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SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Why is there a strong tendency for working-class children to end up in working-class jobs? It is this question, a perennial one in the field of sociology, that social reproduction theorists have addressed during the past thirty years. Drawing on the work of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and especially Karl Marx, reproduction theorists analyze how the class structure is reproduced from one generation to the next. They attempt to unravel how and why the poor are at a decided disadvantage in the scramble for good jobs. As reproduction theorists explore how the social relations of capitalist society are reproduced, they invariably are led to one site: the school. In the popular mind, school is the great equalizer: By providing a level playing field where the low and the mighty compete on an equal basis, schooling renders social inequality superfluous. Reproduction theorists, in contrast, show that schools actually reinforce social inequality while pretending to do the opposite. These theorists share a common interest in uncovering how status or class position is transmitted. But in doing so, they follow somewhat different approaches.

On one end of the spectrum are theorists who advocate deterministic models of reproduction; on the other end are those who put forth models that allow for the relative autonomy of individuals in their own cultural settings. Deterministic theories take as their starting point the structural requirements of the capitalist economic system and attempt to demonstrate how individuals are obliged to fulfill predefined roles that ensure the perpetuation of a class society. Culturally attuned models begin with the experiences of individuals, and only after understanding

people on their own terms do these models attempt to connect those experiences with the demands of capitalist social relations. In this review of reproduction theory, I shall begin with Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, who represent the economic determinist end of the spectrum, progress through the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein, and Shirley Brice Heath, and finally consider Paul Willis and Henry Giroux on the other end of the continuum.

SAMUEL BOWLES AND HERBERT GINTIS: SCHOOLED BY SOCIAL CLASS

As Marxists, Bowles and Gintis begin their analysis with the forces and relations of production. Marx writes in *Capital*, "The capitalist process of production . . . produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer."[1] Building on Marx's basic point, Bowles and Gintis show how the American educational system is subordinated to and reflective of the production process and structure of class relations in the United States. Thus, they suggest that "the major aspects of the structure of schooling can be understood in terms of the systemic needs for producing reserve armies of skilled labor, legitimating the technocratic-meritocratic perspective, reinforcing the fragmentation of groups of workers into stratified status groups, and accustoming youth to the social relationships of dominance and subordinancy in the economic system."[2] In short, argue Bowles and Gintis, schools train the wealthy to take up places at the top of the economy while conditioning the poor to accept their lowly status in the class structure.

Bowles and Gintis emphasize their "correspondence principle," which highlights the similarity between the social relations of production and personal interaction in the schools. "Specifically, the relationships of authority and control between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work replicate the division of labor which dominates the work place."[3] Bowles and Gintis argue that strong structural similarities can be seen in (1) the organization of power and authority in the school and in the workplace; (2) the student's lack of control of curriculum and the worker's lack of control of the content of his or her job; (3) the role of grades and other rewards in the school and the role of wages in the workplace as extrinsic motivational systems; and (4) competition among students and the specialization of academic subjects and competition among workers and the fragmented nature of jobs.[4] In short, the social relations of the school reflect those of the capitalist mode of production; through its institutional relationships, the system of education in the United States "tailors the self-concepts, aspirations, and social class identifications of individuals to the requirements of the social division of labor."[5]

Insofar as these conditions apply to all students, however, their influence cannot explain the reproduction of class relations. An effective explanation

must indicate the ways in which the educational system treats students differently depending on their social origins. In taking up this task, Bowles and Gintis elaborate the factors that contribute to class-based differences in socialization. They begin by demonstrating that there are major structural differences among schools. Schools serving working-class neighborhoods are more regimented and emphasize rules and behavioral control. In contrast, suburban schools offer more open classrooms that "favor greater student participation, less direct supervision, more student electives, and, in general, a value system stressing internalized standards of control."[6]

These variations reflect the different expectations of teachers, administrators, and parents for children of different class backgrounds. Working-class parents, for example, know from their own job experiences that submission to authority is an important value for success in the workplace; they will insist that the schools inculcate this value. Middle-class parents, reflecting their position in the social division of labor, will expect more open schools for their children.[7] Even within the same school, argue Bowles and Gintis, educational tracks, which cater to different classes of students, emphasize different values.

