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## Reproduction, Resistance, & Accommodation in the Schooling Process

In the previous chapters I argued that the foundation for a radical theory of schooling can, in part, be developed from the work of the Frankfurt School and the more recent literature on the hidden curriculum. Whereas the Frankfurt School provides a discourse and mode of critique for deepening our understanding of the nature and function of schooling, critiques of the hidden curriculum have provided modes of analysis that uncover the ideologies and interests embedded in the message systems, codes, and routines that characterize daily classroom life. But as important as these two modes of analysis are, they do not provide a systematic account of how power and human agency interconnect to promote social practices in schools that represent both the condition and the outcome of domination and contestation. Fortunately, within the last decade a body of theoretical work has developed which provides a structural and interactional analysis of the process of schooling. It is to this work that I will now turn in order to assess not only the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical perspectives that characterize its major accounts, but also to indicate the potential these may have for developing an ideological foundation essential for a reconstructed theory of radical pedagogy.

As I indicated in Chapter 2, the specificities of culture, ideology, and power have never figured prominently in the dominant language of educational theory and practice. In the long history of educational theory, extending from Bobbitt (1918) and Charters (1923) to the more recent work of Tyler (1950), Popham (1969), and Mager (1975), there has been a powerful and deep-seated commitment to viewing schools and classroom pedagogy in terms that separate power from knowledge while simultaneously abstracting culture from politics.

In both its conservative and liberal versions, educational theory has been firmly entrenched in the logic of necessity and efficiency and has been mediated through the political discourse of integration and consensus. This becomes clear if it is recognized that notions such as conflict and struggle are either downplayed or ignored in the discourse of traditional educational theory and practice. More specifically, the Parsonian (1959) view of schooling, which argues for a view of schools as neutral institutions designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills they will need to perform successfully in the wider society, laid the basis for a sociology of education that refused to interrogate the relationship between schools and the industrial order. One consequence of this view was that the structure and ideology of the dominant society was rendered unproblematic. Similarly, a disquieting silence emerged regarding how schools might be influenced, bent, and molded by interest groups that both sustained and benefited from the deep-seated political, economic, racial, and gender inequalities that characterize American society (Feinberg 1975).

On the other hand, traditional educational theory offered no real basis for understanding the relationship among issues such as ideology, knowledge, and power. That is, bleached from this perspective was any attempt to reflect on the historical development, selection, use, and legitimation of what schools defined as "real" knowledge. The crucial question ignored here is the way in which the power distributed in a society functions in the interests of specific ideologies and forms of knowledge to sustain the economic and political concerns of particular groups and classes (Young & Whitty 1977). The failure to develop this type of analysis is evident in traditional educational theory's long standing emphasis on the management and administration of knowledge, as opposed to a critical concern with the historical and social determinants that govern the selection of such knowledge forms and attendant practices (Apple 1979). What we are presented with and often victimized by in this perspective is an

epistemology, a mode of thinking that has been flattened out and largely reduced to the celebration of methodological refinement, i.e., a preoccupation with control, production, and observation (Aronowitz 1980). Lost from this calculus of social engineering are the basic rudiments of critical thought—that is, behind traditional theory's insistence on a definition of truth, one that appears to be synonymous with objective methodological inquiry and empirical verification, there is a structured silence around how normative interests provide the grounding for theory and social inquiry. Less abstractly, beneath the seemingly serious commitment to objectivity and value-freedom stands a reductionist logic that not only displays little critical attentiveness to the grounding of knowledge, but also suppresses notions of ethics and the value of history (Jacoby 1975; Giroux 1981). Dancing on the surface of reality, traditional educational theory ignores not only the latent principles that shape the deep grammar of the existing social order, but also those principles underlying the genesis and nature of its own logic.

Within this framework are a number of practices worth mentioning: first, ideology is dissolved within the concept of objective knowledge; second, the relationship between the hidden curriculum and social control are discarded for a preoccupation with designing objectives; and finally, the relationship between socialization and the reproduction of class, gender, and racial inequalities are ignored for an overriding concern with finding ways to teach knowledge that is largely predefined (e.g., see Harty, 1979). It is important to stress here that schools are viewed within this perspective merely as instructional sites. That schools are also cultural sites is ignored, as is the notion that schools represent arenas of contestation and struggle among differentially empowered cultural and economic groups. The latter becomes evident in the dominant role that the discourse of learning psychology and structural-functionalism have played in defining traditional theory's view of schooling. Excluding the mediations of class and power, traditional educational theory either reduces culture to so-called standards of excellence, or simply treats it as a neutral social science category. Missing from the traditional view is the notion that culture refers to specific processes that involve lived antagonistic relations among different socio-economic groups with unequal access to the means of power and a resulting unequal ability to produce, distribute, and legitimize their shared principles and lived experiences (Gramsci 1971; Hall & Jefferson 1976). Thus one derives little sense from the traditional

view of how schools function in the interest of the dominant culture to reproduce the logic and values of the existing society.

It is at this point that one can trace the beginnings of what has been loosely called the "new sociology of education." At the core of this approach, even in its earliest stages, was an attempt to understand how schools constituted subjectivities and produced meaning, and how they were linked to the issues of power and control (Young 1971; Young & Whitty 1977). Instead of separating knowledge from power, proponents of the new theory argued that what counts as knowledge in any given society, school, or social site presupposes and constitutes specific power relations. The critical sociology that developed out of this theoretical interest in the connection between power and knowledge was important because it called into question how meaning was produced in schools, and argued strongly for a mode of theorizing that questioned taken-for-granted school categories and practices (Bates 1981; Musgrave 1980).

Eventually, the phenomenological variant of the new sociology of education was challenged by critical analyses that argued that the real determinants of social control and change lay not inside the typifications and consciousness of teachers but in the political and economic structures of the larger society. In other words, the concern for human agency and transformative consciousness gave way to analyses of how schools function as institutions designed to reproduce the logic of domination and inequality. Thus the new sociology of education, while still focusing on the relationship among power, domination, and schooling, found itself torn between perspectives that stressed a one-sided structuralism or a limited focus on culture and the social construction of knowledge. On the one hand, the emphasis was on locating power relations outside of schools, and in attempting to unravel how these penetrated and shaped the organization of the school and the day-to-day classroom social relations (Baron, et al. 1981). On the other hand, phenomenological and interactional-based approaches focused on the processes at work in the production and construction of school knowledge.

As useful as each of these positions is, each approach has failed to develop a theory of schooling that dialectically links structure and human agency. Consequently, they have either distorted or undertheorized those complex and contradictory moments that tie schools to the state and economic sphere. Unknowingly, these perspectives not only helped reproduce the very mechanisms of domination they attacked, they have also

ignored those ideological and cultural spaces that speak to resistance and the promise of a transformative critical pedagogy.

The current impasse in the new sociology of education is revealed in its inability to move beyond what I have labeled *theories of reproduction*. That is, in spite of the attempts to build on earlier structuralist and culturalist positions, the theoretical parameters of the new sociology have remained restricted to one-sided notions of power and human agency that need to be reconstructed if the ground work for a critical pedagogy is to emerge. It is to an analysis of these positions that I will now turn.

### Theories of Reproduction

In the most general sense, theories of reproduction take as their central concern the issue of how schools function in the interest of the dominant society. But unlike liberal and structural-functionalist accounts, they reject the assumption that schools are democratic institutions that promote cultural excellence, value-free knowledge, and objective modes of instruction. Instead, reproduction theories focus on how power is used to mediate between schools and the interests of capital. By moving outside of the official view of schooling, such theories focus on how schools utilize their material and ideological resources to reproduce the social relations and attitudes needed to sustain the social divisions of labor necessary for the existing relations of production. The overwhelming concern of such theories is with the politics and mechanisms of domination, more specifically with the way in which these leave their imprint on the pattern of relations that tie schools to the industrial order and the character of daily classroom life. Theories of reproduction also share fundamentally different perceptions of how power and control function in the interest of the dominant society both in and out of schools.

In stressing the determinate nature and primacy of either the state or political economy in educational theory and practice, reproductive approaches have played a significant role in exposing the ideological assumptions and processes behind the rhetoric of neutrality and social mobility characteristic of conservative as well as liberal views of schooling. Yet while such approaches represent an important theoretical break from idealist and functionalist paradigms in educational theory, they still remain situated within a problematic that ultimately supports rather than challenges the logic of the existing order. The point here is that there

are some serious deficiencies in existing theories of reproduction, the most important of which is the refusal to posit a form of critique that demonstrates the theoretical and practical importance of counter-hegemonic struggles.

