through which class- race- and gender-mediated practices often refuse, reject, and dismiss the central messages of the schools.

In resistance accounts, schools are relatively autonomous institutions that not only provide spaces for oppositional behavior and teaching but also represent a source of contradictions that sometimes make them dysfunctional to the material and ideological interests of the dominant society. Schools are not solely determined by the logic of the workplace or the dominant society; they are not merely economic institutions but are also political, cultural, and ideological sites that exist somewhat independently of the capitalist market economy. Of course, schools operate within limits set by society, but they function in part to influence and shape those limits, whether they be economic, ideological, or political. Moreover, instead of being homogeneous institutions operating under the direct control of business groups, schools are characterized by diverse forms of school knowledge, ideologies, organizational styles, and classroom social relations. Thus, schools often exist in a contradictory relation to the dominant society, alternately supporting and challenging its basic assumptions. For instance, schools sometimes support a notion of liberal education that is in sharp contradiction to the dominant society's demand for forms of education that are specialized, instrumental, and geared to the logic of the marketplace. In addition, schools still strongly define their role via their function as agencies for social mobility even though they currently turn out graduates at a faster pace than the economy's capacity to employ them.

Whereas reproduction theorists focus almost exclusively on power and how the dominant culture ensures the consent and defeat of subordinate classes and groups, theories of resistance restore a degree of agency and innovation to the cultures of these groups.

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Cohen, *Knuckle Sandwich: Growing Up in a Working-Class City* (London: Pelican Books, 1978); Paul Corrigan, *Schooling and the Smash Street Kids* (London: Macmillan, 1979); Angela McRobbie and Trisha McCabe, *Feminism for Girls* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981); Thomas Popkewitz, B. Robert Tabachnick, and Gary Wehlage, *The Myth of Educational Reform* (Madison, Wis.: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Robert B. Everhart, "Classroom Management, Student Opposition, and the Labor Process" in *Ideology and Practice in Schooling*, ed. Michael Apple and Lois Weiss (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, forthcoming); Paul Olson, "Inequality Remade: The Theory of Correspondence and the Context of French Immersion in Northern Ontario," *Journal of Education*, 165 (1983), 75-78.

Culture, in this case, is constituted as much by the group itself as by the dominant society. Subordinate cultures, whether working-class or otherwise, partake of moments of self-production as well as reproduction; they are contradictory in nature and bear the marks of both resistance and reproduction. Such cultures are forged within constraints shaped by capital and its institutions, such as schools, but the conditions within which such constraints function vary from school to school and from neighborhood to neighborhood. Moreover, there are never any guarantees that capitalist values and ideologies will automatically succeed, regardless of how strongly they set the agenda. As Stanley Aronowitz reminds us, "In the final analysis, human praxis is not determined by its preconditions; only the boundaries of possibility are given in advance."<sup>10</sup>

In this rather brief and abstract discussion, I have juxtaposed two models of educational analysis to suggest that theories of resistance represent a significant advance over the important but limited theoretical gains of reproduction models of schooling. But it is important to emphasize that, in spite of more complex modes of analysis, resistance theories are also marred by a number of theoretical flaws. In part, these flaws stem from a failure to recognize the degree to which resistance theories themselves are indebted to some of the more damaging features of reproduction theory. At the same time, however, resistance theories have too readily ignored the most valuable insights of reproduction theory and, in doing so, have failed to examine and appropriate those aspects of the reproduction model that are essential to developing a critical science of education. Furthermore, despite their concrete differences, resistance and reproduction approaches to education share the failure of recycling and reproducing the dualism between agency and structure, a failure that has plagued educational theory and practice for decades, while simultaneously representing its greatest challenge. Consequently, neither position provides the foundation for a theory of education that links structures and institutions to human agency and action in a dialectical manner.

The basis for overcoming this separation of human agency from structural determinants lies in the development of a theory of resistance that both questions its own assumptions and critically appropriates those aspects of schooling that are accurately presented and analyzed in the reproduction model. In other words, the task facing resistance theorists is twofold: first, they must structure their own assumptions to develop a more dialectical model of schooling and society; and second, they must reconstruct the major theories of reproduction in order to abstract from them their most radical and emancipatory insights.

The remainder of this essay will first discuss three important theories that constitute various dimensions of the reproduction model of schooling: the economic-reproductive model, the cultural-reproductive model, and the hegemonic-state reproductive model. Since reproduction theorists have been the object of considerable criticism elsewhere, I shall focus primarily on the strengths of each of these models, and shall only summarize some of the general criticisms. Second, I shall look at what I generously call neo-Marxist theories of resistance that have recently emerged in the literature on education and schooling, examining their theoretical strengths and weaknesses, while at the same time analyzing how they are either positively or negatively informed by theories of reproduc-

<sup>10</sup> Aronowitz, "Marx, Braverman, and the Logic of Capital," *The Insurgent Sociologist*, 8 (1977), 126-146.

tion. Finally, I shall attempt to develop a new theory of resistance and shall briefly analyze its implications for a critical science of schooling.

## Schooling and Theories of Reproduction

### *Economic-Reproductive Model*

Within the last fifteen years, the political-economy model of reproduction has exercised the strongest influence on radical theories of schooling. Developed primarily around the work of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, it has had a major influence on theories about the hidden curriculum,<sup>11</sup> educational policy studies,<sup>12</sup> and a wide range of ethnographic research.<sup>13</sup> At the core of the political-economy approach are two fundamentally important questions. The most important of these focuses on the relationship between schooling and society and asks, How does the educational system function within society? The second question points to a related but more concrete concern regarding the issue of how subjectivities actually get constituted in schools, asking, How do schools fundamentally influence the ideologies, personalities, and needs of students? While theorists who work within this model give different answers, they generally agree on the relationship between power and domination, on the one hand, and the relationship between schooling and the economy on the other.

Power in these accounts is defined and examined primarily in terms of its function to mediate and legitimate the relations of dominance and subordination in the economic sphere. In this perspective, power becomes the property of dominant groups and operates to reproduce class, gender, and racial inequalities that function in the interests of the accumulation and expansion of capital. This becomes clear in the way economic-reproductive theorists analyze the relations between the economy and schooling.

Central to this position is the notion that schools can only be understood by analyzing the structural effects of the workplace on them. In Bowles and Gintis's work this notion becomes clear through their reliance on what they call the correspondence theory.<sup>14</sup> Broadly speaking, the correspondence theory posits that the hierarchically structured patterns of values, norms, and skills that characterize both the workforce and the dynamics of class interaction under capitalism are mirrored in the social dynamics of the daily classroom encounter. Through its classroom social relations, schooling functions to inculcate students with the attitudes and dispositions necessary to accept the social and economic imperatives of a capitalist economy.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Apple, "The Hidden Curriculum and the Nature of Conflict," *Interchange*, 2 (1971), 27-40; Henry A. Giroux and Anthony N. Penna, "Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum," *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 7 (1979), 21-42; Henry A. Giroux and David Purpel, ed., *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education* (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan, 1983).

<sup>12</sup> Martin Carnoy and Henry Levin, *The Limits of Educational Reform* (New York: McKay, 1976); W. Timothy Weaver, *The Contest for Educational Resources* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1982).

<sup>13</sup> Kathleen Wilcox and Pia Moriarity, "Schooling and Work: Social Constraints on Educational Opportunity," in *Education: Straitjacket or Opportunity*, ed. James Benet and Arlene Kaplan Daniels (New York: Transaction Books, 1980); Roslyn Arlin Mickelson, "The Secondary School's Role in Social Stratification: A Comparison of Beverly Hills High School and Morningside High School," *Journal of Education*, 162 (1980), 83-112; Jean Anyon, "Social Class and School Knowledge," *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11 (1981), 3-42.

<sup>14</sup> Bowles and Gintis, p. 131.

In this view, the underlying experience and relations of schooling are animated by the power of capital to provide different skills, attitudes, and values to students of different classes, races, and genders. In effect, schools mirror not only the social division of labor but also the wider society's class structure. The theoretical construct that illuminates the structural and ideological connection between the schools and the workplace is the notion of the hidden curriculum. This term refers to those classroom social relations that embody specific messages which legitimize the particular views of work, authority, social rules, and values that sustain capitalist logic and rationality, particularly as manifested in the workplace. The power of these messages lies in their seemingly universal qualities—qualities that emerge as part of the structured silences that permeate all levels of school and classroom relations. The social relations that constitute the hidden curriculum provide ideological and material weight to questions regarding what counts as high versus low status knowledge (intellectual or manual), high versus low status forms of social organization (hierarchical or democratic), and, of course, what counts as high versus low status forms of personal interaction (interaction based on individual competitiveness or interaction based on collective sharing). The nature and meaning of the hidden curriculum is further extended through an understanding of how it contributes to the construction of student subjectivities—that is, those conscious and unconscious dimensions of experience that inform student behavior. Consideration of this issue leads into the work of the French social theorist, Louis Althusser.

Althusser also argues that schools represent an essential and important social site for reproducing capitalist relations of production.<sup>15</sup> In agreement with Bowles and Gintis, he argues that the school carries out two fundamental forms of reproduction: the reproduction of the skills and rules of labor power, and the reproduction of the relations of production.

The reproduction of the skills and rules of labor power is defined within the context of the formal curriculum and, in Althusser's terms, includes the kind of "know-how" students need in order to

read, to write and to add—i.e., a number of techniques, and a number of other things as well, including elements of "scientific" or "literary culture," which are directly useful in the different jobs in production (one instruction for manual workers, another for technicians, a third for engineers, a final one for high management). . . . Children also learn the rules of good behaviour, i.e., the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labor, according to the job he is "destined" for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical divisions of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination.<sup>16</sup>

Although both Althusser and Bowles and Gintis acknowledge the role that school knowledge plays in the reproductive process, it is not of much significance in their analyses. *Domination and the reproduction of the work force as constitutive elements of the*

<sup>15</sup> Althusser, *For Marx* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), *Reading Capital* (London: New Left Books, 1970), and "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses," in his *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> Althusser, "Ideological State Apparatuses," p. 132.

schooling process take place primarily “behind the backs” of teachers and students through the hidden curriculum of schooling. But it is at this point that these theorists provide important and differing explanations. Unlike Bowles and Gintis, who situate the hidden curriculum in social relations that are somehow internalized by (read imposed on) students, Althusser attempts to explain this “hidden” process of socialization through a systematic theory of ideology.

Althusser’s theory of ideology has a dual meaning, which becomes clear in his analysis of how ruling-class domination is secured in schools. In its first meaning, the theory refers to a set of material practices through which teachers and students live out their daily experiences. Ideology has a material existence in the rituals, routines, and social practices that both structure and mediate the day-to-day workings of schools. This material aspect of ideology is clearly seen, for example, in the architecture of school buildings, with their separate rooms, offices, and recreational areas—each positing and reinforcing an aspect of the social division of labor. Space is arranged differently for the administrative staff, teachers, secretaries, and students within the school building. Further, the ideological nature of the ecology of the school is somewhat obvious in the seating arrangements in university halls, or, for that matter, in the classrooms of many urban schools.

