Review: Some Recent Studies in Class Consciousness

Reviewed Work(s): Learning to Labour by Paul E. Willis: Working Class Culture by John Clarke, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson: The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behavior by John Goldthorpe, David Lockwood, Frank Bechhofer and Jennifer Platt: The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism by Walter Korpi

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Review Essay

SOME RECENT STUDIES IN CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

A discussion of Paul E. Willis, *Learning to Labour* (Westmead: Saxon House, 1979); John Clarke, Chas Critcher, and Richard Johnson, eds., *Working Class Culture* (London: Hutchinson, 1979); John Goldthorpe, David Lockwood, Frank Bechhofer, and Jennifer Platt, *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behavior* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968); and Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

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> *If the centralization of population stimulates and develops the property-holding class, it forces the development of the workers yet more rapidly. The workers begin to feel as a class, as a whole: they begin to perceive that, though feeble as individuals, they form a power united; their separation from the bourgeoisie, the development of views peculiar to the workers and corresponding to their position in life, is fostered, the consciousness of oppression awakens, and the workers attain social and political importance.*
>
> F. Engels[1]

After its origins in Engels' classic study of the English working class from which the above quotation is drawn, the intellectual understanding of class consciousness has two histories, one political and the other scientific. There are overlaps of course, but one can clearly distinguish what Marxist political theory says about the working class and its political potential from empirical studies on the same topic. One can distinguish the theoretical and political writings of Rosa Luxemburg from the survey of worker opinions made by Adolf Levenstein during the same period of German history. One early bridge

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across this gap is Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness*. In distinguishing between the actual and the potential consciousness of workers, Lukács left room for both empirical study into the actual opinions and attitudes of workers, and for speculation about their radical potential. In Lukács, as in the writings of other "Hegelian Marxists," in the 1920s, science and politics are intertwined. Perhaps the first attempt in a Marxist vein at a more rigorous application of Lukács' problematic is a survey of working-class attitudes and beliefs carried out by the Institut für Sozial Forschung under Fromm's direction in the late 20s and early 30s. This scientific turn in the Marxist discussion of class consciousness was conditioned by a series of historical failures in political practice and the inability of Marxist theory to account adequately for them. This is all well known. The economic and political crisis of 1929–1933 was not the crisis of 1917–1922: the workers' movement in Germany had missed its chance. Politically then, the difference between Lukács and the Frankfurt Institut is the difference between a pre-fascism and a post-fascism view of the working class. Scientifically, one effect of this difference was to draw the problem of class consciousness closer to the confines of academic sociology.

Contemporary "Class Consciousness"

In addition to a new political realism and the demand for scientific rigor, contemporary post-fascism studies of the working class must come to grips with labor under rationalized and stabilized monopoly capitalism. This is part of the meaning behind Horkheimer's famous dictum "whoever doesn't want to talk about capitalism should keep silent about fascism." Class consciousness has both political and economic referents. Braverman's analysis of the labor process, and the growing number of critical responses it has inspired, represents a significant step in Marxist attempts to understand the effects of "late capitalism" on working class consciousness.[2] The analysis of the modern capitalist state as an autonomous "steering" mechanism by such diverse Marxists as Therborn, Habermas, O'Connor, Wright, and Offe is another. Outside the Marxist tradition academic sociology has also contributed some interesting studies of working-class political attitudes. As examples, the empirical studies by Goldthorpe, et al. in England and Walter Korpi in Sweden can be viewed as attempts to accomodate the concept of class consciousness to the new economic and political reality. *The Affluent Worker* studies (1968) and Korpi's *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism* (1978) are two of the most important studies in a trend of sociological research that began in the early 50s. Situated in the context of the continuing "end of ideology" and "post-industrial society" debates, these studies take their point of departure in the attempt to disprove the mainstream notion that workers have been