By failing either to acknowledge the degree to which the oppressed are not constituted by capital or to recognize those aspects of daily life to which capitalist ideology is indifferent, reproductive theories have been trapped in a reductive logic that appears at odds with the aim or even the possibility of developing a radical theory of education. In other words, neither the promise of oppositional teaching nor the more encompassing task of radical social change represents an important moment in these perspectives. The implications that these approaches have for a model of radical pedagogy seems obvious, for between the fact of class, race, and gender domination, and the promise of counter-ideologies embedded in the contradictions and tensions of classroom experiences, reproductive theories posit models of domination that appear so stark that even references to resistance or social change sound like a weak utterance inscribed in madness. In the end, abstract negation gives way to unrelieved despair, and the rhetoric of radical reproductive approaches points to a mode of theorizing that belongs to the rationality of the existing administered system of corporate domination.

The shortcomings of such approaches to radical pedagogy are not new. Earlier criticisms of theories of reproduction have pointed to their one-sided determinism, their somewhat simplistic view of social and cultural reproduction, and their often-ahistorical mode of theorizing (Young & Whitty 1977; Giroux 1981). What is disconcerting is that radical educational critics, especially in the United States,<sup>1</sup> have failed to abstract and develop partially articulated and potentially valuable elements within existing theories of reproduction. Some of these offer concrete possibilities for developing a theory of radical pedagogy—in this case, a theory of pedagogy that both accounts for the connection between structure and intentionality, and points to the need for a connection between critical theory and social action. It is imperative that such a pedagogy be informed by a political project that speaks not only to the interest of individual freedom and social reconstruction, but also has immediate relevance for educators as a mode of viable praxis.

There are two major positions that emerge from the broad range of reproductive approaches presently relying on macro-sociological models to analyze the relationship between schooling and the capitalist societies

of the advanced industrial countries of the West. But before identifying and examining these positions, I want to stress that the categories under use in this essay represent ideal-typical terms that have been hardened and compressed for the sake of analytical clarity. The two positions are (a) theories of social reproduction, which take as representative examples the seminal work of Althusser (1969, 1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976, 1980); and (b) theories of cultural production, with a primary focus on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his cohorts (1977a, 1977b), and on the work of Basil Bernstein (1977, 1981).

### *Theories of Social Reproduction and the Problematic of Ideology and Power*

Theories of social reproduction take as a central issue the notion that schools occupy a major, if not critical, role in the reproduction of the social formations needed to sustain capitalist relations of production. Put simply, schools have emerged historically as social sites that have integrated the traditionally separate tasks of reproducing work skills and producing attitudes that legitimize the social relations in which these skills are located. In other words, workers historically have trained for their work skills on the job under apprenticeship programs (Aronowitz 1973). Similarly, the production of a consciousness compatible with the interest of the dominant society was initially accorded to the family and the developing apparatus of the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer 1972). Schools, in this view, have now integrated these two tasks, and while not being the only agency to do so, are the most important one. In short, schooling represents a major social site for the construction of subjectivities and dispositions, a place where students from different social classes learn the necessary skills to occupy their class-specific locations in the occupational division of labor. While Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) stress different aspects of the reproduction process, they both believe that the economy-school nexus represents the major set of relations in the maintenance and reproduction of the advanced industrial countries of the West. Moreover, they exhibit a strong structuralist preoccupation in their concern with the way in which social systems position or structure human subjects. In analyzing these positions, I will examine the work of Althusser (1969, 1971) before I look at the work of Bowles

and Gintis (1976, 1980) and the implications that these two perspectives have for a radical theory of pedagogy.

### LOUIS ALTHUSSER

Broadly speaking, Althusser attempts to tackle the difficult question of how a labor force can be constituted to fulfill the important material and ideological functions necessary for reproducing the capitalist mode of production. For Althusser (1971), this involves not only training workers with the skills and competencies necessary for working within the process of production, but also ensuring that workers will embody the attitudes, values, and norms that provide the required discipline and respect essential for the maintenance of the existing relations of production. Like Gramsci (1971), Althusser believes that the maintenance of the existing system of production and power arrangements depends on both the use of force and the use of ideology. Thus, for him, the reproduction of the "conditions of production" (Althusser 1971) rests upon three important interrelated moments in the process of production, capital accumulation, and reproduction of social formations characteristic of industrialized societies. These are: 1) the production of values that support the relations of production; 2) the use of force and ideology to support the dominant classes in all important spheres of control; and 3) the production of knowledge and skills relevant to specific forms of work.

Since this position has been treated extensively by others (Hirst 1979; Erben & Gleeson 1977; Callinicos 1977; Aronowitz 1981a), I will focus my analysis primarily on the conception of power and ideology that emerges from Althusser's position.

Jettisoning more vulgar interpretations of the base-superstructure issue in Marxist theory, Althusser (1971) argues that the relation of the economic base to the institutions of civil society cannot be reduced to a simple cause-and-effect determination. Instead, he claims that the legitimizing principles of capitalist industrialized societies are rooted in the self-regulating practices of the state, which consist of the *repressive state apparatus*, which rules by force and is represented by the army, police, courts, and prisons; and the *ideological state apparatus*, which rules primarily through consent and consists of schools, the family, the legal structure, the mass media, and other agencies. Though Althusser (1971) insists that in the final analysis the economic realm is the most important mode of determination, he manages to escape from an orthodox reading of this

issue. He does this by claiming that within particular historically located societies there is a displacement of the logic of determination and domination from its primary contradiction in the economic sphere to other levels of determination within the social totality. For instance, he argues that at the present moment the primary determination in reproducing capitalist societies rests with institutions in the Ideological State Apparatus. More to the point, Althusser claims that schools in advanced capitalist societies have become the dominant institution in the ideological subjugation of the work force, for it is the schools that teach both the skills and the know-how that constitute the subjectivity of future generations of workers. He goes on to assert that ". . . one ideological state apparatus certainly has the dominant role, although hardly anyone lends an ear to its music; it is so silent! This is the School" (Althusser 1971). Althusser's theory of the state and reproduction is clearly an important advance over traditional and liberal accounts. For it argues that the meaning of schools can only be understood within the context of the ideological state apparatus; moreover, it dispels Marxist theories of schooling that argue that schools are simply the ethereal reflection of the economic order. Schools, in Althusser's view, are relatively autonomous institutions that exist in a particular relation with the economic base, but that at the same time have their own specific constraints and practices. For him, schools operate within a social structure defined by capitalist social relations and ideology; but the social relations and ideologies that mediate between schools and the economic base—not to mention the state—represent constraints that are modified, altered, and in some cases contradicted by a variety of political and social forces. What schools don't do as a set of collective agencies is challenge the structural basis of capitalism, though there are individuals within these institutions that may offer sharp criticisms and modes of oppositional teaching. As the major ideological state apparatus, schools, according to Althusser, generally serve their political function quite well and provide students with the appropriate attitudes for work and citizenship. These attitudes include "respect for the socio-technical division of labor and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination" (Althusser 1971).

For our purposes, there are two questions in the Althusserian scheme: on the one hand, there is the question of the actual role that schools play in the reproduction of the existing order; on the other hand, there is the crucial issue of how the mechanisms of reproduction actually work themselves out within such institutions. Althusser's (1971) response to the

first question is clear, but underdeveloped theoretically and empirically. He claims that schools teach students both the skills that are necessary for different jobs in the work force and the rules of behavior appropriate to the existing social relations of production. Althusser (1969, 1971) attempts to explain the nature of these functions through his notion of ideology.

In the Althusserian analysis of schooling, ideology contains two crucial elements. First, it has a material existence in the rituals, practices, and social processes that structure the day-to-day workings of schools. For example, ideological practices can be found in the very materiality of the architecture of the school building i.e., in the categorization of the separate academic subjects as they are exhibited concretely in different departments, often housed in separate buildings or situated on separate floors; in the hierarchical relations between teachers and students inscribed in the lecture hall where ". . . the seating arrangements—benches rising in tiers before a raised lectern—dictate the flow of information, and serve to neutralize professorial authority" (Hebdige 1979). Second, ideology neither produces consciousness nor a willing passive compliance. Instead, it functions as a system of representations, carrying meanings and ideas that structure the unconsciousness of students. The effect is to induce in them an "imaginary relationship . . . to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1971). Althusser writes at length on this issue:

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 men in a process that escapes them. Men "live" their ideologies as the Cartesians "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 [Althusser 1969].

