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In my past volumes, I gave a good deal of credit to the graduate students who work with me and who meet together for the now famous (or infamous) Friday seminar. This is even more the case here. The chapters in this study are the result of intense debates and discussions with my students. They too have taught me a considerable amount, as have the progressive elementary and secondary teachers with whom I have interacted over the last decade and the workers with whom I have worked to create materials for political education on the shop-floor and in offices.

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Reproduction, Contestation, and Curriculum

I
THE SHADOW OF THE CRISIS

As I begin writing this the words of the noted sociologist Manuel Castells keep pressing upon me. "The shadow of the crisis spreads over the world." The images he brings to mind provide some of the driving force behind this volume. For behind the ups and downs of the "business cycle" and behind the turmoil in education, both of which we hear so much about in the press, our daily lives and the lives of millions of people throughout the world are caught up in an economic crisis, one that will probably have lasting cultural, political, and economic effects.

It is affecting our very ideas about school, work and leisure, sex roles, "legitimate" repression, political rights and participation, and so on. It is shaking the very economic and cultural groundings of our day to day lives for many of us. Castells's own images are worth quoting:

> Closed factories, empty offices, millions of unemployed, days of hunger, declining cities, crowded hospitals, ailing administrations, explosions of violence, ideologies of austerity, fatuous discourses, popular revolts, new political strategies, hopes, fears, promises, threats, manipulation, mobilization, repression, fearful stock markets, militant labor unions, disturbed computers, nervous police, stunned economists, subtle politicians, suffering people—so many images that we have been told were gone forever, gone with the wind of post industrial capitalism. And now they are back again, brought by the wind of capitalist crisis.[1]

The mass media bring us no escape from these images. If anything, their repetition and the fact that we cannot escape from seeing and experiencing them point to their reality. The crisis is not a fiction. It can be seen every day in the jobs, schools, families, government and health care and welfare agencies all around us.

In concert with this, our educational and political institutions have lost a large portion of their legitimacy as the state apparatus finds itself unable to respond adequately to the current economic and ideological situation. What has been called the fiscal crisis of the state has emerged as the state finds it impossible to maintain the jobs, programs, and services that have been won by people after years of struggle. At the same time, the cultural resources of our society are becoming more thoroughly commercialized as popular culture is invaded by the commodification process. They are processed and bought and sold. They too became one more aspect of accumulation.

The crisis, though clearly related to processes of capital accumulation, is not only economic. It is political and cultural/ ideological as well. In fact, it is at the intersection of these *three* spheres of social life, how they interact, how each supports and contradicts the others, that we can see it in its most glaring form. The structural crisis we are currently witnessing—no, living—is not really "explained" only by an economy, therefore (that would be too mechanistic), but by a social whole, by each of these spheres. As Castells puts it, this is the case because:

> the economy is not a "mechanism" but a social process continuously shaped and recast by the changing relationships of humankind to the productive forces and by the class struggle defining humankind in a historically specific manner.[2]

What this implies is the following. It is not only in an abstraction like the economy that one can find the roots of the difficult times we face. Rather, the key words are struggle and shaping. They point to structural issues. Our problems are systemic, each building on the other. Each aspect of the social process in the state and politics, in cultural life, in our modes of producing, distributing, and consuming serves to affect the relationships within *and* among the others. As a mode of production attempts to reproduce the conditions of its own existence, "it" creates antagonisms and contradictions in other spheres. As groups of people struggle over issues of gender, race, and class in each of these spheres, the entire social process, including "the economy," is also affected. The struggles and the terrain on which they are carried out are recast. Therefore, the images of these struggles that

Castells calls forth are not static, for people like ourselves live them in their daily lives (perhaps often "unconsciously"). And groups of these people constantly shape and are reshaped by these processes as the conflicts are engaged in.

While the crisis Castells describes is not wholly economic, the depth at which it is felt at an economic level needs to be pointed to if only to indicate how extensive it is.

Some of the figures are indeed shocking. While official unemployment rates of 7–8 percent are bad enough, the real unemployment rate in the United States may be closer to 14 percent. Though current figures are only now becoming available, the unemployment rate within the inner cities was as high as 60–70 percent among black and hispanic youth as early as 1975.[3] Given the deterioration in the American economy (and those economies that are so interconnected with it), one has little reason to believe that this has been altered significantly downward.

Other findings concerning race and sex show another part of the picture. Even though women have struggled over the years to gain a more equal footing, recent data illuminate how difficult this will continue to be. As Featherman and Hauser have demonstrated, for instance, "while the occupational and educational achievement of women have kept pace with men . . ., the ratio of female to male earnings has *declined* from 0.39 to 0.38 for husbands and wives." In fact, there has been little change in the percentage of this earning gap that can be accounted for by plain old sex discrimination. Discrimination accounted for 85 percent of the gap in 1962 and 84 percent in 1973, not a very significant change over all.[4] While recent evidence suggests that this gap may be slowly changing in the professional sector[5]—and this is certainly a positive change—the fact is that only a relatively small percentage of women are actually employed in this sector.