incorporated into capitalist society through their acceptance of "middle-class" values. This "embourgeoisement" thesis has roots that go back as far as Social Democratic Germany in the mid-20s, where both Marxists and non-Marxist sociologists worried that the success of trade unions and the Social Democratic Party had turned the working class from its socialist objectives. Whereas this judgment may have been premature in the 20s, it had much more explanatory force in the 1950s and early 60s. Both in Western Europe and in the US, postwar capitalism seemed to have stabilized enough to guarantee significant segments of the working class's steady increases in standards of living and social security. This steady growth was underpinned by governmentally applied Keynesian economic policies, a renewed access to cheap raw materials, and extremely high levels of worker productivity. Because this new working-class "affluence" was bought through the rationalization of the production process, and at the cost of worker "satisfaction," sociological studies of class consciousness tended also to be studies of job satisfaction. Intended or not, such studies sounded out political attitudes of workers for actual or potential social democratic governments. Within this framework, Goldthorpe, et al., and Korpi ten years later, sought to test the embourgeoisement hypothesis and the importance of work and work satisfaction in modern industrial society. The revised notion of class consciousness stems from this context.

Their first difficulty was in defining what class consciousness could mean under materially advanced and well-organized capitalism. The old definition, after all, was rooted in conditions where the violent overthrow of a weakened state by a mass movement was eminently possible. Such a possibility seemed out of the question in 1958 when David Lockwood first attempted to put into operation class consciousness:

> To study . . . class consciousness . . . is to study the factors affecting . . . sense of identification with, or alienation from, the working class. More precisely, such a study should aim at an understanding of the relationship of the . . . worker to the trade union movement, the main vehicle of working class consciousness.[3]

Lockwood's early identification of class consciousness with trade unionism is a long way from its earlier Marxist meaning, because it collapses Lenin's vital distinction between trade union and class consciousness. Still, it represents a necessary first step towards recognizing the effect of changed historical conditions on social and political theory. Perhaps because of the upsurge of radical social movement, this definition was significantly modified for their later study. Here, Goldthorpe characterized class consciousness as being present when three conditions were met:

1. A sharp awareness of being in a similar situation to other workers and hence of having interests in common.
2. The sharing of a definition of these interests as basically in conflict with the interests of another class.
3. The perception of class conflicts as pervading all social relationships and containing within them the germs of a future social order.[4]

This revised definition put *The Affluent Worker* studies more in line with the pre-fascism approach to class consciousness. The results of their study, however, showed that a significant shift had taken place in the attitudes of British industrial workers since World War II. Their research indicated not so much that British workers had accepted middle-class values and were thus no longer "subjectively" working class, but that for them work had ceased to be the central defining characteristic of their lives. Consequently these workers adopted, the authors argued, an instrumental attitude toward work. Thus, while considering themselves "working class" and continuing to support the Labour Party and their trade unions, the meaning of this self-understanding and activity had significantly altered. Work and the organizations related to it were viewed primarily as instruments to a higher standard of living and increased leisure time, and did not, as in the older Marxist view, constitute means to the development of a radical class consciousness or the creation of a socialist society. Under such conditions, one could hardly identify class consciousness with trade union identification as Lockwood had earlier proposed, unless the meaning of the concept was to be radically changed. In calling themselves "working class" and in supporting "working-class" political parties, the workers in this study certainly proved themselves conscious of class, but hardly class conscious.

In addition to stressing the effect of "orientation to work" on the meaning of work and work-related "class consciousness," Goldthorpe, et al. challenged the orthodoxies of classical Marxism and industrial sociology. Their claim that workers' instrumental attitude toward work was a result of geographic and social mobility and *not* directly of the relations of production, called into question the generally accepted view that work relations were the only important variables in the creation of workers' attitudes and beliefs. Like Goldthorpe, et al., Korpi sets out to dispute the embourgeoisement thesis: in addition, however, he seeks to challenge the instrumentality findings of the British study. The book has two prime goals regarding the study of class consciousness: to show that high material living standard does not diminish radical will, and to prove that work, and not leisure, is still the focus of working-class life. His research begins, however, with just the identification of class consciousness and trade unionism rejected in *The Affluent Worker* studies.