Althusser's (1969, 1971) view of ideology occupies a central position in his view of power and domination. The interplay between power and domination in this perspective is visible at two important levels. At the macro-level, the notion of the materiality of ideology highlights not only

the "political" nature of space, time, routine, and rituals as they function within determinant institutional settings, it also illuminates the relation between capital and the dominant classes in the appropriation and use of apparatuses deemed essential to the production of ideologies and lived experiences. The notion that ideas are free-floating, or the equally reductionist notion of culture as mere excellence, are dealt an effective blow in this critique, which is amplified in the work of Foucault (1977). On another level, Althusser's (1969) more focused discussion of the effects of ideology, specifically his claim that it is a structuring feature of the unconscious, points to a relation between depth psychology and domination that itself raises a number of important issues, particularly in modes of educational theory where a one-sided concern with the cognitive aspects of schooling appears unquestioned. Unfortunately, Althusser (1969, 1971) situates these insights in a theoretical framework that is based on a reductionist notion of power and a one-dimensional view of human agency.

As a number of critics have pointed out (Erbeen & Gleeson 1977; Aronowitz 1981a; Willis 1981), Althusser has fashioned a theory of domination in which the needs of capital become indistinct from the effects of capitalist social relations. In fact, Althusser's (1971) notion of domination is so one-sided that it is impossible to deduce from his perspective the possibility of ideologies which are oppositional in nature (Hall 1981). This is no small point, because it suggests that schools are not to be viewed as social sites marked by the interplay of domination, accommodation, and struggle, but rather as sites that function smoothly to reproduce a docile labor force.

Ideology, in this perspective, is treated undialectically in a number of instances. First, ideology collapses into a theory of domination that restricts its meaning to such a degree that it appears as a "force" able to invalidate or diffuse any type of resistance. Ideology is in this case not simply a negative moment in the lived experience of human beings; its locus of operation at the level of the unconscious appears to make it immune to reflexive self criticism. In a second undialectical treatment of the concept, ideology becomes an institutional medium of oppression that appears to function so efficiently that the state and its ideological apparatus are presented as part of a static and administrative fantasy. In this view, schools and other social sites seem free from even the slightest vestige of conflict, contradiction, and struggle. Finally, Althusser has developed a notion of power that appears to eliminate human agency. The

notion that human beings are neither homogeneously constituted subjects nor passive role bearers is lost in Althusser's (1971) analysis. In effect, there is no theory of mediation in this perspective; nor is there any conception of how people appropriate, select, accommodate, or simply generate meaning. Instead, in Althusser's reductionist schema human beings are relegated to static role-bearers, carriers of predefined meanings, agents of hegemonic ideologies inscribed in their psyche like irremovable scars. Consequently, it is impossible to explain from this perspective what mechanisms are at work to allow or characterize schools as relatively autonomous institutions.

Althusser's (1971) work is in marked contrast to the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976), who do point to some of the specific mechanisms of schooling that serve the logic of capital. If the working class is to be judged as dumb and inert, we at least deserve a glimpse of how the machinery of oppression makes them "hop and jump" for their appointed slots in the labor process. Exaggerations aside, one reason for Althusser's failure is that he has fashioned a theory of reproduction and domination at a level of abstraction that appears uninformed by the concrete interplay of power relations. As Willis and Corrigan point out, "If pure dominance has any meaning at all it can only be in formal sets of possibilities and abstract relations. It is in profane material struggles that opposition takes on meaning through practice" (Willis & Corrigan 1980). The point here is that in the end Althusser falls prey to an abstract system of power and domination that appears to suffer from the very reification it analyzes. Instead of providing a dialectical understanding of the logic of domination, he has enshrined it in a formalistic system that is as insular as it is theoretically demeaning to the notions of struggle and human agency.

#### BOWLES & GINTIS

Bowles and Gintis (1976) share Althusser's basic notion of the role of schooling in capitalist society. That is, like Althusser, Bowles and Gintis believe that schools serve two functions in capitalist society. One essential function is the reproduction of the labor power necessary for capital accumulation. This is provided for in schools through differential selecting and training along class and gender lines of students with the "technical and cognitive skills required for adequate job performance" (Bowles & Gintis 1976) in the hierarchical social division of labor. The second essential function requires the reproduction of those forms of conscious-

ness, dispositions, and values necessary for the maintenance of "institutions and social relationships which facilitate the translation of labor into profit" (ibid).

Althusser (1971) used the concept of ideology to direct us to the role that schools play in securing the domination of the working class. Bowles and Gintis (1976) take us along a similar route but employ a different theoretical vehicle. Instead of the overbearing weight of the ideological state apparatus, we are given the notion of the *correspondence principle*. Broadly speaking, the correspondence principle posits that the hierarchically structured patterns of values, norms, and skills that characterize the work force and the dynamics of class interaction under capitalism are mirrored in the social dynamics of the daily classroom encounter. Classroom social relations inculcate students with the attitudes and dispositions necessary for acceptance of the social and economic imperatives of a capitalist economy. Bowles and Gintis clearly specify the nature of their structural analysis:

The educational system helps integrate youth into the economic system, we believe, through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production. The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the workplace, but develops the types of personal demeanor, modes of self-preservation, self-image, and social identifications which are crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationships of education—the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and their work—replicate the hierarchical division of labor [Bowles & Gintis 1976].

While Bowles and Gintis are helpful in pointing to specific classroom social relations as social processes that link schools to determinate forces in the workplace, they eventually end up with a theory of social reproduction that is much too simplified and overdetermined. Not only does their argument point to a spurious "constant fit" between schools and the workplace, it does so by ignoring important issues regarding the role of consciousness, ideology, and resistance in the schooling process. In other words, dominant control in this view is characterized by a mode of analysis that overlooks the fact that social structures like the school and workplace represent ". . . both the medium and the outcome of reproduction practices" (Giddens 1979). The notion that human action and structure presuppose one another is ignored by Bowles and Gintis in favor of a model of correspondence in which the subject gets dissolved

under the weight of structural constraints that appear to form both the personality and the workplace (Best & Connolly 1979).

What is disregarded in the notion of "correspondence" is not only the issue of resistance, but also any attempt to delineate the complex ways in which working-class subjectivities are constituted. Instead of an analysis of the way in which various sites with their complex of ideologies and different levels of structural constraints function to produce a working class marked by a variety of distinctions, we are presented with a homogeneous image of working-class life fashioned solely by the logic of domination. The impetus toward self-creation appears to be generated for them by the dominant, who are presented here under the rubric of a spurious harmony.

Lacking a considered theory of consciousness or ideology, Bowles and Gintis grossly ignore what is taught in schools as well as how classroom knowledge is either mediated through school culture or given meaning by the teachers and students under study. The authors provide no conceptual tools to unravel the problem of how knowledge is both consumed and produced in the school setting. What we are left with is a theoretical position that reinforces the idea that there is little that educators can do to change their circumstances or plight. In short, not only do contradictions and tensions disappear in this account, but also the promise of critical pedagogy and social change.

In fairness to Bowles and Gintis, it must be stressed that their work has made a number of positive contributions to educational theory. Since I have examined these in detail elsewhere (Giroux, 1981), I will simply mention some of the more salient contributions. First, the earlier work improved our knowledge of how the mechanisms of the hidden curriculum worked through the social relations of the classroom. Secondly, their work was invaluable in articulating the relationship between class- and gender-specific modes of schooling with social processes in the workplace. Moreover, Bowles and Gintis helped to illuminate the non-cognitive dimensions of domination by focusing on the role the schools played in the production of certain types of personality traits. Furthermore, in their most recent work, these authors have argued for the importance of contradictions in the process of social reproduction as well as for the importance of social sites such as the family (Bowles & Gintis 1981). But even this work, in spite of its theoretical gains, says very little about either consciousness or how schools produce subjectivities that are not subsumed within the imperatives of reproduction.

## SUMMARY

In summary, both Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) fail either to define hegemony in terms that posit a dialectical relationship among power, ideology, and resistance, or to provide a framework for developing a viable mode of radical pedagogy. Both views relegate human agency to a passive model of socialization and overemphasize domination while ignoring contradictions and forms of resistance that also characterize social sites like schools and the workplace. Moreover, both views stress the notion of social reproduction at the expense of cultural reproduction, and in spite of Althusser's insistence on the role of ideology as a mechanism of domination, the concept ultimately functions to mystify rather than explain how people resist, escape, or change the "crushing" weight of the existing social order.