According to Bowles and Gintis, schooling functions at a material level to ensure the successful accumulation of capital by providing employers with trained workers. But the American educational system also functions at an ideological level to promote the attitudes and values required by a capitalist economy. Children of workers attend schools and are placed into educational tracks, both of which emphasize conformity and docility and prepare them for low-status jobs. By contrast, the sons and daughters of the elite are invited to study at their own pace under loose supervision, to make independent decisions, and to internalize social norms—all of which prepares them to boss rather than to be bossed. In short, Bowles and Gintis argue that schools socialize students to occupy roughly the same position in the class structure as that of their parents.

PIERRE BOURDIEU: CULTURAL CAPITAL AND HABITUS

Pierre Bourdieu, a prominent French sociologist, is more indebted to Weber and Durkheim than to Marx, yet Bourdieu also is influenced by the French structuralist movement, which seeks to delve beneath the surface of observed cultural forms to find the "deep" principles and logic according to which empirical reality functions. Drawing on these perspectives, Bourdieu forges an original theory in which class structure plays a more nuanced role, but one that does not preclude deterministic elements.

Bourdieu's most important contribution to reproduction theory is the concept of cultural capital, which he defines as the general cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next. Cultural capital is the centerpiece of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. Children of upper-class origin, according to Bourdieu, inherit substantially

different cultural capital than do working-class children. By embodying class interests and ideologies, schools reward the cultural capital of the dominant classes and systematically devalue that of the lower classes. Upper-class students, by virtue of a certain linguistic and cultural competence acquired through family upbringing, are provided with the means of appropriation for success in school. Children who read books, visit museums, attend concerts, and go to the theater and cinema (or simply grow up in families where these practices are prevalent) acquire a familiarity with the dominant culture that the educational system implicitly requires of its students for academic attainment. As Giroux contends, "Students whose families have a tenuous connection to forms of cultural capital highly valued by the dominant society are at a decided disadvantage."[8] Hence, schools serve as the trading post where socially valued cultural capital is parlayed into superior academic performance. Academic performance is then turned back into economic capital by the acquisition of superior jobs. Schools reproduce social inequality, but by dealing in the currency of academic credentials, the educational system legitimates the entire process.

Bourdieu's theory consists of four main points. First, distinctive cultural capital is transmitted by each social class. Second, the school systematically valorizes upper-class cultural capital and depreciates the cultural capital of the lower classes. Third, differential academic achievement is retranslated back into economic wealth—the job market remunerates the superior academic credentials earned mainly by the upper classes. Finally, the school legitimates this process "by making social hierarchies and the reproduction of those hierarchies appear to be based upon the hierarchy of 'gifts,' merits, or skills established and ratified by its sanctions, or, in a word, by converting social hierarchies into academic hierarchies."[9]

Bourdieu's model is not quite that simple, however. He recognizes, for instance, that the conversion of economic capital into cultural capital is not a precise one and thus that "the structure of distribution of cultural capital is not exactly the same as the structure of economic capital."[10] Moreover, in the upper reaches of the class structure, despite the decline of the family firm, economic capital is still passed on directly to the next generation, and the importance of educational attainment and cultural capital is correspondingly lower. Bourdieu also argues that "children's academic performance is more strongly related to parents' educational history than to parents' occupational status"[11] and contends that class-based differences in cultural capital tend to have a decreasing importance as one ascends the educational ladder. For Bourdieu, "social class background is mediated through a complex set of factors that interact in different ways at different levels of schooling."[12] Giroux captures the essence of Bourdieu's argument when he observes that "rather than being directly linked to the power of an economic elite, schools are seen as part of a larger social 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."[13]