One of Korpi's aims is to argue against those both within his party and in Western social science who take working-class quietness as a sign of integration and satisfaction with capitalist society (an end of ideology). Korpi must show that the Swedish working class is both ready and able to create a new socialist society. All that is holding it back is the policy of the party leadership. He wants to use his research as a form of political argument. Within the sociological literature, therefore, he must challenge theories of working-class embourgeoisement, and those theories that counterpose bureaucratic organization and radical-democratic social transformation. His purpose is to argue that strikes and industrial unrest are not a sign of political strength but of weakness, and that what is needed to make Sweden socialist is not a radicalized working class, but a shift in policy to attack capital ownership and not merely the distribution of resources.

The problem with this book stems not from its political purpose but from its wider pretentions. These are: first, the claim that Sweden offers a test case for other Western capitalist countries, and second, the implicit claim that an empirical survey Korpi made of the Swedish metal workers in 1966–1967 is sufficient evidence to justify the broad range of his conclusions. On the basis of this research Korpi mounts his challenge to theories of working-class integration and fragmentation, and to those of antidemocratic bureaucratic unionism. With the now classic study of Goldthorpe, et al. as both his model and target, Kopi attempts to prove that Swedish workers in a similar position do not have the "instrumental" work orientation claimed in their study. Swedish workers do not, according to Korpi, see their work merely as a means to higher levels, of individual consumption and thus to a middle-class lifestyle, but still view their work in collectivist terms. Thus, "the Swedish experience . . . indicates that with an improving standard of living the quality of working life becomes more, not less, important for workers" (141). In other words, the main focus for members of the working class is still production and not consumption, and that improved living standards have not threatened class conscious solidarity. Neither have the tremendous increases in productivity been brought about through a policy of unemployment and rationalization. Korpi uses his survey data to counter neo-Marxist theories, that this technological restructuring of work has eliminated the communicative basis for class consciousness in the separation of workers along noisy production lines, and that the corresponding rise in living standards has broken down the solidarity that characterized the old "occupational communities".

The main thread of his argument is that advanced capitalism, at least in its Swedish version, has not undermined the class consciousness necessary for a socialist society, but rather has helped to overcome working-class fragmenta-

tion and powerlessness by creating the basis for large, centralized industries and unions. In his attempt to generalize this conclusion he illustrates some of Sweden's uniqueness. Sweden's unions are organized along industrial and not craft lines, which favors a collective rather than individual or small in-and-out group approach to wage bargaining. And the so-called "solidaristic" wage policy of the central trade union organization has been successful in reducing wage differences between workers by bargaining for the lowest first. This also has the effect of producing a collective outlook rather than an individual or "labor aristocratic" one. There is little doubt that such policies could help counteract the structural trends towards fragmentation and competition between groups of workers. One needs no more than a superficial understanding of American and British labor history to see how destructive to working-class solidarity wage-differentials and craft-unionism have been. But does Korpi's survey prove his case? More importantly, given this acknowledged uniqueness, can Sweden be taken as a test case for other advanced capitalist societies?

There is nothing wrong with a scientific work aimed at convincing its audience to take certain steps, and I find it a major virtue of Korpi's book that he can so clearly draw the connection between political policy and social science research. But I do not think, based on his own criterion of "hard data," Korpi provides a convincing argument that the Swedish working class is on the verge of creating a new socialist society, nor do I believe he has made his case for Sweden as the model for other Western capitalist societies. There are too many unique characteristics, not the least of which was, until recently, the absence of any major "cross-class" issues that obscure "real" economic interests. Sweden has relatively few foreign "guest-workers," she is without a divisive north-south split (as in the US and Italy), there are no true religious divisions, and although immigration has become an issue again, it does not have the extreme racial overtones it does in Britain or France. Largely as a result of this homogeneity the Social Democratic Party was able to concentrate its political energies on class related economic issues, at the same time as those very policies benefited both big capital and big labor. While this pattern may to some degree model West Germany, Austria, and Norway, it does not model the US, France, Italy, Great Britain, or Holland. While it is possible that Korpi may be correct in saying that the working classes of these countries are still not "integrated" into capitalist society, this claim is not justified on the basis of his Swedish experience. Nevertheless, Korpi has written a good book on Swedish economic and political developments – although the recent election has shown his predictions wrong – and gives us an excellent review of the relevant sociological literature, yet he has not succeeded in convincing me that his arguments can be generally applied. His data, in fact, are