It is also important to note that in these perspectives not only are the mechanisms of power and domination either underdeveloped or ignored, there is also a failure to consider that domination is never total or that power itself is something other than a negative force reducible to the economic sphere or state apparatus. Lost from the social reproductive perspective is any serious consideration of schools as social sites that produce and reproduce ideologies and cultural forms that stand in opposition to dominant values and practices. By ignoring the notion that dominant ideologies and social processes have to be mediated rather than simply reproduced by the cultural field of the school, social-reproduction theorists exempt themselves from one of the central questions in any theory of reproduction, i.e., the question of explaining both the nature and existence of contradictions and patterns of opposition in schools. The existence of such patterns suggests that dominant educational values and practices have to be viewed in such a way that their determinate effects can neither be guaranteed nor taken-for-granted (Moore 1978, 1979).

A more viable approach to understanding the role that schools play in the process of social reproduction of class and gender relationships should focus on the role that the cultural field of the school plays as a *mediating* force within the complex interplay of reproduction and resistance. At this juncture, we may turn to theories of cultural reproduction.

*Theories of Cultural Reproduction*

Theories of cultural reproduction begin precisely at the point where social reproduction theories end. That is, the work of Althusser (1971) and

Bowles and Gintis (1976) is characterized by a singular failure to develop a theory of consciousness and culture, whereas theories of cultural reproduction have made a sustained effort to develop a sociology of curriculum that links culture, class, and domination with the logic and imperatives of schooling. In other words, theories of cultural reproduction are concerned with the question of how capitalist societies are able to repeat and reproduce themselves, but the focus of their concern with issues of social control centers around either an analysis of the principles underlying the structure and transmission of the cultural field of the school or questions of how school culture is produced, selected, and legitimated. In other words, 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 cohorts (1977a, 1977b) in France and the work of Basil Bernstein (1977) in England represent two instrumental perspectives for studying the cultural reproduction position.

## PIERRE BOURDIEU

Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (1977a) have made a sustained effort to develop a sociology of curriculum that links culture, class, and domination, on the one hand, and schooling, knowledge, and biography on the other. Bourdieu and Passeron reject reproductive accounts that view the school as simply a mirror of society, and argue that schools are relatively autonomous institutions only indirectly influenced by more powerful economic and political institutions. Rather than being directly linked to the power of an economic elite, schools are seen as part of a larger universe of symbolic institutions that, rather than impose docility and oppression, reproduce existing power relations subtly via 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 mediated and reproduced, in part, through what he calls "symbolic violence" (1979). That is, class control is not simply the crude reflex of economic power imposing itself in the form of overt force and restraint. Instead, it is constituted through the more subtle exercise of symbolic power waged by a ruling class in order "to impose a definition of the social world that is consistent with its interests" (Bour-



diou 1979). Culture in this perspective becomes the mediating link between ruling-class interests and everyday life. It presents 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, for 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. This is an important point in Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) analysis, because through this argument he 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. In contrast to these positions, Bourdieu argues that it is 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 function it performs and so to perform them more effectively (Bourdieu 1977a). Moreover, it is in analyzing how the school actually performs the functions of cultural reproduction that we begin to benefit most from this analysis.

The concepts of cultural capital and habitus are central to understanding Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) analysis of how the mechanisms of cultural reproduction function concretely within schools. The first concept, cultural capital, refers on the one hand to the different sets of linguistic and cultural competencies that individuals inherit by way of the class-located boundaries of their families. In more specific terms, a child inherits from his or her family sets of meanings, qualities of style, modes of thinking, and types of dispositions that are accorded a certain social value and status as a result of what the dominant class or classes label as the most valued cultural capital. Schools play a particularly important role in both legitimating and reproducing the dominant culture, for schools, especially at the level of higher education, embody class interests and ideologies that capitalize on a kind of familiarity and set of skills that only specific students have received by means of their family backgrounds and class relations. For example, students whose families have a tenuous connection to forms of cultural capital highly valued by the dominant society are at a decided disadvantage. Bourdieu sums up the process well when he argues that the educational system:

. . . offers information and training which can be received and acquired

only by subjects endowed with the system of predispositions that is the condition for the success of the transmission and of the inculcation of the culture. By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what they do not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture [Bourdieu 1977c].

Within the logic of this analysis, the dynamics of cultural reproduction function in two important ways. First, the dominant classes exert their power by defining what counts as meaning, and in doing so they disguise this "cultural arbitrariness" in the name of a neutrality that masks its ideological grounding. This is an important point because Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a) use it to illustrate convincingly the "illusory nature of all discourses which assume the student milieu to be homogeneous" (Baudelot & Establet 1971). What is argued here is that the effects of class reach deep into the university student body and are replicated in the various ways in which different student groups relate to the culture, ideology, and politics of the school. Second, class and power connect with dominant cultural production not only in the structure and evaluation of the school curriculum, but also in the dispositions of the oppressed themselves, who actively participate in their own subjugation. This becomes more clear if we examine Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*.

According to Bourdieu, the habitus refers to the subjective dispositions which reflect a class-based social grammar of taste, knowledge, and behavior inscribed permanently in the "body schema and the schemes of thought" (Bourdieu 1977b) of each developing person. The habitus, or internalized competencies and sets of structured needs, represents the mediating link between structures, social practice, and reproduction. That is, the system of "symbolic violence" does not mechanically impose itself on the oppressed; it is at least in part reproduced by them, since the habitus governs practices that assign limits to its "operations of invention" (ibid). In other words, objective structures—language, schools, families—tend to produce dispositions, which in turn structure social experiences that reproduce the same objective structures.

The value of Bourdieu's educational theory centers around his political analysis of culture, his examination of how the dominant culture is produced in schools, and his attempt at developing a notion of depth psychology that partially unravels the question of why the dominated take-

*Bourdieu critique*

part in their own oppression. Yet as important as Bourdieu's theoretical advances are, especially over liberal and structural-functionalist models of schooling, they remain trapped in a notion of power and domination that is one-sided and over-determined. For instance, as important as the notion of habitus is in linking the concept of domination to the structure of personality needs, its definition and use constitute a conceptual strait-jacket that provides no room for modification or escape. Thus the notion of habitus smothers the possibility for social change and collapses into a mode of management ideology. More specifically, Bourdieu (1979b) disregards the assumption that reflexive thought may result in social practices that qualitatively restructure one's disposition or structure of needs, one's habitus (Heller 1974). Consequently, Bourdieu (1977b) ends up with a theory of hegemony irreversibly rooted in the personality structure; in doing so, he appears to short-circuit the hope for individual and social transformation.

Equally important is the fact that culture, in Bourdieu's view, represents a one-way process of domination. As a result, it suggests falsely that working-class cultural forms and knowledge are both homogeneous and merely a pale reflection of dominant cultural capital. Working-class cultural production and its link to cultural reproduction through the processes of resistance, incorporation, or accommodation is not acknowledged by Bourdieu. The collapse of culture and class into the dynamics of dominant cultural reproduction raises a number of significant problems. First, such a portrayal eliminates conflict both within and between different classes. Thus notions such as struggle, diversity, and human agency get lost in a reductionist view of human nature and history. Second, by reducing classes to homogeneous entities whose only differences are based on whether or not they exercise or respond to power, Bourdieu (1977a) provides no theoretical opportunity to unravel the way in which cultural domination *and* resistance are mediated through the complex interface of race, gender, and class (Arnot 1981). This point is important because it indicates not only that there are elements in society that structure important distinctions within and between classes, but that there are forms of cultural production that are not class-specific, just as there are modes of behavior and ideologies to which capital is relatively indifferent. What is missing from Bourdieu's analysis is the notion that culture is *both* a structuring and transforming process. Davies captures this dynamic in his comment, "Culture refers paradoxically to conservative adaptation and lived subordination of classes to other classes and to opposition, resistance, and creative struggle for change" (Davies 1981).

Bourdieu's (1977a, 1979) analyses also suffer from a one-sided treatment of ideology. In this case, ruling class values, meanings, and codes appear to exist outside of a theory of struggle and imposition. Ideology as a construct that links relations of meaning with relations of power in a dialectical fashion is lost in this perspective. That is, 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 who either resist openly or conform only under pressure from school authorities. The point here is that dominant ideologies are not simply transmitted in schools, nor are they practiced in a void. On the contrary, they are often met with resistance by teachers, students, or parents, and must therefore, to be successful, repress the production of counter-ideologies. Moreover, schools are not simply static institutions that reproduce the dominant ideology, they are active agents in its construction as well. As Connell, et al, point out in one of their ethnographic studies of a ruling class school:

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., interschool 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 [Connell, et al 1981].

By failing to develop a theory of ideology that speaks to the way human beings dialectically create, resist, and accommodate themselves to dominant ideologies, Bourdieu excludes both the active nature of domination as well as the active nature of resistance. Consequently, by reducing the dynamics of ideological domination and construction to a transmission process, the notion of ideology is reified, and reduced to a static structural category.