What of other groups? The black and hispanic populations of the United States have much higher rates of under- and unemployment than others, rates that will significantly increase in the near future. A large proportion of these workers are employed in what might be called the "irregular economy," one in which their work (and pay) is often seasonal, subject to repeated layoffs, poorer pay and benefits, and little autonomy. Like women, they seem to suffer a dual oppression. For not only is the social formation unequal by class—a point brought home, for instance, by the significant class differential in income returns from education but added to this are the powerful forces of race and gender reproduction as well. Each of these forces affects the other.[6]

Certainly gains have been made by specific portions of these groups.

However, the raw statistics of these gains cover something rather consequential. The economy itself has shifted less markedly, either in its benefits or power based on race, sex, or class composition, than we might have supposed. The bulk of the advance has occurred through employment in the state.

One fact documents this rather clearly. Government—at the local, state, and national levels—employs over 50 percent of all of the professional blacks and women in the United States.[7] It has only been through protest and struggle within the state that this has been effected.[8] These jobs were not "given," but are the result of groups of people pressuring year after year. Without such state hiring, the gains among these groups would have been drastically lower. As we shall see later on, in fact, the role the state plays in our economy and culture needs to be given a good deal of attention if we are to understand how an unequal society reproduces itself and how crises are dealt with. This will be of special importance in my discussions of the contradictory role of the school in such reproduction.

Conditions also seem to be worsening because of what has been called the dynamics of uneven development. That is, there is an increasing dichotomization between the haves and the have nots. We can see partial evidence of this in the fact that the wages workers in low-wage industries have been getting dropped over a twenty-year period from 75 percent of the average pay in high wage industries to 60 percent. A dual economy is created with an ever widening gap which, according to a number of political economists, will be next to impossible to reverse.[9]

But what of conditions on the job itself? I shall cite but a few pertinent statistics, though many more could fill up the pages of a number of books. In health and safety, the United States consistently lags behind other industrialized nations, with many occupations having a death and injury rate three to four times what one finds in England and Europe.[10] Profit is more important than people, it seems. Yet many people do not even realize this. Both blue- and white-collar work is often maddeningly boring and repetitive. Workers have little formal control over their labor, and this centralization of control is growing in offices, stores, universities and schools, factories, and elsewhere.[11] Pensions are being lost and hard-won benefits weakened. While service jobs increase (to be largely filled by lower-paid women), other jobs are disappearing as runaway corporations move their plants to areas with a less organized, cheaper, and more docile work-force. And even these additional service jobs are suffering more and more from added workloads, a lack of responsibility for the organization of their jobs, increasing insecurity, and a paucity of serious social services to support

them. Furthermore, it is estimated that conditions may worsen since the economy is currently producing only about half of the total new jobs that will be required in the future.[12]

For many women it is often worse. Since so many of them work in "pink-collar" jobs and in the competitive low-wage sector (that is, stores, restaurants, small offices, and labor-intensive industries such as clothing and accessory manufacturing), they are frequently condemned to relative material impoverishment.[13] The same is true of minority workers, a large portion of whom work in the competitive sector. Working conditions here are much worse and, again, unemployment and underemployment, inadequate health and pension benefits, and weak or non-existent labor unions seem to be the rule.[14]

When this is coupled with the deteriorating purchasing power of most workers' pay, the class and sex differential in that pay, the loss of control on the job, the decline of cities and cultural supports and human ties, and the astronomical costs in mental and physical health these conditions entail, it makes one pause even further. For the images that Castells calls forth describe the conditions that an increasing portion of the population within and outside the boundaries of the United States will face. What these conditions signify, the structural reasons for them, are not made evident due to the hegemonic control of the media and the information industries.[15] We castigate a few industrialists and corporations, a small number of figures in government, a vague abstraction called technology, instead of seeing the productive and political apparatus of society as interconnected. In part, though, we cannot blame ourselves for not recognizing the situation. The unconnected version is what we are presented with by the cultural apparatus in its dominant forms. It takes constant attention to detail by even the most politically sensitive of the working men and women in our society to begin to put it all together, to see these images as realities that are generated out of the emerging contradictions and pressures of our social formation and its mode of production. We live through a crisis in legitimation and accumulation—where the productive and reproductive apparatus of a society (including schools) are riven with tensions, where the very essence of the continued reproduction of the conditions necessary for the maintenance of hegemonic control is threatened—yet it is so hard to see the *patterned* impact all this has on the practices in our daily lives. This is especially difficult in education where an ameliorative ideology and the immense problems educators already face leave little time for thinking seriously about the relationship between educational practices and discourse and the reproduction of inequality.

As we shall see, though, the men and women who work in our offices, stores, shops, factories, and schools have not been totally quiescent in the face of all this, a fact that will be made rather clear in my later discussions of cultural forms of resistance. But, the facts that the objective conditions they face are not easy and the perspectives made available to understand them are not very powerful must be recognized at the outset.