In addition to cultural capital, Bourdieu employs the concept of habitus, which he defines as "a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions."[14] The habitus "could be considered as a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class."[15] Put simply, the habitus is composed of the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of those inhabiting one's social world. This conglomeration of deeply internalized values defines an individual's attitudes toward, for example, schooling. The structure of schooling, with its high regard for the cultural capital of the upper classes, promotes a belief among working-class students that they are unlikely to achieve academic success. Thus, there is a correlation between objective probabilities and subjective aspirations, between institutional structures and cultural practices.[16]

Aspirations reflect an individual's view of his or her own chances for getting ahead and are an internalization of objective probabilities. But aspirations are not the product of a rational analysis; rather, they are acquired in the habitus of the individual. A lower-class child growing up in an environment where success is rare is much less likely to develop strong ambitions than is a middle-class boy or girl growing up in a social world peopled by those who have "made it" and where the connection between effort and reward is taken for granted. "The habitus is the universalizing mediation which causes an individual agent's practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less 'sensible' and 'reasonable.'"[17]

The habitus engenders attitudes and conduct that enable objective social structures to succeed in reproducing themselves. The educational and job opportunity structures are such that individuals of lower-class origin have a very reduced chance of securing professional or managerial jobs. This fact filters down to the lower-class boy (for a girl the outlook is even bleaker) situated in his habitus from the experiences and attitudes of those close to him. Responding to the objective structures, the boy loses interest in school and resigns himself to a low-level job, thereby reinforcing the structure of class inequality. Essentially, Bourdieu posits a circular relationship between structures and practices, in which "objective structures tend to produce structured subjective dispositions that produce structured actions which, in turn, tend to reproduce objective structure."[18]

In Bourdieu's scheme, habitus functions as a regulator between individuals and their external world, between human agency and social structure. As Loïc Wacquant argues, habitus "effects, from within, the reactivation of the meanings and relations objectified 'without' as institutions."[19] It is the mediating link between individuals and their social world. As a conceptual bridge between subjective, inner consciousness and the objective, external constraints of the material world, habitus disposes individuals to think and act in certain ways.[20] Thus, Freddie Piniella announces in the streets of Clarendon Heights, "I ain't goin' to college," while an eleven-year-old counterpart across the city may enter his father's study to confirm a preference for Harvard over Yale.

Through the concepts of cultural capital and habitus, Bourdieu seeks to explain how social inequality is perpetuated and why this process of social reproduction is so readily accepted by exploiter and exploited alike. "Every established order," he notes, "tends to produce the naturalization of its own arbitrariness."[21] At the same time, the mechanisms of cultural and social reproduction remain hidden, because the social practices that safeguard the political and economic interests of the dominant classes go unrecognized as anything other than the only natural, rational, or possible ones. And schooling is crucial to the reproduction and legitimation of social inequality.

> Surely, among all the solutions put forth throughout history to the problem of the transmission of power and privileges, there does not exist one that is better concealed, and therefore better adapted to societies which tend to reuse the most patent forms of the hereditary transmission of power and privileges, than that solution which the educational system provides by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of class relations and by concealing, under an apparently neutral attitude, the fact that it fulfills this function.[22]

Thus success or failure in school is determined largely by social class. But cloaked in the language of meritocracy, academic performance is apprehended as the result of individual ability by both high and low achievers. Such is the magic of school-mediated exclusion: It implants in those it marginalizes a set of cognitive and evaluative categories that lead them to see themselves as the causal agents of a process that is actually institutionally determined. Bourdieu shows how schooling entrenches social inequality by reproducing class privilege and simultaneously sanctifying the resultant inequality.

BASIL BERNSTEIN AND SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH: LINGUISTIC CULTURAL CAPITAL

Whereas Bourdieu paints an elegant theory with broad brushstrokes, Basil Bernstein, an innovative British sociologist, zeroes in on one important link in the process of social reproduction—language patterns. Through his theory of language codification and its relationship to social class on the one hand and schooling on the other, Bernstein links micro- and macro-sociological issues. Influenced by Durkheim and the French structuralist movement, Bernstein, in some respects, goes well beyond Bourdieu in terms of methodological rigor by analyzing both structures and practices and actually demonstrating their relationship. Nevertheless, for all its distinctiveness, Bernstein's work is understood most easily in the context of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital.