not hard enough to convince other social scientists in his own party, let alone young Swedish workers faced more and more with the prospect of a lifetime of moving between job retraining and unemployment as Swedish Social Democratic capital chases the snake of the international capitalist market.

Subjectivity and Class

The necessity of the inclusion of a "subjective dimension" in discussions of class and class consciousness has always been the thrust of Hegelian and critical Marxist approaches. As opposed to their contemporary orthodoxy or, today, to structuralism, critical Marxism has stressed the importance of the social psychological and the "everyday" in the formation and development of human awareness. Such emphasis should also be made against the sociological objectivism displayed in the studies above. The development of the notion of subjectivity from its exclusively cognitive meaning in *History and Class Consciousness* to the psychological dimensions added by Fromm and other members of the early Frankfurt Institut deserves brief mention in this context.

In the corpus of the research carried out by the Frankfurt Institut one can distinguish dimensions of subjective understanding that were lacking in Lukács's theory of class consciousness. Lukács's theory of reification – or why the working class was unable to perceive its real interests in capitalist society – defined subjectivity as a relation between a knowing subject and the object of his/her knowledge. Reification meant that the true relations within capitalist society – between worker and capitalist – were obscured from the worker behind a veil of mystified commodity and contract relations. That is, the real object, the exploitative nature of capitalist society, was hidden from the knowing subject. In this theory, subjectivity meant the subject-object relation of classical epistemology. The Frankfurt studies took the analysis to another level. They defined subjectivity on both a psychological and a philosophical plane. Their studies distinguished between (1) a symbolic structure handed down through different forms of socialization, expecially the family, and (2) the capacity for self-reflection and consciousness that could transcend the limits and boundaries set up by this early socialization. Thus, subjectivity referred both to necessary human socialization/incorporation *and* to the development of the cognitive capacity for emancipation. Both of these dimensions of subjectivity could be derived from Freudian metapsychology: the first from the theory of needs and drives, the second from the clinical technique of psychoanalytic self-reflection.

This is not the place to discuss the problems and shortcomings of this theoretical and practical synthesis. The point here is that it provides a model for

viewing the potential for class consciousness, and, in the context of this essay, to provide a background to some recent developments in Marxist discussions of the theme. An exciting exception to the abundance of economic classifications of class and structualist pigeonholing is the series of historically and ethnologically oriented studies that have recently emerged. In the US, such diverse books as Aronowitz's *False Promises* (1973), Sennett and Cobb's *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (1972), and Kornblum's *Blue Collar Community* (1974) have added much to our understanding of class consciousness in the day-to-day lives of working people. If there is a common theme to such studies it is that class consciousness, or political awareness in general, is not the exclusive property of productive relations, and that such awareness can never be fully tapped in a survey of attitudes and opinions gained in the course of short interviews. While these American studies draw on a tradition in American social science going back to the Chicago School and, theoretically, to the cultural perspective of the Frankfurt School, recent British additions are more "structuralist" in their theory and "literary" in their practice. That is, they draw on the writings of English literary critics such as R. Hoggart, R. Williams, and E. P. Thompson (as well as the latter's historical writings and the social history of E. Hobsbawm), and the Marxist structuralists L. Althusser and N. Poulantzas. This is quite an amalgam, but a fruitful one.[5]