Of course, Bourdieu (1977a) provides a theoretical service in linking the family and school in his theory of cultural reproduction; but his refusal to examine how contradictions arise either through the internal divisions

of age, sex, and race or between the different classes themselves raises the question of why one should bother to study the issue of working-class domination in the first place, particularly since the latter appears as part of an Orwellian nightmare that is as irreversible as it is unjust. It is important to argue, in spite of Bourdieu, that schools do not simply usurp the cultural capital of working-class homes and communities. Complex relations develop in the context of the school, and these need to be analyzed (Clarke, et al. 1979; Hakken 1980). This point is worth pursuing. R. Timothy Sieber (1982) argues that Bourdieu's notion of academic success, which links class-based and linguistic a priori cultural competencies and experiences to the privileged position of middle-class students in universities, contains some important theoretical insights into how the process of social and cultural reproduction works in higher education. But he qualifies his praise by arguing that Bourdieu's model of analysis reifies the way in which mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction work in urban elementary schools. For example, Sieber's (1982) ethnographic study of a public elementary school in New York not only revealed that middle-class students, because of their cultural competencies and experiences, were accorded specific academic privileges and freedoms denied to working-class and Puerto Rican students in the school. Also, this "privileged standing" and educational benefits provided to middle-class students were the outcome of a long struggle that had pitted the middle-class segment of the community against 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 the school" by middle-class parents (Sieber 1982). Sieber recounts:

[M]y conjoint research in the wider school and community revealed something that might have remained hidden had I confined my investigation to classrooms alone. The privileged standing of the middle-class children in the school was not simply the result of the cultural advantage afforded by their upbringing; in fact, their "middle-class" culture conflicted on many points with the culture of the school and its staff. The middle-class children's success at P. S. 4 had been, rather, achieved only through a history of ongoing political conflict that had pitted their parents against the school staff, as well as against the school's other parents. Indeed, the classroom events I was witnessing were the end product of a much broader process of gentrification the school's middle-class parents had brought to Chestnut Heights over the

previous decade. . . . In the case of urban elementary schools such as P. S. 4, however, Bourdieu's model seems to reify the process by which schools enhance the cultural capital of elites, underestimating the hand that parent and community forces have in this process. The present consideration of community history, school-community relations, and middle-class parent involvement indicates that intense political struggles were key factors in the establishment of elite education at P. S. 4 [Sieber 1982].

Angela McRobbie (1980) presents a similar critique. She argues that educators need to take both the social and sexual divisions of labor into account in cultural studies, and that Marxist analyses in general have ignored the latter when looking at the family-school relationship. She indicates that the complexity of such relationships raises questions not only about domination but also about the determinant forces that unwittingly promote resistance. For example, schools may set children against their family cultures, they may provide more progressive models of gender relations than exist in the family, or they may highlight modes of domination that allow students to understand the limits of both the school and family structure within the wider society. One wonders how Bourdieu's theory of domination would explain the following behavior of a group of fifth grade students in Toronto, as chronicled by their teacher;

*Let's have art this afternoon, Mr. McLaren!*

*Yab. We want art!*

*Well, we've got some math to do this afternoon, perhaps after we're finished with that. . . .*

*We wanna naked model . . . one with really big tits that stick out to here!*

*. . . and lots of fuzzy hair down here!*

*You guys are sick! Is that all you think about?*

*Shut up Sandra! All you think about is naked boys!*

*Barry's a fag. He thinks about naked boys too! . . .*

*Sir! Let's have floor hockey instead!*

*I hates floor hockey!*

*We don't want you girls! Hey, sir! Let the girls play skippin or somethin, but let us play floor hockey!*

*There will be no playing anything until we finish our math.  
 Kids should be allowed to choose sometimes. You said so!  
 Yah! You never let us have fun—real fun!  
 Okay, okay. What does "real fun" mean?  
 If we wanna go somewheres, the creek or somethin, they say you should let us . . . .  
 . . . Open your books to the math review on page fifty-one.  
 Wait a minute! I ain't gots no pencil!  
 That's because you used it to jab that little kid at recess and the teacher took it off  
 you!  
 Get lost. . . .  
 Here, you can use my pencil.  
 Thanks, sir! Hey look! I stole the teacher's pencil!  
 Can I turn on the radio during art?  
 Quietly, yes . . . quietly. But first, our math!  
 Hey Sandra, get up on the desk and take off your shirt!  
 Anybody who doesn't finish this test gets a note to take home and get signed!  
 Sir! Can I have a note, please! I love notes!  
 Me too! I wanna note saying I'm bad!  
 Everybody line up for bad notes!  
 . . . Hey! Gimme back my math book!  
 Cut the crap!  
 This is boring . . . . (McLaren 1980).*

McLaren's account suggests that schools are much less successful in producing docile working-class students than Bourdieu (1977a 1977c) would have us believe. More importantly, Bourdieu (1977a 1977c) offers no theoretical insights into either the nature of such resistance or what its value might be in pedagogical terms, i.e., what opportunities it provides for seeing beyond its phenomenal forms and unraveling the possibilities that might be gleaned from understanding its strengths and weaknesses for critical thought.

Finally, there is a serious failure in Bourdieu's work regarding his unwillingness to link the notion of domination with the materiality of economic forces. There is no sense in Bourdieu's (1977a 1977c) work of how the economic system, with its asymmetrical relations of power, produces concrete constraints on working-class students. Foucault's (1980) notion that power works on the body, in the family, on sexuality and on knowledge, is worth acknowledging because it serves to remind us that the relations of power weigh down more than just the mind. The constraints of power are not exhausted in the concept of symbolic violence. Domination as an objective; concrete instance cannot be ignored in any discussion of schooling. For instance, the privileged have a relationship to time which enables them to make long-term plans for their futures, whereas the children of the working class, especially those in higher-education, are often 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 (Bisseret 1979). It is the economic issue that often plays the crucial role in the decision over whether a working-class student can go to school full- or part-time, or in some cases, at all. Likewise, the economic issue is often the determining factor in whether a student will have to work part-time while attending school. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a) appear to have forgotten that domination has to be grounded in something other than ideology, that it also has material conditions. This is no small matter, because it points to a major gap in Bourdieu's (1977a) reasoning regarding working-class failure. That is, the internalization of dominant ideology is not the only force that motivates the working-class student or secures his or her failure. The behavior, failures, and choices of these students are also grounded in material conditions.

As a result of Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) 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 notion of class are static categories. Class involves a notion of social relations in opposition to each other. It refers to shifting relations of domination and resistance, to capital and its institutions as they constantly regroup and attempt to resituate the logic of domination and incorporation (Gramsci 1971). These oppositions are missing from Bourdieu's analyses, and what we are left with is a theory of reproduction that displays no faith in subordinate classes and groups, no hope for their ability or willingness to reinvent and

reconstruct the conditions under which they live, work, and learn. As a result, reproduction theories informed by logic of Bourdieu's notion of domination say too little about how to construct the theoretical basis for a radical pedagogy.

#### BASIL BERNSTEIN

At the core of Bernstein's (1977) analysis of education and the role it plays in the cultural reproduction of class relationships is a theory of cultural transmission. Bernstein points to the problematic at the center of this theory: "How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits, and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the power and the principles of social control. From this point of view, differences within, and change in, the organization, transmission, and evaluation of educational knowledge should be a major area of sociological interest" (Bernstein 1977).

Arguing that education is a major force in the structuring of experience, Bernstein attempts to illuminate how curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation constitute message systems whose underlying structural principles represent modes of social control rooted in the wider society. In investigating the question of how the structure of education shapes both identity and experience, he develops a theoretical framework in which he claims that schools embody an educational code. Such a code is important because it organizes the ways in which authority and power are to be mediated in all aspects of school experience.

The dominant educational code in Bernstein's typology is either a collection code or an integrated code, the meanings of which are directly connected to concepts of classification and framing. Classification refers "not to what is classified, but to the relationship between contents" (Bernstein 1977); in other words, to the strength or weakness in the construction and maintenance of the boundaries that exist between different categories, contents, and the like. Boundary strength in Bernstein's perspective is a critical feature that underlies the division of labor at the heart of the educational experience and wider society. Framing, on the other hand, refers to the pedagogical relationship itself and the issue of how power and control are invested and mediated between teachers and students. Or as Bernstein puts it, framing refers "to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical

relationship" (Bernstein 1977). Either or both concepts may be strong or weak in different combinations; thus they constitute the dominant educational code. For example, the collection code refers to strong classification and framing and could take the form of a traditional curriculum characterized by rigid subject boundaries and strong hierarchical teacher-student relationships. By contrast, an integrated code, characterized by weak classification and weak framing, represents a curriculum in which subjects and categories become more integrated and teacher-student authority relationships more negotiable and open to modification. What is important to understand is that both codes are tied to modes of social reproduction, although Bernstein believes that the integrated code contains more possibilities for a progressive pedagogy.