Bourdieu argues that schools require cultural resources with which only specific students are endowed; Bernstein looks specifically at the educational ramifications of divergent linguistic patterns among children of different social

strata. Bernstein begins by tracing the implications of social class for language use. In a highly complex argument, he contends that class membership generates distinctive forms of speech patterns through family socialization. Working-class children are oriented to "restricted" linguistic codes, while middle-class children use "elaborated" codes. By *linguistic codes* Bernstein does not mean the surface manifestations of language such as vocabulary or dialect, but rather the underlying regulative principles that govern the selection and combination of different syntactic and lexical constructions.[23]

Linguistic codes, which ultimately are rooted in the social division of labor, derive from the social relations and roles within families. While rejecting an outright correlation between social class and linguistic code, Bernstein claims that working-class children generally grow up in homes where common circumstances, knowledge, and values give rise to speech patterns in which meanings remain implicit and dependent on their context (a restricted code). Middle-class families, in contrast, use elaborated codes to express the unique perspective and experience of the speaker; meanings are less tied to a local relationship and local social structure and consequently are made linguistically explicit.[24] In their introductory essay to *Power and Ideology in Education,* Karabel and Halsey explain how distinct class-specific forms of communication are engendered.

> Participation in working-class family and community life, in which social relations are based upon shared identifications, expectations, and assumptions, tends to generate a "restricted code," for the speaker who is sure that the listener can take his intentions for granted has little incentive to elaborate his meanings and make them explicit and specific. Middle-class culture, in contrast, tends to place the "I" over the "we," and the resultant uncertainty that meanings will be intelligible to the listener forces the speaker to select among syntactic alternatives and to differentiate his vocabulary. The result is the development of an "elaborated code" oriented to the communication of highly individuated meanings.[25]

Because "one of the effects of the class system is to limit access to elaborated codes"[26] and because schools operate in accordance with the symbolic order of elaborated codes, working-class children are at a significant disadvantage. "Our schools are not made for these children; why should the children respond? To ask the child to switch to an elaborated code which presupposes different role relationships and systems of meaning . . . may create for the child a bewildering and potentially damaging experience."[27] By conceptualizing the social structure as a system of class inequality, tracing this structure's implications for language, and demonstrating the ways in which schools value the elaborated codes and other linguistic devices characteristic of the upper classes, Bernstein puts forth a theory that focuses on a powerful mechanism of social reproduction.

Shirley Brice Heath's research into language patterns at home and in the classroom also highlights the importance of linguistic cultural capital. Whereas Bernstein elucidates the relationship among schooling, social class, and language in

Britain, Heath looks at race as well in her sensitive ethnography of schooling in America's Piedmont Carolinas. Heath examines the way language is used in Trackton (a working-class African American community) and nearby Roadville (a working-class white neighborhood). She uncovers important linguistic differences between the two neighborhoods, but the real contrast is between the language patterns of these two rural communities and the way the middle-class townspeople talk. The townspeople, including teachers, use discrete interrogative questions when they talk to their children at home. Through the everyday speech patterns prevalent in their households, these middle-class children are taught to label and name objects, to identify the features of the objects, and to talk about referents out of context: precisely the skills demanded of students in school. The children of Trackton learn different skills. They are less often questioned by their parents, who tend to use imperatives or statements. And in any case, questions that are asked at home usually require comparative or analogical answers rather than specific information. The result is that the black working-class children are not socialized to cope with the language patterns used in school and quickly fall into a pattern of academic failure. The white working-class children from Roadville fare better in that they develop many of the cognitive and linguistic patterns required in elementary school. But they fail to develop "the integrative types of skills necessary for sustained academic success."[28] Like their Trackton counterparts, only later, many Roadville students fall behind, drift through school in a fog of failure, or drop out altogether.