This material aspect of Althusser’s notion of ideology corresponds somewhat to Bowles and Gintis’s notion of the hidden curriculum in pointing to the political nature and use of space, time, and social processes as they function within specific insitutional settings. Similarly, it also points to the class-specific source and control of power that bears down on ideological institutions such as schools—institutions deemed essential, according to Althusser, to the production of ideologies and experiences that support the dominant society.<sup>17</sup>

In the second meaning of Althusser’s notion of ideology, the dynamics of the reproductive model unfold. In this sense, ideology is completely removed from any notion of intentionality, producing neither consciousness nor willing compliance. Instead, it is defined as those systems of meanings, representations, and values embedded in concrete practices that structure the unconsciousness of students. The effect of such practices and their mediations is to induce in teachers and students alike an “imaginary relationship . . . to their real conditions of existence.”<sup>18</sup> Althusser explains:

It is customary to suggest that ideology belongs to the region of “consciousness”. . . . In truth, ideology has very little to do with “consciousness”. . . . It is profoundly unconscious, even when it presents itself in a reflected form. Ideology is indeed a system of representations, but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with “consciousness”: they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as structures that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their “consciousness.” They are perceived-accepted-suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on one in a process that escapes them. Men “live” their ideologies as the Cartesian “saw” the moon at two hundred paces away: not at all as a form of consciousness, but as an object of their “world”—as their world itself.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Althusser, “Ideological State Apparatuses,” pp. 148-158.

<sup>18</sup> Althusser, “Ideological State Apparatuses,” p. 162.

<sup>19</sup> Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 233.



The economic-reproductive model gains an added dimension in the work of Christian Baudelot and Roger Establet.<sup>20</sup> Baudelot and Establet also stress that the principal function of the school can only be understood in terms of the role it plays in the production of labor power, the accumulation of capital, and in the reproduction of legitimating ideologies. Once again, schools are tied to the engine of domination and reproduction. But in this case, power does not collapse into an all-encompassing construct of ideological domination. Though still tied to the economic-reproductive model, Baudelot and Establet are not willing to dissolve human agency under the heavy hand of a one-sided notion of domination. Domination, they claim, does manifest itself through the imposition of bourgeois ideology in French schools, but the ideology is sometimes opposed and resisted by working-class youths, particularly at the compulsory levels of schooling.

Several important but underdeveloped theoretical considerations begin to emerge in Baudelot and Establet's model of reproduction. First, schools are not viewed as sites that smoothly socialize working-class students into the dominant ideology. Instead, schools are seen as social sites informed by conflicting ideologies which are rooted, in part, in the antagonistic class relations and structured practices that shape the day-to-day workings of these institutions. But if schools are viewed as sites containing oppositional ideologies, the sources of these ideologies — which fuel student resistance — are to be found not only inside but outside the school as well. That is, the basis for both critique and resistance on the part of working-class students is partly produced through the knowledge and practices made available to them in schools, but the primary historical and material basis for such action is located in oppositional public spheres that exist outside of such institutions.

The question of the location of the basis of resistance leads to Baudelot and Establet's second major insight. They rightly argue that the source of working-class student consciousness cannot be limited to such spheres as the workplace and the school. Working-class student social formations — groups organized around specific cultural experiences, values, and class, gender, and racial relations — with their combination of hegemonic and oppositional ideologies, are primarily formed in the family, the neighborhood, and in the mass- and class-mediated youth cultures.<sup>21</sup> Social classes, in this account, are formed not through the primacy of their determined structural relation to the workplace, but through culture as well. Aronowitz captures this complex dynamic behind the construction of class formations in his comment, "The class's capacity for self-representation is marked by common conditions of life, including, but not limited to, a common relation to the ownership and control of the means of production. Among other things, classes are . . . formed by culture, understood here as modes of discourse, a shared symbolic universe, rituals and customs that connote solidarity and distinguish a class from others."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Baudelot and Establet, *L'Ecole Capitaliste en France* (Paris: Maspero, 1971).

<sup>21</sup> Hegemonic as it is used here refers to elements of unconsciousness, common sense, and consciousness that are compatible with ideologies and social practices that perpetuate existing practices of domination and oppression. This is discussed in greater detail in Giroux, *Theory and Resistance*.

<sup>22</sup> Aronowitz, "Cracks in the Bloc: American Labor's Historic Compromise and the Present Crisis," *Social Text*, 5 (1982), 22-52.

A third important but underdeveloped insight in Baudelot and Establet's analysis is that ideology is limited neither to the realm of the unconscious nor to a configuration of internalized personality traits. As I have mentioned elsewhere, Bowles and Gintis as well as Althusser have drawn accounts of schooling in which the logic of domination appears to be inscribed without the benefit of human mediation or struggle.<sup>23</sup> Baudelot and Establet modify these positions by giving ideology a more active nature. For them, ideology refers to that part of the realm of consciousness that produces *and* mediates the contradictory relations of capitalism and school life. Consequently, ideology becomes the locus of contradictory consciousness, informed by and containing both dominant and oppositional ideologies. This is evident in the contradictory logic exhibited in certain types of resistance. For example, some working-class students either resist or reject the notion of book learning and other forms of literacy in favor of subversive school behavior and a celebration of physicality and manual labor. In doing so, these students may undermine one of the fundamental ideologies of the school, but they do so at the cost of rejecting the possibility for developing modes of critical literacy that could be crucial to their own liberation.<sup>24</sup>

To summarize, the economic-reproductive model had made several important contributions to a radical theory of education. By focusing on the relationship between schools and the workplace, it has helped to illuminate the essential role that education plays in reproducing the social division of labor. In addition, it has made visible the "structured silences" in liberal theory regarding how the imperatives of class and power bear down on and shape school experience, particularly through the hidden curriculum. Furthermore, this model of reproduction has provided important insights into the class and structural basis of inequality. By rejecting the "blaming the victim" ideology that informs much of the research on inequality, these accounts have blamed institutions such as the schools for inequality, and have traced the failure of such institutions to the very structure of capitalist society. Unfortunately, the economic-reproductive model has failed to capture the complexity of the relationship between schools and such other institutions as the workplace and the family. Within its grimly mechanistic and overly-determined model of socialization there appears little room for developing a theory of schooling that takes seriously the notions of culture, resistance, and mediation. Even where contradictions and mediations are mentioned, they generally disappear under the crushing weight of capitalist domination. As such, these accounts are marred not only by a reductionist instrumentalism regarding the meaning and role of schools, but also by a form of radical pessimism that offers little hope for social change and even less reason for developing alternative educational practices.

### *Cultural-Reproductive Model*

Theories of cultural reproduction are also concerned with the question of how capitalist societies are able to reproduce themselves. Central to these theories is a sustained effort

<sup>23</sup> See Henry A. Giroux, "Hegemony, Resistance, and the Paradox of Educational Reform," *Interchange*, 12 (1981), 3-26.

<sup>24</sup> James Donald, "How Illiteracy Became a Problem and Literacy Stopped Being One," *Journal of Education*, 165 (1983), 35-52.

to develop a sociology of schooling that links culture, class, and domination. The mediating role of culture in reproducing class societies is given priority over the study of related issues, such as the source and consequences of economic inequality. The work of Pierre Bourdieu and his colleagues in France represents the most important perspective for studying the cultural-reproductive model.<sup>25</sup>

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction begins with the notion that the logic of domination, whether manifested in schools or in other social sites, must be analyzed within a theoretical framework capable of dialectically linking human agents and dominant structures. Bourdieu rejects functionalist theories that either impute the effects of domination to a single, central apparatus or fail to see how the dominated participate in their own oppression. This rejection becomes clear in Bourdieu's theory of schooling in which he attempts to link the notions of structure and human agency through an analysis of the relationships among dominant culture, school knowledge, and individual biographies.<sup>26</sup> In his attempt to understand the role of culture in linking, first, schools to the logic of the dominant classes, and, second, the dynamics of capitalist reproduction to the subordinate classes, Bourdieu argues against the notion that schools simply mirror the dominant society. Instead, he claims that schools are relatively autonomous institutions that are influenced only indirectly by more powerful economic and political institutions. Rather than being linked directly to the power of an economic elite, schools are seen as part of a larger universe of symbolic institutions that do not overtly impose docility and oppression, but reproduce existing power relations more subtly through the production and distribution of a dominant culture that tacitly confirms what it means to be educated.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction begins with the assumption that class-divided societies and the ideological and material configurations on which they rest are partially mediated and reproduced through what he calls "symbolic violence." That is, class control is constituted through the subtle exercise of symbolic power waged by ruling classes in order "to impose a definition of the social world that is consistent with its interests."<sup>27</sup> Culture becomes the mediating link between ruling-class interests and everyday life. It functions to portray the economic and political interests of the dominant classes, not as arbitrary and historically contingent, but as necessary and natural elements of the social order.

Education is seen as an important social and political force in the process of class reproduction. By appearing to be an impartial and neutral "transmitter" of the benefits of a valued culture, schools are able to promote inequality in the name of fairness and objectivity. Through this argument Bourdieu rejects both the idealist position, which views schools as independent of external forces, and orthodox radical critiques, in which schools merely mirror the needs of the economic system. According to Bourdieu, it is

<sup>25</sup> Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*; Bourdieu, *Outline of Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977). It must be noted that the pioneering work in this area was done by Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1970).

<sup>26</sup> Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*; Bourdieu, "Symbolic Power," *Critique of Anthropology*, 4 (1979), 77-85.

<sup>27</sup> Bourdieu, "Symbolic Power," p. 30.

precisely the relative autonomy of the educational system that “enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence and neutrality, i.e., to conceal the social functions it performs and so to perform them more effectively.”<sup>28</sup>

The notions of culture and cultural capital are central to Bourdieu’s analysis of how the mechanisms of cultural reproduction function within schools. He argues that the culture transmitted by the school is related to the various cultures that make up the wider society in that it confirms the culture of the ruling classes while simultaneously disconfirming the cultures of other groups. This becomes more understandable through an analysis of the notion of cultural capital—the different sets of linguistic and cultural competencies that individuals inherit by way of the class-located boundaries of their family. A child inherits from his or her family those sets of meanings, qualities of style, modes of thinking, and types of dispositions that are assigned a certain social value and status in accordance with what the dominant class(es) label as the most valued cultural capital. Schools play a particularly important role in legitimating and reproducing dominant cultural capital. They tend to legitimize certain forms of knowledge, ways of speaking, and ways of relating to the world that capitalize on the type of familiarity and skills that only certain students have received from their family backgrounds and class relations. Students whose families have only a tenuous connection to the dominant cultural capital are at a decided disadvantage. Bourdieu sums up this process:

The culture of the elite is so near that of the school that children from the lower middle class (and *a fortiori* from the agricultural and industrial working class) can acquire only with great effort something which is *given* to the children of the cultivated classes—style, taste, wit—in short, those aptitudes which seem natural in members of the cultivated classes and naturally expected of them precisely because (in the ethnological sense) they are the *culture* of that class.<sup>29</sup>

By linking power and culture, Bourdieu provides a number of insights into how the hegemonic curriculum works in schools, pointing to the political interests underlying the selection and distribution of those bodies of knowledge that are given top priority.<sup>30</sup> These bodies of knowledge not only legitimate the interests and values of the dominant classes, they also have the effect of marginalizing or disconfirming other kinds of knowledge, particularly knowledge important to feminists, the working class, and minority groups. For example, working-class students often find themselves subjected to a school curriculum in which the distinction between high-status and low-status knowledge is organized around the difference between theoretical and practical subjects. Courses that deal with practical subjects, whether they be industrial arts or culinary arts, are seen as marginal and inferior. In this case, working-class knowledge and culture are

<sup>28</sup> Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*, p. 178.