Culture vs. Ideology

The problematic of "working class culture" as laid out in the writings of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies can best be understood in the tensions between the two strains in their theoretical synthesis. This is, in fact, the way R. Johnson in his theoretical essay in *Working Class Culture* defines his position. In their extreme interpretations the "culturalism" of Williams and the "structuralism" of Althusser totally exclude one another. The culturalist perspective describes "a way of life" and argues against any theoretical abstraction that would generalize from a totality of "lived experience." On the other side, mechanical structuralism sees all social practices as "ideological rituals" determined by and through a "state apparatus" and thus trivializes all conceptions of culture and human experience. In bringing together the concepts of class and culture in the notion of working-class culture, this new perspective aims to differentiate analytically the concepts of culture and ideology to "define what is specific to each and how cultural-ideological processes might be seen as a unity" (230). To separate analytically culture and ideology in human practice Johnson returns, in much the same manner as Williams does in *Marxism and Literature*, to Gramsci's writings. In the *Prison Notebooks* Gramsci uses three concepts to analyze the relation between human experience and their representation in literature. As Johnson points out, this

is in opposition to both structuralists and culturalists, who usually use only one: culture on the one side and ideology on the other. Gramsci distinguishes between (1) the "common sense" of a social group or class or their lived culture, (2) philosophy or ideology, which refers to what I would call "ready-made" conceptions produced by intellectuals and offered to social groups as explanations of their lived experience, and (3) hegemony, which refers to the constant tension between the common sense of a social class – which is the product of its own history and earlier ideological forms – and contemporary ideologies that seek to transform it.

Adapting Gramsci's complex analysis, Johnson sees the relation between culture and ideology as one between base material and transformative forces: culture is the ground on which ideologies work. The strength of this way of looking at the relation between experience and interpretation is that it avoids the functionalist reduction of culture and human action to "structural determinants," while maintaining the idea that consciousness *is* determined by social being. Working-class *culture*, for example, is profoundly shaped by the human struggle to endure and to reshape the condition of being exploited in capitalist society. Any ideology that seeks to explain and transform the cultural practices of this class, be it capitalist or socialist, will have to take into account its basic relations and experiences. One reason why religion has been such a powerful force in helping to reproduce poverty, for example, is that it offers a way to find dignity in extreme circumstance, becoming the opiate of a people by molding their daily experience of poverty and exploitation within an ideology of piety and natural goodness, thus reinforcing a "culture of poverty" with a ready-made explanation that makes it bearable. It transforms the experience of poverty, even if in a conservative direction.

This daily experience, or culture of poverty, however, is not identical to the ideologies that legitimate it or make it palatable. Cultural practices cannot be reduced to any "reproductive" function they may serve. Cultural practice or common sense, in fact, can become the basis for resistance, a form of impulsive, even "instinctual" rebellion against incorporation into an alien form of life. Theorists within the Marx-Freud framework sometimes look to Freud's theory of sexual impulses as a biological basis in the human being that can never be totally tamed by culture or by capitalism. Marcuse's interpretation of Freud's libido theory is an example. In *Legitimation Crisis*, though in a somewhat more cognitive vein, Habermas argues against the notion of an "over-socialized" man with the idea that the human being can never be "absorbed without remainder". For me there always seemed a rather desperate idealism underlying such notions. Against such idealism, and with more empirical investigative possibility, the cultural perspective seeks to map out a

new grounding for a theory of human resistance to total "socialization". In the American literature, besides the works already cited, H. Gutman has described how both the work habits and the community structure immigrant workers brought with them formed a groundwork that capitalist work processes found difficult to penetrate.[6] One need not look only to the past to find such examples. Any new introduction of technology, as Gouldner showed in *Wildcat Strike*, will have to deal with old work habits and worker resistance. This is a form of cultural resistance that need not be conservative.[7]