Heath's basic point is the same as Bernstein's: The mismatch between the language used at home and the language demanded by the school is a serious stumbling block for working-class and nonwhite pupils. Like many of the mechanisms of social reproduction, linguistic socialization is an invisible impediment that goes unacknowledged. Disadvantaged students blame themselves for failure, whereas wealthier pupils take their cultural capital for granted and accept full credit for their success. By stripping schools of their innocence, social reproduction theorists show that formal education actually functions "to certify lower status youngsters as socially inferior at an early age and to initiate the process that keeps many of them economically and socially inferior in adulthood."[29]

PAUL WILLIS: THE LADS AND THE EAR'OLES

Like Heath, Paul Willis, author of *Learning to Labor,* begins with the lived culture of his subjects. In this impressive ethnographic study of a group of disaffected, white, working-class males in a British secondary school, Willis undertook extensive participant observation in order to grasp this "counter-school culture's" distinctive pattern of cultural practices. Willis found that the complex and contradictory nature of the "sources of meaning" on which these boys draw and the determinants of their behavior "warns against a too reductive or crude materialist notion of the cultural level."[30]

This is not to say, however, that Willis denies the importance of structural influence. On the contrary, writing in the Marxist tradition, Willis believes that these boys' class background, geographical location, local opportunity structure (job market), and educational attainment influence their job choice. But he reminds deterministic Marxists that these structural forces act through and are mediated by the cultural milieu. If we are to understand social reproduction, we must understand

> how and why young people take the restricted and often meaningless available jobs in ways which seem sensible to them in their familiar world as it is actually lived. For a proper treatment of these questions we must go to the cultural milieu . . . and accept a certain autonomy of the processes at this level which defeats any simple notion of mechanistic causation and gives the social agents involved some meaningful scope for viewing, inhabiting, and constructing their own world in a way which is recognizably human and not theoretically reductive.[31]

By viewing social reproduction as it actually is lived out, we can understand the mechanisms of the process.

In his study of a working-class school, Willis finds a major division between the students. The great bulk of the students are the "ear'oles," who conform to the roles defined for students, aspire to middle-class occupations, and comply with the rules and norms of the school. The counterschool culture of the "lads," in contrast, rejects the school's achievement ideology; these nonconformist boys subvert teacher and administrator authority, disrupt classes, mock the ear'oles (to whom they feel superior), and generally exploit any opportunity to "have a laff," usually at the expense of school officials. In short, the lads use whatever means possible to display their open opposition to the school.

Willis directs almost all his attention to understanding the lads. Their rejection of school, according to Willis, is partly the result of some profound insights, or "penetrations," into the economic condition of their social class under capitalism. The lads believe that their chances for significant upward mobility are so remote that sacrificing "a laff" for good behavior in school is pointless. The lads repudiate schooling because they realize that most available work is essentially meaningless and that although individuals are capable of "making it," conformism for their group or class promises no rewards.[32] As Michael Apple puts it, "Their rejection of so much of the content and form of day to day educational life bears on the almost unconscious realization that, as a class, schooling will not enable them to go much further than they already are."[33] According to Willis, this type of insight into the nature of capitalism has the potential to catalyze class solidarity and collective action.

The promise of these cultural penetrations, however, is dimmed by certain "limitations" in the lads' cultural outlook. The lads equate manual labor with masculinity, a trait highly valued by their working-class culture; mental labor is associated with the social inferiority of femininity.[34] This reversal of the usual valuation of mental versus manual labor prevents the lads from seeing their

placement in dead-end, low-paying jobs as a form of class domination. Instead, they positively choose to join their brothers and fathers on the shop floor, a choice made happily and apparently free from coercion. Val Burris, in a review of *Learning to Labor,* brings this point into sharp focus.