<sup>29</sup> Bourdieu, “The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities,” in *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Eggleston (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 39.

<sup>30</sup> The hegemonic curriculum refers to the way in which “schools are organized around a particular organization of learning and content. . . . The crucial features of this curriculum are hierarchically-organized bodies of academic knowledge appropriated in individual competition” (Connell et al., *Making the Difference*, p. 120). The curriculum is hegemonic in that it functions to exclude large numbers of students who are from subordinate classes. Connell et al. were the first to use the term, while Bourdieu and his associates have demonstrated how the hegemonic curriculum works in France’s system of higher education.

often placed in competition with what the school legitimates as dominant culture and knowledge. In the end, working-class knowledge and culture are seen not as different and equal, but as different and inferior. It is important to note that high-status knowledge often corresponds to bodies of knowledge that provide a stepping stone to professional careers via higher education. Such knowledge embodies the cultural capital of the middle and upper classes and presupposes a certain familiarity with the linguistic and social practices it supports. Needless to say, such knowledge is not only more accessible to the upper classes, but also functions to confirm and legitimate their privileged positions in schools. Thus, the importance of the hegemonic curriculum lies in both what it includes—with its emphasis on Western history, science, and so forth—and what it excludes—feminist history, black studies, labor history, in-depth courses in the arts, and other forms of knowledge important to the working class and other subordinate groups.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, schools legitimize the dominant cultural capital through the hierarchically arranged bodies of school knowledge in the hegemonic curriculum, and by rewarding students who use the linguistic style of the ruling class. Certain linguistic styles, along with the body postures and the social relations they reinforce (lowered voice, disinterested tone, non-tactile interaction), act as identifiable forms of cultural capital that either reveal or betray a student's social background. In effect, certain linguistic practices and modes of discourse become privileged by being treated as natural to the gifted, when in fact they are the speech habits of dominant classes and thus serve to perpetuate cultural privileges.

Class and power connect with the production of dominant cultural capital not only in the structure and evaluation of the school curriculum but also in the dispositions of the oppressed themselves, who sometimes actively participate in their own subjugation. This point is central to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and can be examined more closely through a discussion of his notions of *habitat* (positions) and *habitus* (dispositions).<sup>32</sup>

In Bourdieu's most recent writings, he examines the relationship between action and structure through forms of historical action that bring together two histories. The first is the *habitat*, or *objectified history*, "the history which has accumulated over the passage of time in things, machines, buildings, monuments, books, theories, customs, law, etc."<sup>33</sup> The second refers to the *embodied history* of the *habitus*, and points to a set of internalized competencies and structured needs, an internalized style of knowing and relating to the world that is grounded in the body itself. *Habitus*, then, becomes a "matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions,"<sup>34</sup> "a system of durably acquired schemes of perception, thought and action, engendered by objective conditions but tending to per-

<sup>31</sup> For an illuminating analysis of this issue see Jean Anyon, "Ideology and United States History Textbooks," *Harvard Educational Review*, 49 (1979), 361–386; and Joshua Brown, "Into the Minds of Babes: A Journey Through Recent Children's History Books," *Radical History Review*, 25 (1981), 127–145.

<sup>32</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline of Theory and Practice*; Bourdieu, "Men and Machines," in *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology*, ed. Karin Knorr-Cetina and Aaron V. Cicourel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

<sup>33</sup> Bourdieu, "Men and Machines," p. 305.

<sup>34</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline of Theory and Practice*, p. 83.

sist even after an alteration of those conditions."<sup>35</sup> The habitus is a product of both socialization and embodied history, and differs for various dominant and subordinate groups within society. As principles inscribed deeply within the needs and dispositions of the body, the habitus becomes a powerful force in organizing an individual's experience and is the central category in situating human agency within practical activity.

It is in the dialectical relationship between institutions as objectified history and the habitus or dispositions of different classes that Bourdieu attempts to fashion a theory of domination and learning. Bourdieu explains the process of domination by arguing that it is often forged through a correlation between a certain disposition (habitus) and the expectations and interests embedded in the position of specific institutions (habitat). Thus, it is in this correspondence between the tacitly inscribed values and ideologies that make up the individual's disposition and the norms and ideologies embedded in the positions characterizing institutions such as schools that the dynamics of domination become manifest. Furthermore, for Bourdieu the notions of habitus and habitat reveal how domination is forged in a logic that draws together those corresponding ideologies and practices that constitute both agents and structures. "The dispositions inculcated by a childhood experience of the social world which, in certain historical conditions, can predispose young workers to accept and even wish for entry into a world of manual labor which they identify with the adult world, are reinforced by work experience itself and by all the consequent changes in their dispositions."<sup>36</sup>

The importance of the notion of habitus to a theory of schooling becomes evident in the expanded theory of learning that it suggests. Bourdieu argues that individuals from different social groups and classes undergo processes of socialization that are not only intellectual but also emotional, sensory, and physical. Learning, in this case, is actively situated in the practical activity of the body, senses, and emotions. It is organized around class-specific cultural practices that inscribe their messages beyond consciousness, in the materiality of the body and the values and dispositions it signifies. Bourdieu explains:

The principles embodied in [the habitus] . . . are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and, therefore, more precious, than the values given body, *made* body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as "stand up straight" as "don't hold your knife in your left hand."<sup>37</sup>

Bourdieu's work is significant in that it provides a theoretical model for understanding aspects of schooling and social control that have been virtually ignored in conservative and liberal accounts. Its politicization of school knowledge, culture, and linguistic practices formulates a new discourse for examining ideologies embedded in the for-

<sup>35</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relation to Culture* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979).

<sup>36</sup> Bourdieu, "Men and Machines," p. 314.

<sup>37</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline of Theory and Practice*, p. 94.

mal school curriculum. Similarly, Bourdieu adds a new dimension to analyses of the hidden curriculum by focusing on the importance of the body as an object of learning and social control.<sup>38</sup> In effect, what emerges in this account are the theoretical rudiments of a cultural-reproductive model that attempts to take seriously the notions of history, sociology, and psychology.

Yet, Bourdieu's work is not without some serious theoretical flaws. The most glaring flaws concern the mechanistic notions of power and domination and the overly determined view of human agency that characterizes much of this work. For example, Bourdieu's formulation of the notion of habitus is based on a theory of social control and depth psychology that appears to be fashioned almost exclusively in the logic of domination. The following comment by Bourdieu is representative of this position.

The uses of the body, of languages, and of time are all privileged objects of social control: innumerable elements of explicit education — not to mention practical, mimetic transmission — relate to uses of the body ("sit up straight," "don't touch") or uses of language ("say this" or "don't say that"). Through bodily and linguistic discipline . . . the choices constituting a certain relation to the world are internalized in the form of durable patterning not accessible to consciousness nor even, in part, amenable to will. Politeness contains a politics, a practical immediate recognition of social classifications and of hierarchies between the sexes, the generations, the classes, etc.<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately, where the conceptual possibility for resistance does appear in Bourdieu's work — that is, in the mismatch between one's habitus and the position one occupies — the foundation for such action rests not on a notion of reflexivity or critical self-consciousness, but on the incompatibility between two structures — the historical structure of the disposition and the historical structure embodied in the institution. Thus, resistance becomes the outcome of a conflict between two formalistic structures, one situated in the realm of the unconscious and the other situated in the social practices that make up institutions such as schools. The result is that the power of reflexive thought and historical agency are relegated to a minor theoretical detail in Bourdieu's theory of change.

Another theoretical flaw in Bourdieu's work is that culture represents a somewhat one-way process of domination. As a result, his theory suggests falsely that working-class cultural forms and knowledge are homogeneous and merely a pale reflection of dominant cultural capital. Working-class cultural production and its relation to cultural reproduction through the complex dynamics of resistance, incorporation, and accommodation are not acknowledged by Bourdieu. The collapse of culture and class into the processes of cultural reproduction raises a number of significant problems. First, such a portrayal eliminates conflict both within and between different classes, resulting in the loss of such notions as struggle, diversity, and human agency in a somewhat reductionist view of human nature and history. Second, by reducing classes to homogeneous groups whose only differences are based on whether they exercise or respond to power, Bour-

<sup>38</sup> It must be stressed that the most important work on the politics of the body is to be found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), esp. pp. 67–199.

<sup>39</sup> Bourdieu, "The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges," *Social Science Information*, 16 (1977), 645–668.

dieu provides no theoretical opportunity to unravel how cultural domination and resistance are mediated through the complex interface of race, gender, and class. What is missing from Bourdieu's work is the notion that culture is both a structuring and transforming process. David Davies captures this dynamic in his comment: "Culture refers paradoxically to conservative adaptation and lived subordination of classes and to opposition, resistance, and creative struggle for change."<sup>40</sup>

Bourdieu's analyses of schooling also suffer from a one-sided treatment of ideology.<sup>41</sup> While it is useful to argue, as Bourdieu does, that dominant ideologies are transmitted by schools and actively incorporated by students, it is equally important to remember that ideologies are also *imposed* on students, who occasionally view them as contrary to their own interests and either resist them openly or conform to them under pressure from school authorities. In other words, dominant ideologies are not just transmitted in schools nor are they practiced in a void. On the contrary, they are often met with resistance by teachers, students, and parents. Furthermore, it is reasonable to argue that in order to be successful, schools have to repress the production of counter-ideologies. Roger Dale illuminates this process in his discussion of how hegemony functions in schools, writing that "hegemony is not so much about winning approval for the status quo. . . . Rather what seems to be involved is the prevention of rejection, opposition or alternatives to the status quo through denying the use of the school for such purposes."<sup>42</sup> Similarly, it must be noted that schools are not simply static institutions that reproduce the dominant ideology; they are active agents in its construction as well. This is aptly portrayed in an ethnographic study of ruling class schools conducted by Robert Connell and his colleagues. They write:

The school generates practices by which the class is renewed, integrated and re-constituted in the face of changes in its own composition and in the general social circumstances in which it tries to survive and prosper. (This is an embracing practice, ranging from the school fete, Saturday sport and week-night dinners with parents, to the organization of a marriage market — e.g., inter-school dances — and informal networks in business and the professions, to the regulation of class membership, updating of ideology, and subordination of particular interests to those of class as a whole.) The ruling-class school is no mere agent of the class; it is an important and active part of it. In short, it is organic to its class. Bourdieu wrote a famous essay about the "school as conserver"; we would suggest an equal stress should be laid on the school as constructor.<sup>43</sup>

By failing to develop a theory of ideology that speaks to the way in which human beings dialectically create, resist, and accommodate themselves to dominant ideologies, Bourdieu excludes the active nature of both domination and resistance. In spite of his claims, it is important to argue that schools do not simply usurp the cultural capital of working-class families and neighborhoods. Complex relations develop between the

<sup>40</sup> Davies, *Popular Culture, Class, and Schooling* (London: Open Univ. Press, 1981), p. 60.