This gives a view of the side on which many workers and employees sit. But what about the other side, the side that has much greater control of our culture, politics, and economy? The picture here is one of rapid centralization and concentration of economic and cultural resources and power. A few examples are sufficient to indicate the extent of, say, corporate control. The top one hundred corporations increased their control of industrial assets from 40 percent in 1950 to nearly 50 percent in 1969, a figure that is even higher today. Of the more than two million businesses in the United States today, the two hundred largest corporations take home over two-thirds of the total profit in the entire country. After-tax corporate profits in 1970 were three times what they had been just ten years earlier. In insurance, the top ten concerns control over 60 percent of all assets. This very same phenomenon is found in banking and the communication industries, as well as in the growing national and international power concentrated in financial and industrial corporate conglomerates. The investment patterns of these industrial and financial concerns reveal what one would expect, the maximization of capital accumulation and profit—with human welfare, public goals, high employment, and so on distant runners up when they are considered at all. From all of this, it should be quite clear that the interests of capital control our economic life and our personal well-being to no small extent.[16]

These data present a less than attractive view of the structural conditions in which many of our citizens find themselves and of the unequal power in our society. Yet, one could still claim that these are aberrations. On the whole we are becoming a more equal society; just look around you. Unfortunately, this may be more wish than fact. As the authors of *Economic Democracy* note:

> As numerous academic and government studies have demonstrated, the distribution of wealth and income in the United States has changed little in the direction of greater equality since the turn of the century and hardly at all since World War II.[17]

Even with this maldistribution and the widening centralization and concentration, we know that stagnation and inflation beset the economy.

Capital accumulation and legitimation are threatened. The debt level of these very same corporations has risen markedly, in part because of the financing of technological innovations due to increased international competition.[18] New markets "need" to be developed; workers need to be brought under greater control and discipline; productivity needs to be increased; new technologies need to be developed at an ever-growing rate; and the techniques and expertise required for engaging in all of this need to be generated. The role of the worker is critical here since it has been found that the rate of exploitation of one's workers is an exceptional predictor of the profit levels of an industry.[19] That is, one of the most important means by which firms may deal with the economic "problems" they confront is to refocus on their work-force and increase the level of exploited labor they can gain from it.

The state and the school will not be immune from these pressures. Social austerity "needs" to be regained. Governmental policies need to correspond to the requirements of capital. Educational practices need to be brought more closely into line with work and the costs of the research and development prerequisites of industry have to be socialized by having them taken over by the state and the university. These conditions in the workplace and the political sphere also create their own problems, however. Intensified competition makes the replacement of technologies necessary well before they are fully paid for by profits. Workers react against a good deal of this. Progressive groups, educators, and parents may challenge the closer linkages between the state, factories, boardrooms, and schools. Blacks, hispanics, and many other workers reject the position that they must pay for the economic contradictions plaguing society. And inflation and social tension are raised again. Hence, in the midst of this, the seeds of continued conflict and crisis grow.

This gives the barest glimpse of the actual circumstances many of our citizens experience. If Castells and so many others are correct, we cannot expect it to get better soon in any significant way. What we can do, however, is to face the structural crisis honestly and see how it works its way out in one of our major institutions of reproduction, the school. We must do this even if it means criticizing some of the basic ways our educational institutions currently operate. To do this, though, we need to understand much more thoroughly the connection between education and the ideological, political, and economic spheres of society and how the school partakes in each of them.

At the same time, we should take existing criticisms of schools and suggestions for their reform and place them as well within the crisis in these

three spheres. However, it is not just these connections and criticisms that should concern us. We need also to be aware of possibilities for action. For just as this crisis generates contradictions and tensions that are emerging at all levels of our social formation, so too will these emerge in schools. Finding them will be undoubtedly difficult, but important as well. It may be the case that these contradictions and tensions will actually open up possibilities for us to act in education, in much the same way that, for instance, the crisis in our offices and factories is generating pressures for greater worker control and autonomy.[20]

These issues noted above are the tasks I shall attempt throughout this book. How are schools linked to outside agencies in complex and contradictory ways? What responses do people inside and outside the school make to these contradictions and pressures? Do most recent analyses of the linkages and responses—even some of the more interesting Marxist investigations—uncover enough of this? How are the processes of cultural and economic reproduction and contestation linked in schools? Are current proposed reforms adequate to deal with this complexity? What can progressive educators and others do about this situation? Perhaps the best way to engage in this is to begin by documenting in the rest of this chapter how the concerns about schools and economic and cultural reproduction have grown in sophistication. Here I shall trace out my own and others' progressive realization of what schools do in this regard and how they respond to structural contradictions and reproductive crises. In so doing, I shall outline and prefigure a number of the arguments that will appear in the following chapters.