> What begins as a potential insight into the conditions of labor and the identity of the working class is transformed, under the influence of patriarchal ideology, into a surprising and uncritical affirmation of manual labor. It is this identification of manual labor with male privilege which, more than anything else, ensures the lads' acceptance of their subordinate economic fate and the successful reproduction of the class structure.[35]

The lads' nonconformist cultural innovations, which ultimately contribute to the reproduction of the class structure, are often complex and contradictory. An understanding of these mechanisms of social reproduction requires an ethnographic approach based on a theory that postulates the relative autonomy of the cultural sphere. Although a Marxist, Willis eschews theories based on economic determinism or a correspondence principle as explanations for the perpetuation of class inequality. Rather, he gives explanatory power to the cultural level and the social innovations of the individuals involved. In this way, we can see how structural forces are mediated by the cultural sphere through which they must pass.

Willis insists that the cultural attitudes and practices of working-class groups are not necessarily reflective of, or even traceable to, structural determinations or dominant ideologies. Although the mode of production wields a powerful influence on the attitudes and actions of individuals, people do not simply respond to the socioeconomic pressures bearing down on them with passivity and indifference. The cultural level is marked by contestation, resistance, and compromise. Culture itself implies "the active, collective use and explorations of received symbolic, ideological, and cultural resources to explain, make sense of and positively respond to 'inherited' structural and material conditions."[36] Subordinate groups can produce alternative cultural forms containing meanings endemic to the working class. Termed "cultural production" by Willis, this process is by nature active and transformative. Still, these behavioral and attitudinal innovations, as the lads illustrate, are often ultimately reproductive. As Liz Gordon remarks in her review of Willis's work, it may seem contradictory to refer to cultural production as both transformative and reproductive, but "Willis wishes to move away from an oversimplistic either/or model. He points out that there is no clear separation between agency and structure; these cannot be understood in isolation from one another."[37]

HENRY GIROUX: STUDENT RESISTANCE TO SCHOOL

Bridging the division between structure and agency maintained by theories of social reproduction has been one of the ongoing theoretical concerns of Henry

A. Giroux, who contends that separation of human agency and structural analysis either suppresses the significance of individual autonomy or ignores the structural determinants that lie outside the immediate experience of human actors.[38] Giroux insists on the need to admit "wider structural and ideological determinations while recognizing that human beings never represent simply a reflex of such constraints."[39] Structuralist theories, which stress that history is made "behind the backs" of the members of society, overlook the significance and relative autonomy of the cultural level and the human experiences of domination and resistance. "In the structuralist perspective human agents are registered simply as the effects of structural determinants that appear to work with the certainty of biological processes. In this grimly mechanistic approach, human subjects simply act as role-bearers."[40] Culturalist theories, on the other hand, pay too little attention to how structurally embedded material and economic forces weigh down and shape human experience. "Culturalism begins at the right place but does not go far enough theoretically—it does not dig into subjectivity in order to find its objective elements."[41]

Giroux argues for a rigorous treatment of ideology, consciousness, and culture in order to move reproduction theory past the theoretical impasse imposed by the structure-agency dualism. He proposes a dialectical treatment of subjectivity and structure in which structure and human agency are seen to affect each other and thinks it crucial "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."[42]

In exploring these issues, Giroux develops a theory of resistance. He takes as his starting point the ethnographic studies of Willis, Hebdige, and Corrigan, which analyze how socioeconomic structures work through culture to shape the lives of students.[43] Giroux follows their lead in examining student nonconformity and opposition for their sociopolitical significance. Giroux considers resistance a response to the educational system, a response rooted in "moral and political indignation,"[44] not psychological dysfunction. Student countercultures and their attendant social attitudes and practices, according to Giroux, need to be analyzed carefully for "radical significance"; not all forms of oppositional behavior stem from a critique, implicit or explicit, of school-constructed ideologies and relations of domination. The violation of a school rule is not in itself an act of resistance unless committed by a youth who, for example, sees through the schools' achievement ideology and is acting on that basis. The logic of resistance runs counter to the social relations of schooling and calls for struggle against, rather than submission to, domination.[45] By insisting that oppositional behavior be scrutinized and that resistance be mined for its broader significance, Giroux sets the program for future studies in social reproduction.