<sup>41</sup> This is particularly true in Bourdieu and Passeron's *Reproduction*.

<sup>42</sup> Dale, "Education and the Capitalist State: Contributions and Contradictions," in *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education*, ed. Michael Apple (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 157.

<sup>43</sup> Robert W. Connell, Dean J. Ashenden, Sandra Kessler, and Gary W. Dowsett, "Class and Gender Dynamics in a Ruling Class School," *Interchange*, 12 (1981), 102-117.



schools and working-class families and they need to be analyzed in terms of the conflicts and struggles that inform them. This point is highlighted in an ethnographic study by R. Timothy Sieber that chronicles the history of a power struggle over an elementary school in New York City.<sup>44</sup>

This study reinforces one aspect of Bourdieu's analysis in revealing that middle-class students, with their respective cultural competencies and experiences, were accorded specific academic privileges and freedoms denied to working-class and Puerto Rican students in the same school. But the more interesting aspect of Sieber's study indicates that the "privileged standing" and educational benefits provided to middle-class students were the outcome of a long struggle between the middle-class segment of the community and its predominantly working-class residents. The predominance of middle-class culture in this school was the outcome of a political struggle, and contrary to Bourdieu's position, was actively and systematically developed "both inside and outside of the school" by middle-class parents.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, there is a serious flaw in Bourdieu's work regarding his unwillingness to link the notion of domination with the materiality of economic forces. There is no insight in Bourdieu's analyses regarding how the economic system, with its asymmetrical relations of power, produces concrete constraints on working-class students. Michel Foucault's notion that power works on the body, the family, sexuality, and the nature of learning itself serves to remind us that the relations of power weigh down on more than just the mind.<sup>46</sup> In other words, the constraints of power are not exhausted within the concept of symbolic violence. Domination as an objective, concrete instance cannot be ignored in any discussion of schooling. For instance, the privileged classes have a relationship to time that enables them to make long-term plans regarding their futures. In contrast, the children of the dispossessed, especially those who are in higher education, often are burdened by economic constraints that lock them into the present and limit their goals to short-term plans. Time is a privation, not a possession, for most working-class students.<sup>47</sup> It is the economic dimension that often plays a crucial role in the decision over whether a working-class student can go to school full or part time, or in some cases can afford to go at all, just as the economic issue is often the determining factor in deciding whether or not a student will have to work part time while attending school. Bourdieu appears to have forgotten that domination has to be grounded in something other than mere ideology, that it also has a material foundation. This is no small matter, because it points to a major gap in Bourdieu's reasoning regarding working-class failure. The internalization of dominant ideology is not the only force that motivates working-class students or secures their failure. Their behaviors, failures, and choices are also grounded in material conditions.

As a result of Bourdieu's one-sided emphasis on ruling-class domination and its attendant cultural practices, it becomes clear that both the concept of capital as well as the

<sup>44</sup> Sieber, "The Politics of Middle-Class Success in an Inner-City School," *Journal of Education*, 164 (1981), 30-47.

<sup>45</sup> Sieber, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup> Foucault, *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

<sup>47</sup> Noelle Bissereet, *Education, Class Language, and Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

notion of class are treated as static categories. In my view, class involves a notion of social relations that are in opposition to each other. It refers to the shifting relations of domination and resistance and to capital and its institutions as they constantly regroup and attempt to reconstruct the logic of domination and incorporation. These oppositions are missing from Bourdieu's analyses.<sup>48</sup> What we are left with is a theory of reproduction that displays little faith in subordinate classes and groups and little hope in their ability or willingness to reconstruct the conditions under which they live, work, and learn. Consequently, most reproduction theories informed by Bourdieu's notion of domination ultimately fail to provide the comprehensive theoretical elements needed for a radical pedagogy.

### *Hegemonic-State Reproductive Model*

Recently Marxist theorists have argued that understanding the role of the State is central to any analysis of how domination operates.<sup>49</sup> Thus, a major concern now among a number of educational theorists focuses on the complex role of state intervention in the educational system.<sup>50</sup> These theorists believe that educational change cannot be understood by looking only at capital's domination of the labor process or the way capitalist domination is reproduced through culture. Neither of these explanations, they claim, has given adequate attention to the underlying structural determinants of inequality that characterize the advanced industrial countries of the West. They argue that such accounts display little understanding of how political factors lead to State interventionist policies that serve to structure and shape the reproductive functions of education.

In spite of the agreement among reproductive theorists about the importance of the State, there are significant differences among them as to what the State actually is, how it works, and what the precise relationship is between the State and capital, on the one hand, and the State and education on the other. Michael Apple captures the complexity of this issue in his review of some of the major questions with which theorists of the State are currently grappling. He writes:

Does the state only serve the interests of capital or is it more complex than that? Is the State instead an arena of class conflict and a site where hegemony must be worked for, not a foregone conclusion where it is simply imposed? Are schools—as important sites of the State—simply “ideological state apparatuses” (to quote Althusser), ones whose pri-

<sup>48</sup> See esp. Bourdieu, “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction,” in *Power and Ideology in Education*, ed. Jerome Karabel and Albert H. Halsey (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979); and Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction*.

<sup>49</sup> Some representative examples include Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1969); James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973); Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: New Left Books, 1973), and *Classes in Contemporary Society*; Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When it Rules* (London: New Left Books, 1978); Philip Corrigan, ed., *Capitalism, State Formation, and Marxist Theory* (London: Quartet Books, 1980).

<sup>50</sup> This is a small but growing and important body of literature. Among the more recent works are Roger Dale, Geoff Easland, and Madeleine Macdonald, ed., *Education and the State*, I and II (Sussex, Eng.: Falmer Press, 1980); Mariam E. David, *The State, the Family, and Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Madan Sarup, *Education, State and Crisis* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); Apple, *Education and Power*.

mary role is to reproduce the ideological and “manpower” requirements of the social relations of production? Or, do they also embody contradictory tendencies and provide sites where ideological struggles within and among classes, races, and sexes can and do occur?<sup>51</sup>

It is not my intent to unravel how different theorists of the State deal with these issues. Instead, I will focus on two major themes. First, I will explore some of the dynamics that characterize the relationship between the State and capitalism. Second, I will explore some of the underlying dynamics at work in the relationship between the State and schooling.

*The State and capitalism.* One of the major assumptions in Marxist accounts regarding the relationship between the State and capitalism has been developed around the work of the late Italian theorist, Antonio Gramsci.<sup>52</sup> For Gramsci, any discussion about the State had to begin with the reality of class relations and the exercise of hegemony by the dominant classes. Gramsci’s dialectical formulation of hegemony as an ever-changing combination of force and consent provides the basis for analyzing the nature of the State in capitalist society.

Hegemony, in Gramsci’s terms, appears to have two meanings. First, it refers to a process of domination whereby a ruling class exercises control through its intellectual and moral leadership over allied classes.<sup>53</sup> In other words, an alliance is formed among ruling classes as a result of the power and “ability of one class to articulate the interest of other social groups to its own.”<sup>54</sup> Hegemony in this instance signifies, first, a pedagogic and politically transformative process whereby the dominant class articulates the common elements embedded in the world views of allied groups. Second, hegemony refers to the dual use of force and ideology to reproduce societal relations between dominant classes and subordinate groups. Gramsci strongly emphasizes the role of ideology as an active force used by dominant classes to shape and incorporate the commonsense views, needs, and interests of subordinate groups. This is an important issue. Hegemony in this account represents more than the exercise of coercion: it is a process of continuous creation and includes the constant structuring of consciousness as well as a battle for the control of consciousness. The production of knowledge is linked to the political sphere and becomes a central element in the State’s construction of power. The primary issue for Gramsci centers around demonstrating how the State can be defined, in part, by refer-

<sup>51</sup> Apple, “Reproduction and Contradiction in Education,” in *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education*, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

<sup>53</sup> Gramsci, pp. 57–58.

<sup>54</sup> Chantal Mouffe, “Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci,” in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 182–183. It is important to stress that hegemony is not a static concept; on the contrary, hegemony is an active process realized as an uneven and tenuous situation and outcome through which oppositional forces are either accommodated, constrained, or defeated. The relationship between hegemony and political education is treated extensively in Walter Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci’s Political and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980); see also Philip Wexler and Tony Whitson, “Hegemony and Education,” *Psychology and Social Theory*, 3 (1982), 31–42.

ring to its active involvement as a repressive and cultural (educative) apparatus.

This brings us directly to Gramsci's definition of the State. Rejecting orthodox Marxist formulations of the State as merely the repressive tool of the dominant classes, Gramsci divides the State into two specific realms: political society and civil society. Political society refers to the state apparatuses of administration, law, and other coercive institutions whose primary, though not exclusive, function is based on the logic of force and repression. Civil society refers to those private and public institutions that rely upon meanings, symbols, and ideas to universalize ruling-class ideologies, while simultaneously shaping and limiting oppositional discourse and practice.

Two issues need to be stressed in conjunction with Gramsci's view of the State. All state apparatuses have coercive and consensual functions; it is the dominance of one function over the other that gives the apparatuses of either political or civil society their defining characteristic. Furthermore, as a mode of ideological control, hegemony—whether it takes place in the schools, the mass media, or the trade unions—must be fought for constantly in order to be maintained. It is not something “that simply consists of the projection of the ideas of the dominant classes into the heads of the subordinate classes.”<sup>55</sup> The footing on which hegemony moves and functions has to shift ground in order to accommodate the changing nature of historical circumstances and the complex demands and critical actions of human beings. This view of the function of the State redefines class rule and the complex use of power. Power as used here is both a positive and a negative force. It functions negatively in the repressive and ideological apparatuses of the government and civil society to reproduce the relations of domination. It functions positively as a feature of active opposition and struggle, the terrain on which men and women question, act, and refuse to be incorporated into the logic of capital and its institutions.

In short, Gramsci provides a definition of the State that links power and culture to the traditional Marxist emphasis on the repressive aspects of the State. Gramsci is rather succinct on this issue: “The state is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules.”<sup>56</sup>

Gramsci's writings are crucial to an understanding of the meaning and workings of the State and have influenced a wide range of Marxist writers who argue that “all state formations under capitalism articulate class power.”<sup>57</sup> The crucial starting point for many of these theorists is a sustained attack on the liberal assumption that the State is a neutral, administrative structure that operates in the interests of the general will. This attack generally takes the form of an historical critique that rejects the liberal notion of the State as a naturally evolving structure of human progress which stands above class and sectional interests. Marxist critics have argued in different ways that the State is a specific set of social relations linked historically to the conditions of capitalist produc-

<sup>55</sup> Kenneth Neild and John Seed, “The Theoretical Poverty or the Poverty of Theory,” *Economy and Society*, 8 (1979), 383–416.

<sup>56</sup> Gramsci, p. 244.