II
EDUCATIONAL CRITICISM

In the previous section of this chapter I documented some of the elements of the structural crisis that we are beginning to see. I pointed out how this has begun to impact on the labor process, on parts of our culture, and on the legitimacy of our institutions. As economic and cultural institutions, schools will "reflect" these changes in the labor process, culture, and legitimacy. Partly because of this, they have been and will be subject to the same kinds of serious criticisms that are currently being marshalled against other institutions in the political, cultural, and economic spheres.

It is not inconsequential that a central thrust of radical criticism of our institutions during the last decade or so has been on the school. It has become increasingly obvious over this same time period that our educational

institutions may serve less as the engines of democracy and equality than many of us would like. In many ways, this criticism has been healthy since it has increased our sensitivity to the important role schools—and the overt and covert knowledge within them—play in reproducing a stratified social order that remains strikingly unequal by class, gender, and race. As individuals as diverse as Bourdieu, Althusser, and Baudelot and Establet in France, Bernstein, Young, Whitty, and Willis in England, Kallos and Lundgren in Sweden, Gramsci in Italy, and Bowles and Gintis, myself, and others in the United States have repeatedly argued, the educational and cultural system is an exceptionally important element in the maintenance of existing relations of domination and exploitation in these societies.

While there may be serious disagreements among these people about how this goes on, still none would deny the importance of examining the relationship between schooling and the maintenance of these unequal relations. And while some of us may also disagree with parts of the logic of each other's analysis, we simply cannot look at the schools, and the knowledge within them, in quite the same way as we did before this corpus of work appeared.

While this criticism has been healthy, it has perhaps had two side effects that are, paradoxically, the opposite of each other. On the one hand, it has caused us to give too much importance to the school. We may see the school as *the* issue, instead of as part of a larger framework of social relations that are structurally exploitative. That the issue is much larger can be seen in the recent study by Jencks *et al., Who Gets Ahead?* It documents the fact that not only are economic returns from schooling twice as great for individuals who are economically advantaged to begin with, but for, say, black students, even finishing high school will probably not bring any significant benefits. Thus, even if we could alter the school to equalize achievement, the evidence suggests that it might not make a significant difference in the larger framework in which schools exist.[21]

The second side effect is nearly the mirror image of the possible overemphasis on the power of the school. This is the rather pessimistic stance that says that since schools *are* so integrated into this larger framework and since they seem basically to mirror what a "society needs," especially in a time of crisis, then they can be ignored. Nothing of value can be gained by acting in them because they are fundamentally determined institutions. I believe that both of these side effects can have negative consequences. As I present my arguments here, we shall need to be cautious of these effects. Behind my own sense of this lay these two cautions, therefore: the realization that understanding and acting on schools is not

enough, but also knowing that and ignoring them is simply wrong. It is the result of an incorrect analysis and is misguided politically. As I shall argue, in fact, the educational system, because of its very location within a larger nexus of social relations, can provide a significant terrain over which serious action can evolve.

In this section of the introductory chapter I shall be forced to speak rather generally at times, skating over what are serious issues and controversies within structurally oriented economic and cultural scholarship on schools. How does one summarize one's work over a decade, as well as other people's efforts, when that work has grown in sophistication considerably over those years? How can one trace the rapid development of critical ideas about what schools do, without at the same time showing how these ideas about what happens within schools have been fundamentally influenced by one's political practice and by the intense debate going on now within the leftist community on the relationship between culture and mode of production? Obviously, all of this can't be done. Therefore, I have chosen to handle this problem in three ways. First, I shall lay out what Marxist oriented educational scholarship is about by making some general points about how one should interpret the central issue, that of reproduction. I then want to trace the development of my own thinking on these matters by illuminating the concerns I had during the years when I wrote *Ideology and Curriculum*. In so doing, I want to show how my analysis has progressed in more recent work, a progress that, again, has been strongly influenced by the exceptional work being currently done within Marxist literature, and by my own involvement in political activity. The third aspect, possible action, is just as critical and will be developed throughout the coming chapters.

Since I cannot give a sense of all of the debates that are continuing to influence the work of people like me, I shall outline in my Notes some of the major controversies that remain unsettled. This will leave a good deal unsaid, for in order to show how, say, my own political work—with poor, black, white, and hispanic groups to secure their and their children's economic and cultural rights, with politically progressive workers on the development of materials for political education, on economic justice, etc.—has been so important in my latest analyses, I would have to transform this book into an autobiography. For now I shall leave that style to others. I do want to stress, however, that none of what is written here can be thoroughly understood without reference to the concrete practice of the men and women with whom I act.