Culture as Resistance

Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* offers new empirical grounding for a theory of culturally based resistance. The framework for his study is one institution in the "ideological state apparatus": a basic school. Following Johnson's critical remarks about structuralist theories of reproduction, which see the school only in its reproductive function, Willis shows the way small groups of students form a rebellious counter-culture within the school that draws its basic content from a larger working-class culture. If such groups represented only a transient form of "youth culture" and not part of a continuous working-class culture, their importance for theories of resistance and social change would be considerably less. There exists a tendency in structuralist analysis of the school to see such groups in precisely this way. But Willis is able to show how the rebellious behavior of these youths is continuous with their family environment and their later working-class jobs: the antics and the solidarity of the classroom are those of the shop floor. It is part of the complexity of Willis's analysis, and the irony of working-class life in modern capitalism, that he is able to show how this rebelliousness, which helps to maintain working-class culture against middle-class encroachment, is also – from the liberal viewpoint of social mobility – what "condemns" these "lads" to unskilled, low-paid jobs. Their resistance to conforming in the middle-class school is precisely part of what ensures that they remain working class in the economic sense. They are active agents in their own exploitation.

But they are also actors with flashes of insight into their own condition. They may not be entirely aware of why they rebel, against even the "good intentions" of the few sympathetic teachers, but their working-class "instinct," their culturally formed impulses, prevent them from merely going along. They resist. In analyzing this impulse to resistance, Willis develops two theoretical categories: penetration and limitation. The former refers to insights into the conditions of existence and their place in the social totality by members of a social group or class "but in a way that is not centered, essentialist or individualist" (119). Limitation, on the other hand, refers to "those

blocks, diversions and ideological effects which confuse and impede the full development and expression" of those penetrative impulses. What is exciting and important about these notions, especially that of penetration, is that they are de-centered, that is, not individually but culturally based. It is not the lone rebel, the conscious drop-out that is the concern here, but the nearly unconscious rebellion by similarly situated groups of youths who create and express their resistance through cultural practices. This is the basis on which a more politically conscious rebellion can build. Of course it is also the basis on which commercially sponsored rebellion builds. Culturally based resistance is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for progressive political movement. An active and ideologically aware working-class movement is a further necessary condition for this school and shop-floor culture to develop political goals, rather than having their rebellion commodified.

The basis for penetration is the very working-class culture itself. Three constituative elements of this culture allow the "lads" in Willis's study to create and maintain themselves against the tremendous pressure either to conform or to drop out. The first of these elements is an epistemology that differs from the middle-class view of knowledge offered in the school. For these working-class lads knowledge is gained through experience and hard knocks, not from books and lessons. Their impulse is to discount what their teachers say and to mock those other students – working-class or otherwise – who seek to please the staff by accepting their view of knowledge and the world. The lads, as Willis shows, "know better". They know better than the well-meaning guidance counselor the structure of the job market and the kinds of jobs they will end up with. They know better than the "progressive" teachers the meaning of qualifications and the impact of schooling on their lives. This scepticism, based in deep-seated cultural experience, is what allows these working-class kids to see through or penetrate the legitimating ideologies that underlie this social institution. This cultural basis serves also to help solidify the group around a sense of superiority. Their "deviance" is self-inflicted; there are no "hidden injuries of class" here. The others are the fools, not they, even if their conformity brings them favor. It is favor bought at the loss of self.

Two other constituative elements of the culture reinforce this cohesion against the middle-class world: a particular view of work and a sense of masculinity. For Willis, the first is a ground for penetration and the second an example of limitation. Through a clear summary of Marx's description of the uniqueness of human labor, the only variable element in the capitalist system, Willis argues that working-class experience has produced the culturally "instinctive" understanding that labor power is something that can be withheld, and thus

is something that can serve as a weapon to fight the unreasonable demands of the dominant middle-class culture. Labor power is thus both a means of capital reproduction and a club, perhaps the only real weapon in the struggle against capitalism. This culturally based understanding allows the rebellious counter-culture in the school to penetrate the ideology of equivalence exchange that guides that institution's understanding of work and reward: pay attention and you will succeed. The working-class lads "know" they are paying more than attention, and they have a different idea of what being a success means. They also "know" they can withhold their attention, that it is theirs to give or not; and in withholding this attention from the school, they are free to define and use their capacities in their own way.