<sup>57</sup> Philip Corrigan, Harvie Ramsey, and Derek Sayer, “The State as a Relation of Production,” in *Capitalism, State Formation and Marxist Theory*, ed. Philip Corrigan (London: Quartet Books, 1980), p. 21.

tion. In effect, the State is an organization, an embodiment of a changing pattern of class relations organized around the dynamics of class struggle, domination, and contestation. Furthermore, as a set of relations organized around class divisions, the State expresses ideological and economic interests through repressive as well as legitimating institutions. "The State is not a structure, it is an organization; or better, it is a complex of social forms organized so that it inflects all relations and ideas about relations in such a way that capitalist production, and all it entails, becomes thought of as lived and natural."<sup>58</sup>

This leads to a related and important issue concerning the defining features of the State's operation. Theorists such as Nicos Poulantzas have rightly argued that the State and its various agencies, including public schools, cannot be seen merely as tools manipulated at will by the ruling classes.<sup>59</sup> On the contrary, as the concrete representation of class relations, the State is constituted through continuing conflicts and contradictions, which, it can be argued, take two primary forms. First, there are conflicts among different factions of the ruling class, who often represent varied and competing approaches to social control and capital accumulation. But it is important to note that the relative autonomy of the State, secured partly through the existence of competing dominant classes, often tends to obscure what various factions of the ruling class have in common. That is, the State's short-term policies are firmly committed to maintaining the underlying economic and ideological structures of capitalist society. Thus, behind the discourse of diverging political, sectional, and social interests, there is the underlying grammar of class domination and structured inequality. Dominant classes may battle over the size of the military budget, monetary cutbacks in social services, and the nature of the tax structure, but they do not challenge basic capitalist production relations.

The definitive feature of the relative autonomy of the State is to be found, then, not in its chorus of oppositional discourses, but in its structured silences regarding the underlying basis of capitalist society. Moreover, the State is defined less by the interest of any one dominant group than by the specific set of social relations it mediates and sustains. Claus Offe and Volker Ronge summarize this position well: "What the State protects and sanctions is a set of rules and social relations which are presupposed by the class rule of the capitalist class. The State does not defend the interests of one class but the common interests of all members of a capitalist society."<sup>60</sup>

The second defining feature of the State centers around the relationship between the dominant and dominated classes. The State is not only an object of struggle among members of the ruling class, it is also a defining force in the production of conflict and struggle between the ruling class and other subordinate groups. The underlying logic of State formation is situated in the State's dual role of performing the often contradictory tasks of establishing the conditions for the accumulation of capital, on the one hand, and the ideological task of moral regulation on the other. In other words, the State has

<sup>58</sup> Corrigan, Ramsey, and Sayer, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Society*. For an important discussion of Marxist theories of the State and the issue of relative autonomy, see Ralph Miliband, "State Power and Class Interests," *New Left Review*, 138 (1983), 57-68.

<sup>60</sup> Offe and Ronge, "Thesis on the Theory of the State," *New German Critique*, 6 (1975), 137-147.

the task of meeting the basic needs of capital by providing, for instance, the necessary flow of workers, knowledge, skills, and values for the reproduction of labor power.<sup>61</sup> But at the same time, the State has the task of winning the consent of the dominated classes, which it attempts by legitimating the social relations and values that structure the capital accumulation process either through remaining silent about the class interests that benefit from such relations, or through marginalizing or disqualifying any serious critique or alternative to them. Furthermore, the State attempts to win the consent of the working class for its policies by making an appeal to three types of specific outcomes—economic (social mobility), ideological (democratic rights), and psychological (happiness). Philip Corrigan and his colleagues point to this issue in their argument:

We stress that the State is constructed and fought over. Central to this is a two fold set of historical practices: (i) the constant “rewriting” of history to naturalize what has been, in fact, an extremely changeable set of State relations, to claim that there is, and has always been, one “optimal institutional structure” which is what “any” civilization needs; and (ii) to marginalize (disrupt, deny, destroy, dilute, “help”) all alternative forms of State, particularly any which announces any form of organization that established difference at the level of the national social formation (or crime of all crimes!, that established any form of international solidarity along class lines).<sup>62</sup>

The contradictions that arise out of the differences between the reality and the promise of capitalist social relations are evident in a number of instances, some of which directly involve schooling. For example, schools often promote an ideology of social mobility that is at odds with high levels of unemployment and the overabundance of highly qualified workers. Furthermore, the ideology of the work ethic is often contradicted by the increasing number of routinized and alienating jobs. In addition, capitalism’s appeal to the satisfaction of higher needs often rests on an image of leisure, beauty, and happiness, the fulfillment of which lies beyond the capabilities of the existing society.

What emerges from this analysis of the relationship between the State and the economy are a number of crucial issues that have a significant bearing on educational policy and practice. First, it is rightly claimed that the State is neither the instrument of any one dominant class faction nor simply a pale reflection of the needs of the economic system. Second, the State is accurately portrayed as a site marked by ongoing conflicts among and between various class, gender, and racial groups. Third, the State is not merely an expression of class struggle, it is primarily an organization that actively defends capitalist society through repressive as well as ideological means. Finally, in its capacity as an ideological and repressive apparatus, the State limits and channels the responses that schools can make to the ideology, culture, and practices that characterize the dominant society. The following section contains a more detailed examination of these issues.

*The State and schooling.* In order to adequately investigate the relationship between the State and schooling, two questions need to be posed and analyzed. How does the State exercise control over schools in terms of its economic, ideological, and repressive

<sup>61</sup> Althusser, “Ideological State Apparatuses,” pp. 127–186.

<sup>62</sup> Corrigan, Ramsey, and Sayer, p. 17.

functions? How does the school function not only to further the interests of the State and the dominant classes but also to contradict and resist the logic of capital?

As part of the state apparatus, schools and universities play a major role in furthering the economic interests of the dominant classes. Several theorists have argued that schools are actively involved in establishing the conditions for capital accumulation, and they point specifically to a number of instances in which the State intervenes to influence this process.<sup>63</sup> For example, through state-established certification requirements, educational systems are heavily weighted toward a highly technocratic rationality that relies upon a logic drawn primarily from the natural sciences. The effects can be seen in the distinction schools at all levels make between high-status knowledge—usually the “hard sciences”—and low-status knowledge—subjects in the humanities. This bias also puts pressures on schools to utilize methods of inquiry and evaluation that stress efficiency, prediction, and the logic of the mathematical formula. The extent of State intervention is obvious in the favorable political orientation exercised through small- and large-scale government funding for educational research programs. Apple, for instance, illuminates this point:

The state will take on the large initial cost of basic research and development. It then “transfers” the fruits of it back to the “private sector” once it becomes profitable. The state’s role in capital accumulation is very evident in its subsidization of the production of technical/administrative knowledge. . . . Like the economy, examples of this pattern of intervention are becoming more visible. They include the emphasis on competency-based education, systems management, career education, futurism (often a code word for manpower planning), continued major funding for mathematics and science curriculum development (when compared to the arts), national testing programs. . . . All of these and more signal the sometimes subtle and sometimes quite overt role of state intervention into schooling to attempt to maximize efficient production of both the agents and the knowledge required by an unequal economy.<sup>64</sup>

The rationality that supports state intervention into schools also influences the development of curricula and classroom social relations the success of which is often measured against how well they “equip” different groups of students with the knowledge and skills they will need to perform productively in the workplace. Moreover, beneath the production of this type of curriculum and socialization there is the brute reality that schools function partly to keep students out of the labor force. As Dale points out, “schools keep children off the streets, and insure that for a large part of most days in the year they cannot engage in activities which might disrupt a social context amenable to capital accumulation but are exposed to attempts to socialize them into ways compatible with the maintenance of that context.”<sup>65</sup>

State intervention is also manifested in the way policy is formulated outside of the control of teachers and parents. The economic interest underlying such policy is present not only in the rationality of control, planning, and other bureaucratic emphases on rule-

<sup>63</sup> See esp. Martin Carnoy, “Education, Economy and the State”; Roger Dale, “Education and the Capitalist State,” in *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education*.

<sup>64</sup> Apple, *Education and Power*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>65</sup> Dale, pp. 146-147.

following but also in the way in which the State funds programs to handle what Apple calls “negative outcomes” in the accumulation process.

By defining large groups of children as deviant (slow learners, remedial problems, discipline problems, etc.), and giving funding and legislative support for special teachers and for “diagnosis” and for “treatment” the state will fund extensive remedial projects. While these projects seem neutral, helpful, and may seem aimed at increasing mobility, they will actually defuse the debate over the role of schooling in the reproduction of the knowledge and people “required” by society. It will do this in part by defining the ultimate causes of such deviance as within the child or his or her culture and not due to, say, poverty, the conflicts and disparities generated by the historically evolving cultural and economic hierarchies of the society, etc. This will be hidden from us as well by our assumption that schools are primarily organized as distribution agencies, instead of, at least in part, important agencies in the accumulation process.<sup>66</sup>

One of the major questions pursued by educational theorists studying the State focuses on the relationship between power and knowledge—specifically, how the State “exercises and imposes its power through the production of ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ about education.”<sup>67</sup> Poulantzas, for example, argues that the production of dominant ideologies in the schools is to be found not only in the high-status knowledge and social relations sanctioned by the State bureaucracy but, more importantly, in the reproduction of the mental-manual division. The State appropriates, trains, and legitimates “intellectuals” who serve as experts in the production and conception of school knowledge, and who ultimately function to separate knowledge from both manual work and popular consumption. Behind this facade of credentialized expertise and professionalism lies a major feature of dominant ideology—the separation of knowledge from power. Poulantzas states, “The knowledge-power relationship finds expression in particular techniques of the exercise of power—exact devices inscribed in the texture of the State whereby the popular masses are permanently kept at a distance from the centres of decision making. These comprise a series of rituals and styles of speech, as well as structural modes of formulating and tackling problems that monopolise knowledge in such a way that the popular masses are effectively excluded.”<sup>68</sup>

This separation becomes more pronounced in the special status that state certification programs and schools give to curriculum “experts;” the underlying logic of this status suggests that teachers should implement rather than conceptualize and develop curriculum approaches. The knowledge-power relation also finds expression in the active production and distribution of knowledge itself. For instance, one of the main roles of the schools is to valorize mental labor and disqualify manual labor. This division finds its highest representation in forms of tracking, classroom social relations, and other aspects of school legitimation that function to exclude and devalue working-class history and culture. Furthermore, this division between mental and manual labor underlies the school’s socializing process which prepares working-class and other students for their respective places in the work force.

<sup>66</sup> Apple, *Education and Power*, p. 95.

<sup>67</sup> James Donald, “Green Paper: Noise of a Crisis,” *Screen Education*, 30 (1979), 13–49.

<sup>68</sup> Poulantzas, quoted in Donald, “Green Paper,” p. 21.



Schools, of course, do more than mediate the logic of domination, and this can be seen in the contradictions that emerge around the ideology of democratic rights often reproduced in the school curriculum. Schools play an active role in legitimating the view that politics and power are primarily defined around the issues of individual rights and through the dynamics of the electoral process. Central to this liberal ideology of democratic rights are assumptions that define the political sphere and the role of the State in that sphere. The importance of this ideology as a contradictory part of the hegemonic curriculum cannot be overstated. On the one hand, it functions to separate the issues of politics and democracy from the economic sphere and to displace the notion of conflict from its class-specific social context to the terrain of individual rights and struggle. On the other hand, there is a certain counter-logic in democratic liberal ideology that provides the basis for resistance and conflict. That is, liberal democratic ideology contains concerns for human rights that are often at odds with capitalist rationality, its ethos of commodity fetish, and its drive for profits.