CURRICULUM AND REPRODUCTION

For the major part of this century, education in general and the curriculum field in particular has devoted a good deal of its energy to the search for one specific thing. It has searched long and hard for a general set of principles that would guide educational planning and evaluation. In large part, this has reduced itself to attempts at creating the *most efficient method* of doing curriculum work. One need only trace the internal history of the dominant traditions in the field—from Thorndike, Bobbitt, and Charters in the early years of the twentieth century to Tyler and to the even more vulgar behaviorists and systems managers today—to begin to realize how strong the emphasis on curriculum as efficient method has become.[22]

The focus on method has not been without its consequences. At the same time that process/product rationality grew, the fact that education is through and through a political enterprise withered. The questions we asked tended to divorce ourselves from the way the economic and cultural apparatus of a society operated. A "neutral" method meant our own neutrality, or so it seemed. The fact that the methods we employed had their roots in industry's attempts to control labor and increase productivity, in the popular eugenics movement, and in particular class and status group interests, was made invisible by the stunning lack of historical insight in the field.[23] At the same time, we seemed to assume that the development of this supposedly neutral method would eliminate the need to deal with the issue of whose knowledge should be or already was preserved and transmitted in schools. While a number of alternative traditions continued to try to keep this kind of political question alive, by and large the faith in the inherent neutrality of our institutions, the knowledge that was taught, and our methods and actions, was ideally suited to help legitimate the structural bases of inequality.

The key to this last sentence is the concept of legitimation. (Like Wittgenstein, I am claiming that the meaning of our language and practices is in their use.) And the use in this case has tended to be twofold. As I sought to demonstrate in *Ideology and Curriculum*, the traditions that dominate the field assist in the reproduction of inequality while at the same time serving to legitimate both the institutions that recreate it and our own actions within them. This is *not* to claim that individual children are not often being helped by our practices and discourse; nor is it to claim that all of our day to day actions are misguided. It is to claim that macroeconomically our work may serve functions that bear little resemblance to even our best intentions.

How are we to understand this? A fundamental problem facing us is the way in which systems of domination and exploitation persist and reproduce themselves without being consciously recognized by the people involved.[24] This is of particular import in education, where our commonly accepted practices so clearly seek to help students and to ameliorate many of the "social and educational problems" facing them. On the face of it, such a focus on these "problems" should seem helpful. Yet it ignores something that has been made rather clear in recent sociological literature.

The essentials of this literature are stated rather pointedly by DiMaggio when he argues that commonsense classification of individuals, social groups, or "social problems" tends to confirm and reinforce these structurally generated relations of domination. For "purposeful, reasoning, well intentioned actors" often contribute simply by pursuing their own subjective ends—to the maintenance of these structural relations.[25] These purposeful, reasoning, and well-intentioned actors, hence, may be latently serving ideological functions at the same moment that they are seeking to alleviate some of the problems facing individual students and others. This is as much due to the linkages between economic and cultural institutions—what many Marxists have called (not unproblematically) the relationship between base and superstructure[26]—as it is to the personal characteristics of these people. Thus one can examine schools and our action on them in two ways: first, as a form of amelioration and problem-solving by which we assist individual students to get ahead; and, second, on a much larger scale, to see the patterns of the *kinds* of individuals who get ahead and the latent outcomes of the institution. These larger social patterns and outcomes may tell us much about how the school functions in reproduction, a function that may tend to be all too hidden if our individual acts of helping remain our primary focus.

So far I have been using words like function and reproduction. These concepts point to the role of educational institutions in preserving what exists. But they also imply a good deal more that deserves our attention if we are not to be utterly mechanistic.

What do we mean when we look at how schools "function" to reproduce an unequal society? Unlike sociological functionalism, where order is assumed and deviance from that order is problematic, Marxist and neo-Marxist analyses signal something else by that term (or at least they should). Rather than a functional coherence where all things work relatively smoothly to maintain a basically unchanging social order, these analyses point to "the *contested* reproduction of a society's fundamental relations, which enables society to reproduce itself again, but only in the

form of a dominant and subordinate (i.e. antagonistic, not functional) social order."[27]

For schools are not "merely" institutions of reproduction, institutions where the overt and covert knowledge that is taught inexorably molds students into passive beings who are able and eager to fit into an unequal society. This account fails in two critical ways. First it views students as passive internalizers of pregiven social messages. Whatever the institution teaches in either the formal curriculum or the hidden curriculum is taken in, unmodified by class cultures and class (or race or gender) rejection of dominant social messages. Anyone who has taught in working-class schools, in schools located in our inner-city ghettos, and elsewhere knows that this is simply not the case. Student reinterpretation, at best only partial acceptance, and often outright rejection of the planned and unplanned meanings of schools, are more likely. Clearly, schools need to be seen in a more complex manner than simple reproduction.

The reproduction account is too simple in another way. It undertheorizes and hence neglects the fact that capitalist social relations are inherently *contradictory* in some very important ways. That is, as I claimed earlier, just as in the economic arena where the capital accumulation process and the "need" to expand markets and profits generates contradictions within a society (where, for example, rising profits and inflation create a crisis in legitimacy in both the state and the economy),[28] so too will similar contradictions emerge in other dominant institutions. The school will not be immune to these.