There is a further difference between the middle-class view of labor as a fixed commodity – a chunk of time and energy – to be exchanged for "education" or "leisure," and that of the working class lads. For these lads work means physical labor, working with their hands, moving and shaping materials, not sitting behind a desk and using their minds alone. Again the irony. This view of work, rooted in a positive working-class culture, helps to reproduce the basic division of labor between mental and manual work that structures capitalist society. The lads' rejection of the middle-class identification of rewarding work with mental labor is part of what condemns them to the lowest paid jobs in the labor market hierarchy. They end up at the bottom because they "want to". Their identification of work with manual labor, in addition to helping to perpetuate the division between mental and manual labor, is further strengthened by an association with masculinity. Two social divisions cross in this view of work: mental and manual labor and gender. The working-class culture of these British lads associates manual work "with the social superiority of masculinity, and mental labour with the social inferiority of femininity" (148). Here we have an example of what Willis means by limitation. That these two social divisions are experienced in the same concrete space, in both the school and on the shop floor, means they are extremely difficult to separate. They can only be separated in abstraction. But it is abstraction that their view of knowledge resists. Their penetration into the meaning of labor power is thus limited by a masculine logic that labor must be tough, and the sense of masculine superiority they derive from it. Whereas such a sense of superiority may strengthen them against middle-class values and against individualist incorporation into capitalist society, their identification of mental work with femininity blinds them to their own and others' domination and exploitation. What is given by their culture with one hand is taken away with the other. Their penetration into one of the legitimating ideologies of capitalism is thus limited through their acceptance of another. In this sense patriarchy, as Willis argues, is a necessary and integral part of the contemporary capitalist reproduction of labor power.

I have spent such a great deal of space on Willis' book because I think, his own denial to the contrary, it represents an important return to the problematic of class consciousness laid out by Lukács and the early Frankfurt Institut. Willis shows that being working-class means partaking of a semicognitive culture – being part of "history" and all that entails in both past and future – and how this culture provides grounds for privileged access into the contradictions of capitalist society. This is what Lukács meant by the working-class's "interest" in truth. His work also shows the tensions that inhibit the movement from this "instinctual" penetration to real cognitive and political understanding. This is what Fromm's early work attempted to reveal. When coupled with other contemporary Marxist works on the structure of the modern labor process, and analyses of the larger political and economic context, his book helps us understand how capitalism really works on both an individual and a class level. Because of this, his work, and that of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in general, makes a significant contribution to the development of a unified social theory. A theory that can explain both "class" and "consciousness".

NOTES

1. F. Engels, "The Conditions of the Working-Class in England," *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 418
2. See for example: Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century* (Basic Books, 1979); and Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism* (University of Chicago Press, 1979).
3. Cited in Martin Bulmer, ed., *Working-Class Images of Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 5. Bulmer's Book represents an important continuation of the *Affluent Worker* studies.
4. *Ibid.* This was actually written by Goldthorpe for a French summary of the work.
5. The intellectual prehistory of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, the origin of a good part of recent empirical studies of class consciousness, is nicely laid out by Chas Critcher in an essay collected in *Working-Class Culture* put out by the Centre. As opposed to so many French and American attempts at theoretical synthesis that usually end up as overheated commentaries on conceptual structures – and that can also be evidenced in an earlier volume of the Centre called quite aptly *On Ideology* (Hutchinson, 1977) – the theoretical synthesis of these British writers has produced some excellent empirical studies. In a way these studies are the contemporary Marxist equivalent to the revolt against "grand theory" that ran through American social science some years ago. Page references in the following sections refer to those books being discussed.
6. Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (Vintage Books, 1977). See also Barrington Moore, Jr., *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (M. E. Sharpe, 1978).
7. For a theoretical discussion of this theme see R. Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977).

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