Finally, it must be remembered that the most direct intervention exercised by the State is constituted by law. Though impossible to discuss here in detail, this intervention often takes forms which link schools to the logic of repression rather than ideological domination. One instance of this linkage is that the foundation of school policy is sometimes established in the courts, such as the push towards racial integration of public schooling. Another instance is that school attendance is established through the rule of law and provides the "legal" cement that brings students into the schools. Relatedly, it is the courts, the police, and other state agencies that attempt to enforce involuntary school attendance. Of course, involuntary school attendance does not guarantee student obedience, and in some respects becomes a major issue promoting student resistance, a fact often forgotten by resistance theorists.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that theories of the State perform a theoretical service by adding to our understanding of how the processes of social and cultural reproduction function in the political sphere. They rightly draw our attention to the importance of the relative autonomy of the State and its apparatuses (such as schools), the contradictory character of the State, and the economic, ideological, and repressive pressures the State exerts on schooling. But it must be acknowledged that, as part of a wider theory of reproduction, hegemonic-state accounts exhibit some major theoretical failings. First, theories of the State focus primarily on macro and structural issues, resulting in a mode of analysis that points to contradictions and struggle, but says little about how human agency works through such conflicts at the level of everyday life and concrete school relations. A second failing is that some theories of the State display little understanding of culture as a relatively autonomous realm with its own inherent counter-logic. For instance, Poulantzas's heavy-handed notion of the school as merely an ideological state apparatus provides no theoretical space for investigating the emergence and dynamics of student counter-cultures as they develop in the interplay of concrete, antagonistic school relations.<sup>69</sup> Culture is, however, both the subject and object of resistance; the driving force of culture is contained not only in how it functions to dominate subordinate groups, but also in the way in which oppressed groups draw from their own

<sup>69</sup> Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Society*, pp. 259–270.

cultural capital and set of experiences to develop an oppositional logic. Despite theoretical lip service to the contrary, this dialectical view of culture is often subsumed within a view of power that leans too heavily on the logic of domination in defining culture simply as an *object* of resistance rather than its *source*. In order to obtain a more concrete view of the dynamics of resistance and struggle as they inform subordinate school cultures operating under the ideological and material constraints partly constructed by the State, it is necessary to turn to theories of resistance.

### Schooling and Theories of Resistance

The concept of resistance is relatively new in educational theory. The reasons behind this theoretical neglect can be traced partly to the failings of both conservative and radical approaches to schooling. Conservative educators analyzed oppositional behavior primarily through psychological categories that served to define such behavior not only as deviant, but more importantly, as disruptive and inferior — a failing on the part of the individuals and social groups that exhibited it. Radical educators, on the other hand, have generally ignored the internal workings of the school and have tended to treat schools as “black boxes.” Beneath a discourse primarily concerned with the notions of domination, class conflict, and hegemony, there has been a structured silence regarding how teachers, students, and others live out their daily lives in schools. Consequently, there has been an overemphasis on how structural determinants promote economic and cultural inequality, and an underemphasis on how human agency accommodates, mediates, and resists the logic of capital and its dominating social practices.

More recently, a number of educational studies have emerged that attempt to move beyond the important but somewhat limited theoretical gains of reproduction theory. Taking the concepts of conflict and resistance as starting points for their analyses, these accounts have sought to redefine the importance of mediation, power, and culture in understanding the complex relations between schools and the dominant society. Consequently, the work of a number of theorists has been instrumental in providing a rich body of detailed literature that integrates neo-Marxist social theory with ethnographic studies in order to illuminate the dynamics of accommodation and resistance as they work through countercultural groups both inside and outside schools.<sup>70</sup>

Resistance, in these accounts, represents a significant critique of school as an institution and points to social activities and practices whose meanings are ultimately political and cultural. In contrast to a vast amount of ethnographic literature on schooling in both the United States and England, neo-Marxist resistance theories have not sacrificed theoretical depth for methodological refinement.<sup>71</sup> That is, recent neo-Marxist studies

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Willis, *Learning to Labour*; McRobbie and McCabe, *Feminism for Girls*; Robins and Cohen, *Knuckle Sandwich*; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1980).

<sup>71</sup> Representative examples of the ethnographic literature in the United States include Howard Becker, *Boys in White* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961); Arthur Stinchcombe, *Rebellion in a High School* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1964); Harry Wolcott, *The Man in the Principal's Office: An Ethnography* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973); George Spindler, ed., *Ethnography of Schooling* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982). Works from England include David Hargreaves, *Social Relations in a Secondary School* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967); Colin Lacey, *Hightown Grammar* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1970); Peter Woods, *The Divided School* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); Stephen Ball, *Beachside Comprehensive: A Case Study of Secondary Schooling* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981).

have not followed the method of merely providing overly-exhaustive descriptive analyses of the internal workings of the school. Instead, they have attempted to analyze how determinant socioeconomic structures embedded in the dominant society work through the mediations of class and culture to shape the antagonistic experiences of students' everyday lives. Rejecting the functionalism inherent in both conservative and radical versions of educational theory, neo-Marxist accounts have analyzed curriculum as a complex discourse that not only serves the interests of domination but also contains aspects which provide emancipatory possibilities.

The attempt to link social structures and human agency in order to explore the way they interact in a dialectical manner represents a significant advance in educational theory. Of course, neo-Marxist resistance theories are also beset with problems, and I will mention some of the more outstanding ones here. Their singular achievement is the primary importance they allot to critical theory and human agency as the basic categories to be used in analyzing the daily experiences that constitute the internal workings of the school.

Central to theories of resistance is an emphasis on the tensions and conflicts that mediate relationships among home, school, and workplace. For example, Willis demonstrates in his study of the "lads"—a group of working class males who constitute the "counterculture" in an English secondary school—that much of their opposition to the labels, meanings, and values of the official and hidden curriculum is informed by an ideology of resistance, the roots of which are in the shop-floor cultures occupied by their family members and other members of their class.<sup>72</sup> The most powerful example of this mode of resistance is exhibited by the lads in their rejection of the primacy of mental over manual labor. Not only do the lads reject the alleged superiority of mental labor, they also reject its underlying ideology that respect and obedience will be exchanged for knowledge and success. The lads oppose this ideology because the counter-logic embodied in the families, workplaces, and street life that make up *their* culture points to a different and more convincing reality. Thus, one major contribution that has emerged from resistance studies is the insight that the mechanisms of reproduction are never complete and are always faced with partially realized elements of opposition.

Furthermore, this work points to a dialectical model of domination, one that offers valuable alternatives to many of the radical models of reproduction analyzed previously. Instead of seeing domination as simply the by-product of external forces—for example, capital or the State—resistance theorists have developed a notion of reproduction in which working-class subordination is viewed not only as a result of the structural and ideological constraints embedded in capitalist social relationships, but also as part of the process of self-formation within the working class itself.

One key issue posed by this notion of domination is the question, How does the logic that promotes varied forms of resistance become implicated in the logic of reproduction? For example, theories of resistance have attempted to demonstrate how students who actively reject school culture often display a deeper logic and view of the world that confirms rather than challenges existing capitalist social relations. Two illustrations demonstrate this point. Willis's lads rejected the primacy of mental labor and its ethos of

<sup>72</sup> Willis, *Learning to Labour*, pp. 99-116.

individual appropriation, but in doing so they closed off any possibility of pursuing an emancipatory relationship between knowledge and dissent. By rejecting intellectual labor, the lads discounted the power of critical thinking as a tool of social transformation.<sup>73</sup>

The same logic is displayed by the students in Michelle Fine's study of drop outs from alternative high schools in New York City's South Bronx.<sup>74</sup> Fine had assumed that the students who dropped out of these schools were victims of "learned helplessness," but she discovered instead that they were the most critical and politically astute students in the alternative schools: "Much to our collective surprise (and dismay) the drop outs were those students who were most likely to identify injustice in their social lives and at school, and most ready to correct injustice by criticizing or challenging a teacher. The drop outs were least depressed, and had attained academic levels equivalent to students who remained in school."<sup>75</sup> There is a certain irony here: while such students were capable of challenging the dominant ideology of the school, they failed to recognize the limits of their own resistance. By leaving school, these students placed themselves in a structural position that cut them off from political and social avenues conducive to the task of radical reconstruction.

Another important and distinctive feature of resistance theories is their emphasis on the importance of culture and, more specifically, cultural production. In the concept of cultural production we find the basis for a theory of human agency, one that is constructed through the active, ongoing, collective medium of oppressed groups' experiences. In a more recent work, Willis elaborates on this issue, arguing that the notion of cultural production

insists on the active, transformative natures of cultures and on the collective ability of social agents, not only to think like theorists, but to act like activists. Life experiences, individual and group projects, secret illicit and informal knowledge, private fears and fantasies, the threatening anarchic power arising from irreverent association . . . are not merely interesting additions. . . . These things are central: determined but also determining. They must occupy, fully fledged in their own right, a vital theoretical and political transformative stage in our analyses. This is, in part, the project of showing the capacities of the working class to generate albeit ambiguous, complex, and often ironic, collective and cultural forms of knowledge not reducible back to the bourgeois forms and the importance of this as one of the bases for political change.<sup>76</sup>

As Willis suggests, theories of resistance point to new ways of constructing a radical pedagogy by developing analyses of the ways in which class and culture combine to offer the outlines for a "cultural politics." At the core of such a politics is a semiotic reading of the style, rituals, language, and systems of meaning that inform the cultural terrains of subordinate groups. Through this process, it becomes possible to analyze what counter-hegemonic elements such cultural fields contain, and how they tend to become incorpo-

<sup>73</sup> Willis, *Learning to Labour*, pp. 89-116.

<sup>74</sup> Fine, "Examining Inequity: View From Urban Schools," Univ. of Pennsylvania, Unpublished Manuscript, 1982.

<sup>75</sup> Fine, p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> Willis, "Cultural Production and Theories of Reproduction," p. 114.

rated into the dominant culture and subsequently stripped of their political possibilities. Implicit in such an analysis is the need to develop strategies in schools in which oppositional cultures might be rescued from the processes of incorporation in order to provide the basis for a viable political force. An essential element of such a task, which has been generally neglected by radical educators, is the development of a radical pedagogy that links a politics of the concrete not just with the processes of reproduction but also with the dynamics of social transformation. The possibility for such a task already exists and is present in the attempt by resistance theorists to view the cultures of subordinate groups as more than simply the by-product of hegemony and defeat.<sup>77</sup>

Another important feature of resistance theory is a deeper understanding of the notion of relative autonomy. This notion is developed through a number of analyses that point to those nonreproductive moments that constitute and support the critical notion of human agency. As I have mentioned, resistance theory assigns an active role to human agency and experience as key mediating links between structural determinants and lived effects. Consequently, there is the recognition that different spheres or cultural sites—schools, families, mass media—are governed by complex ideological properties that often generate contradictions both within and among them. At the same time, the notion of ideological domination as all-encompassing and unitary in its form and content is rejected, and it is rightly argued that dominant ideologies themselves are often contradictory, as are different factions of the ruling classes, the institutions that serve them, and the subordinate groups under their control.