By using this typology, Bernstein has attempted to conceptualize the structural features that link schools and the mode of production as they reproduce class relationships. Power and control in this perspective are embedded in the structuring devices that shape the experiences and consciousness of human beings passing through social sites such as the family, the school, and the workplace. While Bernstein rejects any form of mechanical correspondence among these different social sites, he nevertheless tends to assume that regardless of the *form* of social control they perpetuate, all of these social spheres share in the reproduction of class control and the maldistribution of power that underlies the existing mode of production. Thus, in the end, educational reforms that call for a change in the *form* of social control pose little threat to the class basis of power and will do just as little to effect social change.

Bernstein's (1977) work is particularly useful in identifying how the principles of social control are coded in the structuring devices that shape the messages embedded in schools and other social institutions. In the final analysis, however, Bernstein's work does not go far enough as a theory of radical pedagogy. While he points to the importance of a semiotic reading of the structural features that shape knowledge, classroom social relationships, and organizational structures in the day-to-day functioning of schools, he does so at the expense of analyzing the lived-experiences of the actors themselves. That is, Bernstein ignores how different classes of students, teachers, and other educational workers give meaning to the codes that influence their daily experiences. By disregarding the production of meaning and the content of school cultures, he provides a weak and one-sided notion of consciousness and human action, and needless to say, whether in the self-constituted acts of dis-

course, social practices, or in the school materials themselves, he thus escapes the tricky question of how the state and other powerful capitalist institutions such as the corporate conglomerates influence school policy and curriculum making through the production of specific ideologies and cultural materials.

In conclusion, both Bourdieu and Bernstein surrender to a version of domination in which the cycle of reproduction appears unbreakable. In spite of insightful comments on the form and substance of cultural reproduction, social actors as possible agents of change disappear in these accounts, as do instances of conflict and contradiction. Though both theorists provide illuminating analyses of the relative autonomy of schools and the political nature of culture as a reproductive force, Bourdieu and Bernstein end up either ignoring or playing-down the notions of resistance and counter-hegemonic struggle. As a result, their insights are limited and incomplete.

### *Beyond Theories of Social and Cultural Reproduction*

Within the last few years, a number of educational studies have emerged that attempt to move beyond the important but limited theoretical advances that characterize social and cultural reproduction theories. Taking the concepts of conflict and resistance as starting points for their analyses, these accounts have sought to redefine the importance of power, ideology, and culture as central constructs for understanding the complex relations between schooling and the dominant society. Consequently, the work of Willis (1977), Hebdige (1979), and Corrigan (1979) 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 oppositional youth cultures both inside and outside of schools.

In contrast to the vast amount of ethnographic literature on schooling both in the United States (Jackson, 1968; Becker, 1961; Stinchcombe, 1964; Mehan, 1979) and England (Lacy, 1970; Hargreaves, 1967; Woods, 1979), neo-Marxist accounts have not sacrificed theoretical depth for methodological refinement. That is, more recent Marxist studies have not followed the generally bland method of merely providing exhaustive descriptive analyses of the internal workings of the school. Instead, these perspectives—especially Willis (1977)—have attempted to analyze how

determinant socio-economic structures embedded in the dominant society work through the mediations of class and culture in shaping the lived antagonistic experiences of students at the level of everyday life. 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 in the interests of the relations of domination, but which also contains interests that speak to emancipatory possibilities.

The importance of the neo-Marxist work on resistance and reproduction cannot be overstressed. Its attempts to link social structures and human agency to explore the way they interact in a dialectical manner represent a significant theoretical advance over functional-structuralist and interactional accounts. 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 a priori status allotted to critical theory and emancipatory interests as the basic elements upon which to assess the problem under study, the political nature of the researcher's views, and the centrality of concepts such as class, power, ideology, and culture in analyzing the relationship between schooling and capitalism. One qualification should be made regarding the a priori importance given to theory in neo-Marxist resistance studies. To celebrate theory as the central mediating category in research is not to argue simultaneously that practice or empirical work is either unimportant or irrelevant to theory. On the contrary, it is meant to argue that theory and practice, while interconnected at the point of experience, represent distinct analytical moments and should not collapse into each other (Horkheimer 1972). Theory serves the function of establishing the problematic that governs the nature of social inquiry; it also illuminates the interests embodied in the rationality that governs its dominant and subordinate assumptions. A specific constellation of assumptions and values provides the reflexivity that gives a theoretical framework its value. Put another way, theory must be celebrated for its truth content, not for the methodological refinements it employs. Needless to say, theory is informed by practice; but its real value lies in its ability to provide the reflexivity needed to interpret the concrete experience that is the object of research. Theory can never be reduced to practice, because the specificity of practice has its own center of theoretical gravity, and cannot be reduced to a predefined formula. That is, the specificity of practice cannot be abstracted from the complex of forces, struggles, and mediations that give each situation a

unique defining quality. Theory can help us understand this quality, but cannot reduce it to the logic of a mathematical formula. Furthermore, it must be remembered that experience and concrete studies do not speak for themselves, and that they will tell us very little if the theoretical framework we use to interpret them lacks depth and critical rigor. This point appears to be lost on a whole range of recent critics currently responding to work that comes out of the neo-Marxist tradition (Lacey 1982; Hargreaves 1982). These critics belabor neo-Marxist studies for not drawing on or conducting empirical studies grounded in the problematic of liberal social theory. The point, of course, is that in redefining the nature of educational theory, the struggle will not be over the use of data or types of studies conducted. The real battle will be over the theoretical frameworks in use, for it is on the contested terrain of theory that the debate needs to be conducted (Laclau 1977). By forgetting this issue, such critics either have little sense of the irrelevancy of their work or they have an over-inflated view of it. In short, neo-Marxist studies on resistance have performed an important theoretical service by reinserting empirical work into the framework of critical theory.

What is significant about this work is that in pointing to the gaps and tensions that exist in social sites such as schools, it successfully undermines theories of reproduction that support a "constant fit" between the school and the workplace. Moreover, it further undermines over socialized and over determined models of schooling, so fashionable among leftist pedagogues. Thus, one major contribution that has emerged from neo-Marxist studies is that, in part, they demonstrate that the mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction are never complete and are always faced with partially realized elements of opposition. Moreover, this work points to a dialectical model of domination that offers valuable alternatives to many pessimistic models of schooling that reduce the logic of domination to external forces that appear impossible to challenge or modify. Instead of seeing domination as simply the reflex of external forces—capital, the state, etc.—Willis (1977), Apple (1982), Olson (1981), and others have developed a notion of reproduction in which working-class domination 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. Central to this perspective is a notion of culture in which the production and consumption of meaning are connected to specific social spheres and traced to their sources in historical and class-located parent cultures. Put simply,

culture is not reduced to an overly-determined, static analysis of dominant cultural capital like language, cultural taste, and manners. Instead, culture is viewed as a system of practices, a way of life that constitutes and is constituted by a dialectical interplay between the class-specific behavior and circumstances of a particular social group and the powerful ideological and structural determinants in the wider society. Hall and Jefferson express this clearly:

Culture is the distinctive shapes in which the material and social organization of life expresses itself. A culture includes the "maps of meaning" which make things intelligible to its members. These "maps of meaning" are not simply carried around in the head: they are objectivated in the patterns of social organizations and relationships through which the individual becomes a social individual. Culture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped, but it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood, and interpreted [Hall & Jefferson 1976].

Theories of resistance provide a study of the way in which class and culture combine to offer outlines for a cultural politics. Central to such a politics is a semiotic reading of the style, rituals, language, and systems of meaning that constitute the cultural field of the oppressed. Through this process, it becomes possible to analyze what counter-hegemonic elements such cultural fields contain, and how they tend to get incorporated into the dominant culture to be stripped of their political possibilities. Implicit in such an analysis is the need to develop strategies in schools in which oppositional cultures might provide the basis for a viable political force. Willis sums up this position when he writes:

We must interrogate cultures, ask what are the missing questions they answer; probe the invisible grid of context, inquire what unsaid propositions are assumed in the invisible and surprising external forms of cultural life. If we can supply the premises, dynamics, logical relations of responses which look quite untheoretical and lived out "merely" as cultures, we will uncover a cultural politics [Willis 1978].