For instance, as a state apparatus schools perform important roles in assisting in the creation of the conditions necessary for capital accumulation (they sort, select, and certify a hierarchically organized student body) and legitimation (they maintain an inaccurate meritocratic ideology and, therefore, legitimate the ideological forms necessary for the recreation of inequality).[29] However, these two "functions" of schools are often in conflict with each other. The needs of capital accumulation may contradict the needs for legitimation, a situation that is currently rather intense. In the school we can see this in the relative overproduction of credentialed individuals at a time when the economy no longer "requires" as many high salaried personnel. This very overproduction calls into question the legitimacy of the ways schools function.[30] On a more concrete level, we can see the contradictions of the institution in the fact that the school has different ideological obligations that may be in tension. Critical capacities are needed to keep our society dynamic; hence schools should teach students to be critical. Yet critical capacities can challenge capital as

well.[31] This is not an abstract idea. These ideological conflicts permeate our educational institutions and are worked out every day in them.

The emphasis on working out contradictions in the last few paragraphs is not just important for thinking about how schools may be caught in conflicts of accumulation and legitimation not necessarily of their own making. It also provides a fundamental principle for thinking about how ideology itself works, a working that has been a constitutive part of my own and others' inquiries about reproduction.

Just as the school is caught in contradictions that may be very difficult for it to resolve, so too are ideologies filled with contradictions. They are not coherent sets of beliefs. It is probably wrong to think of them as only beliefs at all. They are instead sets of lived meanings, practices, and social relations that are often internally inconsistent. They have elements within themselves that see through to the heart of the unequal benefits of a society and at one and the same time tend to reproduce the ideological relations and meanings that maintain the hegemony of dominant classes.[32] Because of this, ideologies are contested; they are continually struggled over. Since ideologies have both "good and bad sense" within them, people need to be won over to one side or the other, if you will. Particular institutions become the sites where this struggle takes place and where these dominant ideologies are produced. The school is crucial as one of these sites.

Here it is not just the institution that is important. Actors (real people) must elaborate dominant ideologies. As Gramsci—one of the most influential figures in the analysis of the relationship between culture and economy—notes, this has been one of the prime tasks of "intellectuals," spreading and making legitimate dominant ideological meanings and practice, attempting to win people over and create unity on the contested terrain of ideology.[33] Whether we accept it or not, educators are in the structural position of being such "intellectuals" and, therefore, are not isolated from these ideological tasks (though many of them may struggle against it, of course). Again Gramsci's insights are helpful. The control of the cultural apparatus of a society, of both the knowledge preserving and producing institutions and the actors who work in them, is essential in the struggle over ideological hegemony.

All of these general comments about how recent scholarship has looked at ideology and reproduction raise some exceptionally complex issues, of course. Reproduction, the state, legitimation, accumulation, contradiction, ideological hegemony, base/superstructure, all of these are strange concepts to a field involved in building efficient and neutral methods. Yet if we are to take seriously the political nature of education and curriculum and the

unequal benefits and results of schooling,[34] they are essential. By and large, then, if we conceive of the internal qualities of schools and the knowledge found within them to be intricately connected to relations of domination, what is it that the use of these concepts entails in an analysis of schools and curriculum?

In his discussion of the various ways Marxists have looked at schooling (and these ways are not all alike; they *do* differ radically),[35] Stuart Hall captures the essence of part of the approach taken by those of us who have been influenced by this scholarship, and in particular by the original work of Gramsci. A quote from one of his longer passages summarizes some of the background of this position rather clearly.

> [This position] attributes the fundamental determination in securing the "complex unity" of society to the relationships of the economic structure, but regards the so-called "superstructures" as having vital, critical "work" to do in sustaining, at the social, cultural, political, and ideological levels, the *conditions* which enable capitalist production to proceed. Furthermore, it regards the superstructures as having the role, above all, of drawing society into "conformity" with the long-term requirements and conditions of a capitalist economic system (for example, in the work of Gramsci). This suggests that, though the superstructures are more determined than determining, the topography of base/superstructures is not so important as the relatively autonomous "work" which the superstructures perform for the economic structure. This is regarded as difficult, contested "work," that operates through opposition and antagonism—in short, by means of class struggle which is present at all the various levels of society—where simple correspondences are hard to come by. Far from assuming a simple recapitulation between the various structures of society, this approach *sees* the "work" which the *superstructures* [like schools] perform as necessary precisely because, on its own, the economic system cannot ensure all the conditions necessary for its own expanded reproduction. The economic system cannot ensure that society will be raised to that general level of civilization and culture which its advanced system of production needs. Creating an order of society around the fundamental economic relationships is just as necessary as production itself; the relations of production alone cannot "produce" such a social order. Here, then, the relationship is not one of correspondence but of coupling—the *coupling* of two distinct, but interrelated and interdependent spheres. Gramsci is one of the outstanding theorists of this position. The nature of the "coupling" envisaged is described in Gramsci's phrase, the "structure-superstructure complex." Again, simplifying, we may call this the paradigm of *hegemony*.[36]