In considering the weaknesses in theories of resistance, I will make several criticisms which represent starting points for the further development of a critical theory of schooling. First, although studies of resistance point to those social sites and “spaces” in which the dominant culture is encountered and challenged by subordinate groups, they do not adequately conceptualize the historical development of the conditions that promote and reinforce contradictory modes of resistance and struggle. What is missing in this perspective are analyses of those historically and culturally mediated factors that produce a *range* of oppositional behaviors, some of which constitute resistance and some of which do not. Put simply, not all oppositional behavior has “radical significance,” nor is all oppositional behavior a clear-cut response to domination. The issue here is that there have been too few attempts by educational theorists to understand how subordinate groups embody and express a combination of reactionary and progressive behaviors—behaviors that embody ideologies both underlying the structure of social domination and containing the logic necessary to overcome it.

Oppositional behavior may not be simply a reaction to powerlessness, but might be an expression of power that is fueled by and reproduces the most powerful grammar of domination. Thus, on one level, resistance may be the simple appropriation and display of power, and may manifest itself through the interests and discourse of the worst aspects of capitalist rationality. For example, students may violate school rules, but the logic that informs such behavior may be rooted in forms of ideological hegemony such as

<sup>77</sup> It is important to stress that the opposition displayed by a subordinate group must be seen not only as a form of resistance but also as an expression of a group's struggle to constitute its social identity.

racism and sexism. Moreover, the source of such hegemony often originates outside of the school. Under such circumstances, schools become social sites where oppositional behavior is simply played out, emerging less as a critique of schooling than as an expression of dominant ideology.

This becomes clearer in Angela McRobbie's account of sixth-form female students in England who, by aggressively asserting their own sexuality, appear to be rejecting the official ideology of the school with its sexually repressive emphasis on neatness, passivity, compliance, and "femininity."<sup>78</sup> Their opposition takes the form of carving boyfriends' names on school desks, wearing makeup and tight-fitting clothes, flaunting their sexual preferences for older, more mature boys, and spending endless amounts of time talking about boys and boyfriends. It could be argued that this type of oppositional behavior, rather than suggesting resistance, primarily displays an oppressive mode of sexism. Its organizing principle appears to be linked to social practices informed by the objective of developing a sexual, and ultimately successful, marriage. Thus, it appears to underscore a logic that has little to do with resistance to school norms and a great deal to do with the sexism that characterizes working-class life and mass culture in general. This is not to say that such behavior can simply be written off as reactionary. Obviously, the fact that these young women are acting collectively and attempting to define for themselves what they want out of life contains an emancipatory moment. But in the final analysis, this type of opposition is informed by a dominating, rather than liberating, logic.

This leads to a related issue. Resistance theories have gone too far in viewing schools as institutions characterized exclusively by forms of ideological domination. Lost from this view is an insight provided by theorists who deal with the hegemonic-state reproductive model: the notion that schools are also repressive institutions that use various coercive state agencies, including the police and the courts, to enforce involuntary school attendance. The point here is that resistance theories must recognize that in some cases students may be totally indifferent to the dominant ideology of the school with its respective rewards and demands. Their behavior in school may be fueled by ideological imperatives that signify issues and concerns that have very little to do with school directly. School simply becomes the place where the oppositional nature of these concerns is expressed.

In short, oppositional behaviors are produced amid contradictory discourses and values. The logic that informs a given act of resistance may, on the one hand, be linked to interests that are class- gender- or race-specific. On the other hand, it may express the repressive moments inscribed in such behavior by the dominant culture rather than a message of protest against their existence. To understand the nature of such resistance, we must place it in a wider context to see how it is mediated and articulated in the culture of such oppositional groups. Because of a failure to understand the dialectical nature of resistance, most theories of education have treated the concept somewhat superficially. For instance, when domination is stressed in such studies, the portrayals of schools, working-class students, and classroom pedagogy often appear too homogeneous and static to be taken seriously. When resistance is discussed, its contradictory na-

<sup>78</sup> Angela McRobbie, "Working Class Girls and the Culture of Femininity," in *Women Take Issue*.

ture is usually not analyzed seriously, nor is the contradictory consciousness of the students and teachers treated dialectically.<sup>79</sup>

A second weakness in theories of resistance is that they rarely take into account issues of gender and race. As a number of feminists have pointed out, resistance studies, when analyzing domination, struggle, and schooling, generally ignore women and gender issues and focus instead on males and class issues.<sup>80</sup> This has meant that women are either disregarded altogether or are included only in terms that echo the sentiments of the male countercultural groups being portrayed. This raises a number of important problems that future analyses must resolve. One problem is that such studies have failed to account for the notion of patriarchy as a mode of domination that both cuts across various social sites and mediates between men and women within and between different social class formations. The point here, of course, is that domination is not singularly informed or exhausted by the logic of class oppression, nor does it affect men and women in similar ways. Women, though in different degrees, experience dual forms of domination in both the home and the workplace. How the dynamics of these forms are interconnected, reproduced, and mediated in schools represents an important area of continuing research. Another problem is that these studies contain no theoretical room for exploring forms of resistance that are race- and gender-specific, particularly as these mediate the sexual and social divisions of labor in various social sites such as schools. The failure to include women and racial minorities in such studies has resulted in a rather uncritical theoretical tendency to romanticize modes of resistance even when they contain reactionary racial and gender views. The irony here is that a large amount of neo-Marxist work on resistance, although allegedly committed to emancipatory concerns, ends up contributing to the reproduction of sexist and racist attitudes and practices.

A third weakness characterizing theories of resistance, as Jim Walker points out, is that they have focused primarily on overt acts of rebellious student behavior.<sup>81</sup> By so limiting their analyses, resistance theorists have ignored less obvious forms of resistance among students and have often misconstrued the political value of overt resistance. For example, some students minimize their participation in routine school practices while simultaneously displaying outward conformity to the school's ideology, opting for modes of resistance that are quietly subversive in the most immediate sense, but that have the potential to be politically progressive in the long run. These students may use humor to disrupt a class, use collective pressure to draw teachers away from class lessons, or purposely ignore the teacher's directions while attempting to develop collective spaces that allow them to escape the ethos of individualism permeating school life. Each type of behavior can indicate a form of resistance if it emerges out of a latent or overt ideological

<sup>79</sup> A representative example of the work I am criticizing can be found in Nancy King, "Children's Play as a Form of Resistance in the Classroom," *Journal of Education*, 164 (1982), 320-329; Valerie Suransky, "Tale of Rebellion and Resistance: The Landscape of Early Institutional Life," *Journal of Education* (forthcoming). There is a certain irony in that these articles are organized around the concept of resistance without ever providing a rigorous theoretical definition of what the term means.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, Angela McRobbie, "Settling Accounts with Subcultures," *Screen Education*, 34 (1980), 37-49.

<sup>81</sup> Walker, "Rebels With Our Applause: A Critique of Resistance Theories," *Journal of Education* (forthcoming).

condemnation of the underlying repressive ideologies that characterize schools in general. That is, if we view these acts as practices involving a conscious or semiconscious political response to school-constructed relations of domination, then these students are resisting school ideology in a manner that gives them the power to reject the system on a level that will not make them powerless to protest it in the future. They have not renounced access to knowledge and skills that may allow them to move beyond the class-specific positions of dead-end, alienating labor that most of the showy rebels will eventually occupy.<sup>82</sup>

What resistance theorists have failed to acknowledge is that some students are able to see through the lies and promises of the dominant school ideology but decide not to translate this insight into extreme forms of rebelliousness. In some cases the reason for this decision may be an understanding that overt rebelliousness may result in powerlessness now and in the future. Needless to say, they may also go through school on their own terms and still face limited opportunities in the future. But what is of major importance here is that any other alternative seems ideologically naive and limits whatever transcendent hopes for the future these students may have.<sup>83</sup>

It is the tension between the present reality of their lives and their willingness to dream of a better world that makes such students potential political leaders. Of course, in some cases students may not be aware of the political grounds of their position toward school, except for a general awareness of its dominating nature and the need to somehow escape from it without relegating themselves to a future they do not want. Even this vague understanding and its attendant behavior portend a politically progressive logic, a logic that needs to be incorporated into a theory of resistance.

A fourth weakness of theories of resistance is that they have not given enough attention to the issue of how domination reaches into the structure of personality itself. There is little concern with the often contradictory relation between understanding and action. Part of the solution to this problem may lie in uncovering the genesis and operation of those socially constructed needs that tie people to larger structures of domination. Radical educators have shown a lamentable tendency to ignore the question of needs and desires in favor of issues that center around ideology and consciousness. A critical psychology is needed that points to the way in which "un-freedom" reproduces itself in the psyche of human beings. We need to understand how dominating ideologies prevent many-sided needs from developing in the oppressed, or, in other words, how hegemonic ideologies function to exclude oppressed groups from creating needs that extend beyond the instrumental logic of the market. I am concerned here with such radical needs as those that represent the vital drive toward new relationships between men and women, the generations, different races, and humanity and nature. More specifically, we need to understand how to substitute radical needs organized around the desire for meaningful work, solidarity, an aesthetic sensibility, eros, and emancipatory freedoms for the egoistic, aggressive, calculable greed of capitalist interests. Alienating need structures—those dimensions of our psyche and personality that tie us to social practices and relationships that perpetuate systems of exploitation and the servitude of humanity—

<sup>82</sup> Willis, *Learning to Labour*, pp. 130–137.

<sup>83</sup> See Willis, *Learning to Labour*, chs. 8 and 9; Connell et al., *Making The Difference*, ch. 5.



represent one of the most crucial areas from which to address a radical pedagogy.

The question of the historical genesis and transformation of needs constitutes, in my mind, the most important basis for a theory of radical educational praxis. Until educators can point to possibilities for the development "of radical needs that both challenge the existing system of interest and production and point to an emancipated society,"<sup>84</sup> it will be exceptionally difficult to understand how schools function to incorporate people, or what that might mean to the establishment of a basis for critical thinking and responsible action. Put another way, without a theory of radical needs and critical psychology, educators have no way of understanding the grip and force of alienating social structures as they manifest themselves in the lived but often nondiscursive aspects of everyday life.<sup>85</sup>

### Toward a Theory of Resistance

Resistance is a valuable theoretical and ideological construct that provides an important focus for analyzing the relationship between school and the wider society. More importantly, it provides a new means for understanding the complex ways in which subordinate groups experience educational failure, pointing to new ways of thinking about and restructuring modes of critical pedagogy. As I have noted, the current use of the concept of resistance by radical educators suggests a lack of intellectual rigor and an overdose of theoretical sloppiness. It is imperative that educators be more precise about what resistance actually is and what it is not, and be more specific about how the concept can be used to develop a critical pedagogy. It is also clear that a rationale for employing the concept needs to be considered more fully. I will now discuss these issues and briefly outline some basic theoretical concerns for developing a more intellectually rigorous and politically useful foundation for pursuing such a task.