Theories of resistance perform a theoretical service in their call for forms of political analyses that study and transform the radical themes and social practices that make up the class-based cultural fields and details of everyday life. Willis is stunningly accurate in his perception that if radical social theory is to investigate how "the detailed, informed, and lived can

enjoy its victory in a larger failure" (Willis 1978), it will have to develop strategies that link a politics of the concrete, not just with questions of reproduction, but also with the issue of social transformation. Moreover, rather than seeing culture simply as the reflex of hegemony and defeat, Willis (1977) and others have illuminated it as a social process that both embodies and reproduces lived antagonistic social relationships (Benner 1980a; Giroux 1981). This points to the importance of studying schools as social sites that contain levels of determination of unique specificity, social sites that do not reflect the wider society but only have a particular relationship to it.

Finally, resistance theories deepen our understanding of the notion of relative autonomy, a greatly needed corrective in light of the long history of orthodox Marxist readings of the base-superstructure issue in which institutions like schools were reduced to the reflex or shadow of the mode of production. The notion of relative autonomy is developed through a number of analyses that point to those non-reproductive "moments" that constitute and support the critical notion of human agency. For example, there is the active role assigned to human agency and experience as key mediating links between structural determinants and lived effects. Furthermore, there is the recognition that different spheres or cultural sites, e.g., schools, families, trade unions, mass media, etc., are governed by complex ideological properties that often generate contradictions both within and between them. At the same time, the notion of ideological domination as all-encompassing and unitary in its form and content is rejected. As such, 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.

I want to conclude this chapter by pointing to the weaknesses in theories of resistance, and may I suggest as well that the criticisms presented here represent starting points for further development of a critical theory of schooling.

First, though studies of resistance point to the social sites and "spaces" in which the dominant culture is encountered and challenged by subordinate groups, such studies have not adequately conceptualized the genesis of the conditions that promote and reinforce contradictory modes of resistance and struggle. In other words, what is lost in this perspective are analyses of those historically and culturally mediated determinants that produce a range of oppositional behaviors, not to mention the diverse ways

in which they are experienced by subordinate groups. Put simply, not all oppositional behavior has "radical significance," nor is all oppositional behavior rooted in a reaction to authority and domination. The point 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 ideologies, ideologies that both underlie the structure of social domination and contain the logic necessary to overcome it. Above and beyond the questionable interests and ideologies that fuel various forms of resistance there is also the point that oppositional behavior may not be simply a reaction to powerlessness, but instead it might be an expression of power that is fueled by and reproduces the most powerful grammar of domination. Thus resistance may on one level be the simple appropriation and display of power, and as such it may manifest itself through the interests and discourse of the worst aspects of capitalist rationality.<sup>1</sup>

Oppositional behaviors, like the subjectivities that constitute them, are produced amidst 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; but, on the other hand, such resistance may represent and express the repressive moments inscribed by the dominant culture rather than a message of protest against their existence. The dynamics of resistance may not only be informed by a reactionary as well as a radical set of interests, it may also get sustained most strongly outside of the school—in the workplace, the home, or the neighborhood. To understand the nature of such resistance necessitates placing it within a wider context in order to see how it is mediated and articulated amidst the everyday institutions and lived experiences that constitute the culture of the oppositional groups under analyses. The message here is that because of a failure to understand the dialectical nature of resistance, the concept has been treated superficially in both theoretical and ideological terms in most theories of education. For instance, where domination and resistance are stressed in such studies, the portrayals provided of schools, of working-class students, and of classroom pedagogy often appear too homogeneous and static to be taken seriously. Where resistance is analyzed, its contradictory nature is not analyzed seriously, nor is the contradictory consciousness of the students and teachers under analysis treated dialectically. Of course, there are exceptions to this trend, and the work of Willis (1981), Popkewitz, et al (1981, 1982), and Arnot (1981) should be mentioned; but such work is marginal



to the field and to the theoretical perspective under analysis. A representative example of the work I am criticizing can be found, for instance, in some of the early studies done by Anyon (1980, 1981a, 1981b). While Anyon's work is interesting and important, she has a tendency to present the mechanisms of domination as they work in schools as a relatively coherent and homogeneous set of practices. The educators who appear in her studies seem as if they have been pressed out of some hegemonic fantasy, and as such demonstrate a uniformity of behavior—especially toward working-class students—that is not only overdrawn, but borders on being demeaning. We are told that the teachers of working-class students care little for them and teach simply to enforce routine and discipline. Throughout her studies the same theme appears: "Work is following the steps of a procedure. The procedure is usually mechanical, involving rote behavior and very little decision-making or choice. The teachers rarely explain why the work is being assigned, how it might connect to other assignments, or what the idea is that lies behind the procedure or gives it coherence and perhaps meaning or significance" (Anyon 1980). The notion that different styles of work, diverse community pressures, and conflicting professional ideological perspectives may generate a diversity of administrative and teaching approaches is downplayed in Anyon's studies. More significantly, there is no attempt to provide a theoretical understanding of what resistance as a construct actually means. When the concept is employed, it is reduced to descriptive categories such as passive and active resistance (1981b). It is no wonder that where resistance does appear in her work, it lacks the theoretical depth and grounding to appear very useful, and as such emerges like the unexpected exclamation point tacked on to the end of the sentence to emphasize a point that should have been developed more fully.

A second weakness in theories of resistance is the inadequate number of attempts to take into account the issues of gender and race. As Arnot (1981), McRobbie (1980), Walkerdine (1981), and others have pointed out, resistance studies generally ignore women and gender issues to focus instead primarily on males and class when analyzing domination, struggle, and schooling. This has meant that women are either disregarded altogether or that when they are included in such studies it is only in terms that echo the sentiments of the male countercultural groups being portrayed. This raises a number of significant problems that future analyses will have to face. On the one hand, such studies have failed to come to grips with the notion of patriarchy as a mode of domination that cuts

across various social sites as well as a mode of domination that 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 domination take a form that affects 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 get interconnected, reproduced, and mediated in schools represents an important area of continuing research. On the other hand, 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 minorities of color in such studies has resulted in a rather uncritical theoretical tendency to romanticize modes of resistance even when they contain reactionary views about women. The irony here is that a large amount of neo-Marxist work, while allegedly committed to emancipatory concerns, ends up contributing to the reproduction of sexist attitudes and practices, albeit unknowingly (Arnot 1981; McRobbie 1980; Walkerdine 1981).

Third, neo-Marxist studies of schooling seem to have an uncanny attachment to a definition of resistance celebrating it as a mode of apolitical style. As a result, there are very few attempts within the literature on schooling and countercultural movements to situate the notion of resistance within specifically political movements, movements that display resistance in the arts and/or in concrete political action. Surely, as E.P. Thompson (1966), David Hakken (1980), and Willis and Corrigan (1980) have pointed out, working-class resistance is rooted in a variety of forms and does not move solely on an ideological and cultural terrain that rejects intellectual analyses and overt political struggle in favor of symbolic resistance.

Fourth, theories of resistance have under-theorized the point that schools not only repress subjectivities but are also actively involved in their production. Thus, as I mentioned previously, there have been too few attempts to understand how different discourses and classroom practices function to promote in a wide variety of students contradictory forms of consciousness and behavior, some of which may be exhibited in resistance, in accommodation, or in outright self-indulgence. It must be remembered that students from all classes and groups bear the logic of domination and control in different degrees, and that this logic is a

constituting as well as a repressive force in their lives. More to the point, not only has the question of how subjectivities get produced been played-down, so has the crucial issue of trying to distinguish politically viable forms of resistance, whether latent or overt,<sup>2</sup> from acts of behavior that are either one-sidedly self-indulgent or are linked to the dynamics of domination. It must be understood that it is theoretically incorrect to view working-class cultural capital as a single entity, just as it is important to remember that while the diversity within the working classes is marked, it is formed within economic, political, and ideological contexts that limit the capacity for self-determination. To forget this allows one to run the risk of both romanticizing the culture of subordinate groups and mystifying the dynamics of hegemonic ideologies and structure. The crucial issue is that educators need to acknowledge the contradictions in working-class culture and learn how to discard the elements that are repressive, while simultaneously reappropriating those features that are progressive and enlightening.