While some of these points should be and are currently being widely debated, notice what is being argued here. "Superstructural" institutions

such as schools have a significant degree of relative autonomy. The economic structure cannot ensure any simple correspondence between itself and these institutions. However, such institutions, with the school among them, perform vital functions in the recreation of the conditions necessary for ideological hegemony to be maintained. These conditions are not imposed, though. They are and need to be continuously rebuilt on the field of institutions like the school. The conditions of existence of a particular social formation are rebuilt through antagonistic relations (and sometimes even through oppositional forms, as we shall see later on in this book and as I discuss my own genesis through these concepts and positions in this chapter). Above all, hegemony doesn't simply come about; it must be worked for in particular sites like the family, the workplace, the political sphere, and the school.[37] And it is just this process of understanding how hegemony comes about, how it *is* partly produced, through the day to day curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative interactions in schools, that has been my primary concern.

IDEOLOGY AND CURRICULUM AS A FIRST APPROXIMATION

What emerges from this general discussion of the way we might interpret schools? No simple one-way, conflict free, base/superstructure model will do. Contestation is central to reproduction. Even concepts like reproduction may be inadequate. It is easier for me to say this now, and to begin to understand fully the significance of what this perspective articulated by Hall implies today, than it was even three years ago when I was completing the work on *Ideology and Curriculum.*

To be honest, all of these points about reproduction, contradiction, and contestation did not dawn on me all at once; nor was I able to appreciate either how they could be employed or what they might mean. Given my own interest, and that of people like Bowles and Gintis, Bourdieu, Bernstein, and others, in *reproduction*—an interest that was critically important I believe at that particular historical moment, but an interest that at the beginning tended to exclude other elements of what might be happening in schools—these points have had to be struggled with, worked through, and have ultimately been slowly incorporated. At times, this involved (and still does) serious self-criticism of my own and others' previous work, building on and correcting mistakes, and fleshing out what now seems too simple and mechanistic.

Given this painstaking movement away from a focus on simple reproduction by a number of people like myself, in what follows I would like to

employ the development of my own work as a paradigm case both for understanding how the exceptional growth of literature on how such things as, say, reproduction, contradiction, and contestation are accomplished has influenced scholarship that seeks to situate the school within a larger nexus of social relations and for seeing the logic of the arguments I shall make in the later chapters of this book.

In my previous work I focused on the role school curricula played in the creation and recreation of the ideological hegemony of the dominant classes and class segments of our society. In essence, the fundamental problematic that guided my work was the relationship between power and culture. While I was not totally clear on it, I intuitively grasped the fact that culture has a dual form. It is lived experience, developed out of and embodied in the day to day lives and interactions of specific groups. Yet, it also has another characteristic. Here I am referring to the ability of certain groups in society to transform culture into a commodity, to accumulate it, to make of it what Bourdieu has called "cultural capital." in many ways, it seemed to me that cultural capital and economic capital could be thought about in similar ways.[38] Yet both of these senses of culture—commodified and lived—were partly underdeveloped in my original investigations, perhaps because of the debates and issues into which I wanted to intervene.

Much of my analysis of schooling in *Ideology and Curriculum* concentrated on two issues: (1) a debate with liberal theories of curriculum and education in general, by attempting to show what is actually taught in schools and what its ideological effects might be; and (2) a debate within leftist scholarship on education about what schools do.

The first of these issues grew out of my general agreement with individuals like Bowles and Gintis, Althusser, and others that schools are important agencies for social reproduction. Our attempts at reforming these agencies tended to be misguided, in large part because we misrecognized the socio-economic functioning of the institution. Along with these other individuals, I set out to document how this functioning actually went on. The kinds of questions I asked were unlike those that tended to dominate our efficiency-minded field. Rather than asking how we could get a student to acquire more curricular knowledge, I asked a more political set of questions. "Why and how are particular aspects of a collective culture represented in schools as objective factual knowledge? How, concretely, may official knowledge represent the ideological configurations of the dominant interests in a society? How do schools legitimate these limited and partial standards of knowing as unquestioned truths?"[39]

These questions provided the fundamental set of interests guiding my

work. As I mentioned earlier, I was taken with the fact that, in our long history from Bobbitt and Thorndike to Tyler and, say, Popham and Mager of transforming curriculum into only a concern with efficient methods, we had almost totally depoliticized education. Our search for a neutral methodology and the continuing transformation of the field into a "neutral instrumentation" in the service of structurally non-neutral interests served to hide from us the political and economic context of our work. The kind of political/economic scrutiny I was engaged in was very similar in many ways to that being done by Katz, Karier, and Feinberg in the history and philosophy of education, by Bowles and Gintis and Carnoy and Levin in the economics of education, and by Young, Bernstein, and Bourdieu in the sociology of education. While there were similarities, however, there were and are serious disagreements among many of us on the left who examine and act on educational institutions. These disagreements provided the context for the second issue I noted above.