Student resistance represents a fertile area for academic study because it offers the possibility of transcending the structure-agency dualism. Resistance theory examines the ongoing, active experiences of individuals while simultaneously perceiving in oppositional attitudes and practices a response to structures of

constraint and domination. Taking Willis's concept of cultural production seriously, Giroux suggests that working-class subordination is not a simple reaction to the logic of capitalist rationality. Rather, oppositional cultural patterns draw on elements of working-class culture in a creative and potentially transformative fashion. Thus, the mechanisms of class domination are neither static nor final.

As Giroux is well aware, a thorough understanding of student resistance is difficult to come by. Oppositional behavior is not self-explanatory. It must be linked with the subjects' own explanations of their behavior and contextualized within the nexus of peer, family, and work relations out of which resistance emerges.[46] Unfortunately, Giroux himself undertakes no such investigation, and most studies of social reproduction concentrate on the role of schooling in the perpetuation of class inequality, thus giving only token consideration to the other vehicles of socialization.

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN CLARENDON HEIGHTS

This book intends to delve beneath the surface of teenage behavior to recover the interests, concerns, and logic that render it comprehensible. In *Learning to Labor*, Willis gives us a complete and sophisticated analysis of how the lads experience the process of social reproduction. But what of the ear'oles? Both groups are working class. What causes the lads to respond to the school and to the occupational structure in a completely different way than do the ear'oles? Are the ear'oles, as Burris suggests, prepared for their economic fate by passive submission to structural and ideological forces? Or do the ear'oles actively respond to structural pressures bearing down on them and develop their own novel cultural practices and meanings? If economic determinants have the overriding importance that theorists such as Bowles and Gintis suggest, how can two groups from the same social location embody two distinctly different cultural orientations? Will the educational and occupational outcomes be much the same for the lads and ear'oles, or will they differ? In the process of social reproduction, what is the relationship between structural forces and cultural innovation? How much autonomy do individuals have at the cultural level?

Although the British and American contexts are obviously different, such questions are crucial to our understanding of how social inequality is reproduced in the United States. The chapters that follow examine in an intensive fashion two very different groups from the same social location and in the process illuminate some of the mechanisms, both structural and cultural, that contribute to social reproduction. In particular, occupational aspirations, as a mediating link between socioeconomic structures (what society offers) and individuals at the cultural level (what one wants), play a crucial role in the reproduction of class inequality. At the interface between structural determinants and human agency, aspirations offer the sociologist a conceptual bridge over the theoretical rift of the structure-agency dualism. Bourdieu and Willis both emphasize the importance of aspirations in their

theoretical writings. For Bourdieu, the relationship between aspirations and opportunity is at the root of "the educational mortality of the working classes."[47] We have seen that a disparity in aspirations is the major difference between the lads and the ear'oles. Indeed, of all the factors contributing to social reproduction (e.g., tracking, social relations of schooling, class-based differences in linguistic codes), the regulation of aspirations is perhaps the most important.

Now that we have familiarized ourselves with some of the major aspects of social reproduction literature, we are in a position to examine in depth the male teenage world of Clarendon Heights. The experiences of the Brothers and the Hallway Hangers, if properly elucidated, bear on the issues of social reproduction more directly than any sociological theory ever could. Thus, it is to the boys of Clarendon Heights that we now turn.

NOTES

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5. Ibid., p. 129.
6. Ibid., p. 132.
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24. Basil Bernstein, "Social Class, Language, and Socialization," in Karabel and Halsey, *Power and Ideology,* p. 477.

25. Karabel and Halsey, *Power and Ideology,* p. 63.

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27. Ibid., p. 483.

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29. Carol Camp Yeakey and Clifford T. Bennett, "Race, Schooling, and Class in American Society," *Journal of Negro Education* 59 (Winter 1990): 5.

30. Paul E. Willis, *Learning to Labor* (Aldershot, U.K.: Gower, 1977), p. 171.

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34. Willis, *Learning to Labor,* p. 148.

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