Fifth, theories of resistance have not given enough attention to the issue of how domination reaches into the structure of the personality itself. That is, there is little concern with the often contradictory relation between understanding and action, and why one does not always lead to the other. Part of the answer 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 occlude the question of needs and desires in favor of issues that center around ideology and consciousness. What is needed is a notion of alienation that points to the way in which un-freedom reproduces itself in the psyche of human beings. We need to understand how dominating ideologies limit the development of many-sided needs to particular groups, as well as how the transformation of radical needs into the egoistic, calculable greed of capitalist interest relations can be prevented. Alienating need structures 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 radical educational praxis. Until educators can point to the possibilities for the development "of radical needs that both challenge the existing system of interest and production and point to an emancipated society" (Cohen 1977), it may 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 depth psychology, educators have no way of understanding the grip and force of alienating social structures as they manifest themselves in the lived but often non-discursive aspects of everyday life.

## 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 new theoretical leverage for understanding the complex ways in which subordinate groups experience educational failure, and directs attention to new ways of thinking about and restructuring modes of critical pedagogy. Unfortunately, the way the concept is used currently by radical educators suggests a lack of intellectual rigor and an overdose of theoretical sloppiness. It is clear that a rationale for employing the concept needs to be considered more fully. Similarly, it is imperative that educators be more precise about what resistance actually is and what it is not. Furthermore, there is a need to be more specific about how the concept can be used in the service of developing a critical pedagogy. I want to turn to these issues and briefly outline some basic theoretical concerns for developing a more intellectually rigorous and politically useful foundation for developing such a task.

In the most general sense, resistance has to be grounded in a theoretical rationale that points to a new framework and problematic for examining schools as social sites, particularly the experience of subordinate groups. That is, the concept of resistance represents more than a new heuristic catchword in the language of radical pedagogy,—it represents a mode of discourse that rejects traditional explanations of school failure and oppositional behavior. In other words, the concept of resistance represents a problematic governed by assumptions that shift the analysis of oppositional behavior from the theoretical terrains of functionalism and mainstream educational psychology to those of political analysis. Resistance in this case redefines the causes and meaning of oppositional behavior by arguing that it has little to do with the logic of deviance, individual pathology, learned helplessness (and, of course, genetic explanations), and a great deal to do, though not exhaustively, with the logic of moral and political indignation.

Aside from shifting the theoretical ground from which to analyze op-

positional behavior, the construct of resistance points to a number of assumptions and concerns about schooling that are generally neglected in both traditional views of school and social and cultural theories of reproduction. First, it celebrates a dialectical notion of human agency that rightly portrays domination as neither a static process nor one that is ever complete. Concomitantly, the oppressed are not viewed 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 interface between their own lived experiences and structures of domination and constraint. Central categories that emerge in the problematic of resistance are intentionality, consciousness, the meaning of common sense, and the nature and value of non-discursive behavior. Secondly, resistance adds new theoretical depth to Foucault's (1977) notion that power works so as to be exercised on and by people within different contexts that structure interacting relations of dominance and autonomy. What is highlighted here is that power is never uni dimensional; it is exercised not only as a mode of domination, but also as an act of resistance or even as an expression of a creative mode of cultural and social production outside the immediate force of domination. This point is important in that the behavior expressed by subordinate groups cannot be reduced to a study in domination or resistance. Clearly, in the behavior of subordinate groups there are moments of cultural and creative expression that are informed by a different logic, whether it be existential, religious, or otherwise. It is in these modes of behavior as well as in creative acts of resistance that the fleeting images of freedom are to be found. Finally, inherent in a radical notion of resistance is an expressed hope, an element of transcendence, for radical transformation—a notion that appears to be missing from a number of radical theories of education that appear trapped in the theoretical cemetery of Orwellian pessimism.

In addition to developing a rationale for the notion of resistance, there is a concrete need to lay out the 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 has to be situated in a perspective or rationality that takes the notion of emancipation as its guiding interest. That is, the nature and meaning of an act of resistance has to be defined next to the degree to which it contains the possibilities to develop what Marcuse termed "a commitment to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity" (Marcuse 1977). Thus, central to analyzing any act of resistance would be a concern

with uncovering the degree to which it speaks to a form of refusal that highlights, either implicitly or explicitly, the need to struggle against the social nexus of domination and submission. In other words, resistance must have a revealing function, one that contains a critique of domination and provides theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and for struggle in the interest of self-emancipation and social emancipation. To the degree that oppositional behavior suppresses social contradictions while simultaneously merging with, rather than challenging, the logic of ideological domination, it falls not under the category of resistance but under its opposite, i.e., accommodation and conformism. The value of the resistance construct lies in its critical function, in its potential to speak to the radical possibilities embedded in its own logic and to the interests contained in the object of its expression. Of course, this is a rather general set of standards by 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 the destruction or 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 to the logic of domination and destruction. It is this ambiguous area that I want to analyze briefly, since the other two areas are fairly self-explanatory. Recently, I heard a "radical" educator argue that teachers who rushed home early after school were, in fact, committing acts of resistance. She also claimed that teachers who do not adequately prepare for their classroom lessons were 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, that what is in fact being displayed is not resistance but inexcusable 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 preciseness. In cases like these, one has to either link the behavior under analyses with an interpretation provided by the subjects who display it or dig deeply into the specific historical and relational conditions out of which the behavior develops. Only then will the conditions possibly reveal the interest embedded in such behavior.

It follows from the argument I have advanced 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. It is conceivable that the person interviewed may not be able to explain why he or she displayed such behavior, or the interpretation may be distorted. In this case, the underlying interest in such behavior may be illuminated against the backdrop of social practices and values out of which the behavior emerges. Such a referent might 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. What must be urged is that the concept of resistance 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 contains a moment of critique and a potential sensitivity to its own interests, i.e., an interest in radical consciousness-raising and collective critical action.

Let us now return to the question of how we define resistance and view oppositional behavior, and what the implications are for making such a distinction. On one level, it is important to be theoretically precise about what form of oppositional behavior constitutes resistance and what does not. On another level, it is equally important to argue that all forms of oppositional behavior represent a focal point and a basis for dialogue and critical analysis. Put another way, oppositional behavior needs to be analyzed to see if it constitutes a form of resistance, which, as I have mentioned, means uncovering its 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 they can be judged as forms of resistance or not, need to be examined in the interests being used as a basis for critical analysis and dialogue. Thus oppositional behavior becomes the object of theoretical clarification as well as the basis for possible radical strategy considerations.

On a more philosophical level, it must be stressed that resistance as a theoretical construct rejects the positivistic notion that the categorization and meaning of behavior is synonymous with an observation of a literal reading based on the immediacy of expression. Instead, resistance needs to be viewed from a very different theoretical starting point, one that links the display of behavior to the interest it embodies. As such, the emphasis is on going beyond the immediacy of behavior to the notion of interest that underlies its often hidden logic, a logic that also has to be interpreted through the historical and cultural mediations that shape it.

Finally, it must be strongly emphasized that the ultimate value of the notion of resistance has to be measured against the degree to which it not only prompts critical thinking and reflective action, but, more importantly, against the degree to which it contains the possibility of galvanizing collective political struggle around the issues of power and social determination.

I now want to speak briefly to the value of resistance as an educational principle. The pedagogical value of resistance rests, in part, in its situating the notions of structure and human agency, and the concepts of culture and self-formation, in a new problematic for understanding the process of schooling. It rejects the notion that schools are simply instructional sites, and in doing so it not only politicizes the notion of culture, but also points to the need to analyze school culture within the shifting terrain of struggle and contestation. Educational knowledge, values, and social relations are now placed within the context of lived antagonistic relations, and need to be examined as they are played out within the dominant and subordinate cultures that characterize school life.<sup>3</sup> Elements of resistance now become the focal point for the construction of different sets of lived experiences, experiences in which students can find a voice and maintain and extend the positive dimensions of their own cultures and histories. Resistance also calls attention to modes of pedagogy that need to unravel the ideological interests embedded in the various message systems of the school, particularly in the curriculum, modes of instruction, and evaluation procedures (Bernstein 1977). Moreover, the concept of resistance highlights the need for classroom teachers to decipher how the modes of cultural production displayed by subordinate groups can be analyzed to reveal both their limits and their possibilities for enabling critical thinking, analytical discourse, and new modes of intellectual appropriation. In the most profound sense, the concept of resistance points to the imperative of developing a theory of signification, a semiotic reading of behavior that not only takes discourse seriously, but also attempts to unravel how oppositional moments are embedded and displayed in non-discursive behavior (Giddens 1979). Put more theoretically, what is being called for here is the need to reformulate the relationship among ideology, culture, and hegemony to make clear the ways in which these categories can enhance our understanding of resistance as well as how such concepts can form the theoretical basis for a radical pedagogy that takes human agency seriously.