In the most general sense, resistance must be grounded in a theoretical rationale that provides a new framework for examining schools as social sites which structure the experiences of subordinate groups. The concept of resistance, in other words, represents more than a new heuristic catchword in the language of radical pedagogy; it depicts a mode of discourse that rejects traditional explanations of school failure and oppositional behavior and shifts the analysis of oppositional behavior from the theoretical terrains of functionalism and mainstream educational psychology to those of political science and sociology. Resistance in this case redefines the causes and meaning of oppositional behavior by arguing that it has little to do with deviance and learned helplessness, but a great deal to do with moral and political indignation.

Aside from shifting the theoretical ground for analyzing oppositional behavior, the concept of resistance points to a number of assumptions and concerns about schooling that are generally neglected in both traditional views of schooling and radical theories of reproduction. First, it celebrates a dialectical notion of human agency that rightly portrays domination as a process that is neither static nor complete. Concomitantly, the op-

<sup>84</sup> Jean Cohen, review of *Theory and Need in Marx*, by Agnes Heller, *Telos*, 33 (1977), 170-184.

<sup>85</sup> For an excellent analysis of the relationship between Marxist theory and psychoanalysis, see the differing interpretations by Richard Lichtman, *The Production of Desire* (New York: Free Press, 1982); and Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

pressed are not seen as being simply passive in the face of domination. The notion of resistance points to the need to understand more thoroughly the complex ways in which people mediate and respond to the connection between their own experiences and structures of domination and constraint. Central categories that emerge in a theory of resistance are intentionality, consciousness, the meaning of common sense, and the nature and value of nondiscursive behavior. Second, resistance adds new depth to the notion that power is exercised on and by people within different contexts that structure interacting relations of dominance and autonomy. Thus, power is never unidimensional; it is exercised not only as a mode of domination, but also as an act of resistance. Last, inherent in a radical notion of resistance is an expressed hope for radical transformation, an element of transcendence that seems to be missing in radical theories of education which appear trapped in the theoretical cemetery of Orwellian pessimism.

In addition to developing a rationale for the notion of resistance, there is a need to formulate criteria against which the term can be defined as a central category of analysis in theories of schooling. In the most general sense, I think resistance must be situated in a perspective that takes the notion of emancipation as its guiding interest. That is, the nature and meaning of an act of resistance must be defined by the degree to which it contains possibilities to develop what Herbert Marcuse termed "a commitment to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity."<sup>86</sup> Thus, the central element of analyzing any act of resistance must be a concern with uncovering the degree to which it highlights, implicitly or explicitly, the need to struggle against domination and submission. In other words, the concept of resistance must have a revealing function that contains a critique of domination and provides theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and struggle in the interest of social and self-emancipation. To the degree that oppositional behavior suppresses social contradictions while simultaneously merging with, rather than challenging, the logic of ideological domination, it does not fall under the category of resistance, but under its opposite—accommodation and conformism. The value of the concept of resistance lies in its critical function and in its potential to utilize both the radical possibilities embedded in its own logic and the interests contained in the object of its expression. In other words, the concept of resistance represents an element of difference, a counter-logic, that must be analyzed to reveal its underlying interest in freedom and its rejection of those forms of domination inherent in the social relations against which it reacts. Of course, this is a rather general set of standards upon which to ground the notion of resistance, but it does provide a notion of interest and a theoretical scaffold upon which to make a distinction between forms of oppositional behavior that can be used for either the amelioration of human life or for the destruction and denigration of basic human values.

Some acts of resistance reveal quite visibly their radical potential, while others are rather ambiguous; still others may reveal nothing more than an affinity for the logic of domination and destruction. It is the ambiguous area that I want to analyze briefly, since the other two areas are self-explanatory. Recently, I heard a "radical" educator argue that teachers who rush home early after school are, in fact, committing acts of re-

<sup>86</sup> Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977).

sistance. She also claimed that teachers who do not adequately prepare for their classroom lessons are participating in a form of resistance as well. Of course, it is equally debatable that the teachers in question are simply lazy or care very little about teaching, and that what in fact is being displayed is not resistance but unprofessional and unethical behavior. In these cases, there is no logical, convincing response to either argument. The behaviors displayed do not speak for themselves. To call them resistance is to turn the concept into a term that has no analytical precision. In cases like these, one must either link the behavior under analysis with an interpretation provided by the subjects themselves, or dig deeply into the historical and relational conditions from which the behavior develops. Only then will the interest embedded in such behavior be revealed.

It follows from my argument that the interests underlying a specific form of behavior may become clear once the nature of that behavior is interpreted by the person who exhibits it. But I do not mean to imply that such interests will automatically be revealed. Individuals may not be able to explain the reasons for their behavior, or the interpretation may be distorted. In this case, the interest underlying such behavior may be illuminated against the backdrop of social practices and values from which the behavior emerges. Such a referent may be found in the historical conditions that prompted the behavior, the collective values of a peer group, or the practices embedded in other social sites such as the family, the workplace, or the church. I want to stress that the concept of resistance must not be allowed to become a category indiscriminately hung over every expression of "oppositional behavior." On the contrary, it must become an analytical construct and mode of inquiry that is self-critical and sensitive to its own interests—radical consciousness-raising and collective critical action.

Let us now return to the question of how we define resistance and view oppositional behavior, and to the implications for making such distinctions. On one level, it is important to be theoretically precise about which forms of oppositional behavior constitute resistance and which do not. On another level, it is equally important to argue that all forms of oppositional behavior represent a focal point for critical analysis and should be analyzed to see if they represent a form of resistance by uncovering their emancipatory interests. This is a matter of theoretical preciseness and definition. On the other hand, as a matter of radical strategy, *all* forms of oppositional behavior, whether actually resistance or not, must be examined for their possible use as a basis for critical analysis. Thus, oppositional behavior becomes the object of both theoretical clarification and the subject of pedagogical considerations.

On a more philosophical level, I want to stress that the theoretical construct of resistance rejects the positivist notion that the meaning of behavior is synonymous with a literal reading based on immediate action. Instead, resistance must be viewed from a theoretical starting point that links the display of behavior to the interest it embodies, going beyond the immediacy of behavior to the interest that underlies its often hidden logic, a logic that also must be interpreted through the historical and cultural mediations that shape it. Finally, I want to emphasize that the ultimate value of the notion of resistance must be measured not only by the degree to which it promotes critical thinking and reflective action but, more importantly, by the degree to which it contains the possibility of galvanizing collective political struggle among parents, teachers, and students around the issues of power and social determination.

I will now briefly discuss the value of a dialectical notion of resistance for a critical theory of schooling. The pedagogical value of resistance lies, in part, in the connections it makes between structure and human agency on the one hand and culture and the process of self-formation on the other. Resistance theory rejects the idea that schools are simply instructional sites by not only politicizing the notion of culture, but also by analyzing school cultures within the shifting terrain of struggle and contestation. In effect, this represents a new theoretical framework for understanding the process of schooling which places educational knowledge, values, and social relations within the context of antagonistic relations and examines them within the interplay of dominant and subordinate school cultures. When a theory of resistance is incorporated into radical pedagogy, elements of oppositional behavior in schools become the focal point for analyzing different, and often antagonistic, social relations and experiences among students from dominant and subordinate cultures. Within this mode of critical analysis, it becomes possible to illuminate how students draw on the limited resources at their disposal in order to reaffirm the positive dimensions of their own cultures and histories.

Resistance theory highlights the complexity of student responses to the logic of schooling. Thus, it highlights the need for radical educators to unravel how oppositional behavior often emerges within forms of contradictory consciousness that are never free from the reproductive rationality embedded in capitalist social relations. A radical pedagogy, then, must recognize that student resistance in all of its forms represents manifestations of struggle and solidarity that, in their incompleteness, both challenge and confirm capitalist hegemony. What is most important is the willingness of radical educators to search for the emancipatory interests that underlie such resistance and to make them visible to students and others so that they can become the object of debate and political analysis.

A theory of resistance is central to the development of a radical pedagogy for other reasons as well. It helps bring into focus those social practices in schools whose ultimate aim is the control of both the learning process and the capacity for critical thought and action. For example, it points to the ideology underlying the hegemonic curriculum, to its hierarchically organized bodies of knowledge, and particularly to the way in which this curriculum marginalizes or disqualifies working-class knowledge as well as knowledge about women and minorities. Furthermore, resistance theory reveals the ideology underlying such a curriculum, with its emphasis on individual rather than collective appropriation of knowledge, and how this emphasis drives a wedge between students from different social classes. This is particularly evident in the different approaches to knowledge supported in many working-class and middle-class families. Knowledge in the working-class culture is often constructed on the principles of solidarity and sharing, whereas within middle-class culture, knowledge is forged in individual competition and is seen as a badge of separateness.

In short, resistance theory calls attention to the need for radical educators to unravel the ideological interests embedded in the various message systems of the school, particularly those embedded in its curriculum, systems of instruction, and modes of evaluation. What is most important is that resistance theory reinforces the need for radical educators to decipher how the forms of cultural production displayed by subordinate groups

can be analyzed to reveal both their limitations and their possibilities for enabling critical thinking, analytical discourse, and learning through collective practice.

Finally, resistance theory suggests that radical educators must develop a critical rather than a pragmatic relationship with students. This means that any viable form of radical pedagogy must analyze how the relations of domination in schools originate, how they are sustained, and how students, in particular, relate to them. This means looking beyond schools. It suggests taking seriously the counter-logic that pulls students away from schools into the streets, the bars, and the shopfloor culture.<sup>87</sup> For many working-class students, these realms are “real time” as opposed to the “dead time” they often experience in schools. The social spheres that make up this counter-logic may represent the few remaining terrains that provide the oppressed with the possibility of human agency and autonomy. Yet, these terrains appear to represent less a form of resistance than an expression of solidarity and self-affirmation.

The pull of this counter-logic must be critically engaged and built into the framework of a radical pedagogy. Yet, this is not to suggest that it must be absorbed into a theory of schooling. On the contrary, it must be supported by radical educators and others from both inside and outside of schools. But as an object of pedagogical analysis, this counter-logic must be seen as an important theoretical terrain in which one finds fleeting images of freedom that point to fundamentally new structures in the public organization of experience.

Inherent in the oppositional public spheres that constitute a counter-logic are the conditions around which the oppressed organize important needs and relations. Thus, it represents an important terrain in the ideological battle for the appropriation of meaning and experience. For this reason, it provides educators with an opportunity to link the political with the personal in order to understand how power is mediated, resisted, and reproduced in daily life. Furthermore, it situates the relationship between schools and the larger society within a theoretical framework informed by a fundamentally political question, How do we develop a radical pedagogy that makes schools meaningful so as to make them critical, and how do we make them critical so as to make them emancipatory?

In short, the basis for a new radical pedagogy must be drawn from a theoretically sophisticated understanding of how power, resistance, and human agency can become central elements in the struggle for critical thinking and learning. Schools will not change society, but we can create in them pockets of resistance that provide pedagogical models for new forms of learning and social relations—forms which can be used in other spheres more directly involved in the struggle for a new morality and view of social justice. To those who would argue that this is a partisan goal, I would reply that they are right, for it is a goal that points to what should be the basis of all learning—the struggle for a qualitatively better life for all.

<sup>87</sup> I am indebted to a conversation with Stanley Aronowitz for this insight regarding the idea of counter-logic. For an elaborated analysis of this idea, see his *Crisis in Historical Materialism* (New York: Praeger, 1981).

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