All too much of this kind of neo-Marxist scholarship treated the school as something of a black box, and I was just as dissatisfied with this as I was with the dominant tradition in education. It did not get inside the school to find out how reproduction went on. In many ways, oddly, it was an analogue of the Tyler Rationale in curriculum, in that the focus tended to be scientistic and to place its emphasis on input and output, consensus, and efficient production. The interpretations placed upon the school were clearly different from those of Tyler and the efficiency minded curriculum "experts," yet schools were still seen as taking an input (students) and efficiently processing them (through a hidden curriculum) and turning them into agents for an unequal and highly stratified labor force (output). Thus, the school's major role was in the teaching of an ideological consciousness that helped reproduce the division of labor in society. This was fine as far as it went, but it still had two problems. *How* was this accomplished? Was that *all* schools did?

I spent a good deal of time in *Ideology and Curriculum* attempting to answer these questions. I interrogated schooling using a variety of techniques—historical, economic, cultural, and ethnographic. In the process, it became clear that at least three basic elements in schooling had to be examined. These included: the day to day interactions and regularities of the hidden curriculum that tacitly taught important norms and values; the formal corpus of school knowledge—that is, the overt curriculum itself—that is planned and found in the various materials and texts and filtered through teachers; and, finally, the fundamental perspectives that educators (read here Gramsci's points about the role of intellectuals) use to plan, organize, and

evaluate what happens in schools.[40] Each of these elements was scrutinized to show how the day to day meanings and practices that are so standard in classrooms—while clearly there to help individual children—tended to be less the instruments of help and more part of a complex process of the economic and cultural reproduction of class relations in our society.

One word in this last sentence highlights the question of "Is that all schools do?"—the word *cultural.* Like Bernstein, Bourdieu, and, especially, Gramsci, it was evident to me that schools were cultural as well as economic institutions and examining the reproduction of the social division of labor would not exhaust how schools contributed to the creation of ideological hegemony. Thus, once again the form and content of the curriculum became of great significance if we were to see how cultural domination works and how "unity was created." What the investigators who dealt almost totally with the problem of economic reproduction were neglecting was the culture preserved, transmitted, and rejected within the institution. The way the curriculum was organized, the principles upon which it was built and evaluated, and, finally, the very knowledge itself, all of these were critically important if we were to understand how power was reproduced. Here I meant not just economic power but cultural power as well, though the two are considerably interwoven.[41]

Yet the focus on curriculum and culture still left out one very important aspect of schools, and it is here that I also tried to go beyond the theorists of economic reproduction such as Bowles and Gintis. They attempted to see the school as a place where economically rooted norms, dispositions, and values were taught, something I had also documented in both the ethnography of what is taught in kindergartens and in the analysis of social studies and science curricula reported in *Ideology and Curriculum.* This position tended to see schools and their overt and hidden curriculum as part of a mechanism of *distribution* only. This was all well and good. After all, schools do distribute ideological knowledge and values. However, it neglected an essential factor in what our educational apparatus also does. I wanted to argue that the educational system constitutes a set of institutions that are fundamental to the *production* of knowledge as well. As the reader will see in Chapter 2, this was and is a key element in my argument about how we should interpret education. Schools are organized not only to teach the "knowledge that, how, and to" required by our society, but are organized as well in such a way that they ultimately assist in the production of the technical/administrative knowledge required among other things to expand markets, control production, labor, and people, engage in the basic and applied research needed by industry, and

create widespread "artificial" needs among the population.[42] This technical/administrative knowledge was able to be accumulated. It acted like a form of capital, and, like economic capital, this cultural capital tended to be controlled by and serve the interests of the most powerful classes in society.[43] Economic and cultural capital were inextricably linked. The kinds of knowledge considered most legitimate in school and which acted as a complex filter to stratify groups of students were connected to the specific needs of our kind of social formation. Schools produced knowledge of a particular kind, then, at the same time as they recreated categories of *deviance* that stratified students. Deviance creation and the production of cultural capital were indissolubly connected.

Thus, I began to see the need to interpret schooling as a system of both production and reproduction. Our analysis of what gets into schools and why, of what counts as legitimate knowledge and values, would be incomplete unless we saw the complex and contradictory roles schools play. As some of the "new" sociologists of education argued, schools process both people and knowledge. But the "processing" of knowledge includes more than its differential distribution to different kinds of people, but also its production and ultimate accumulation by those in power.

While all of this may seem horribly abstract, its roots were and are in something much more concrete. As someone who had taught for years at both the elementary and secondary level and who had worked continuously with teachers and administrators as a professor, I was searching for ways of understanding my and their actions. Teachers, for example, blamed themselves as individuals (or their pupils) for the failures of students, just as I did. It more and more, however, seemed to me *not* to be a question of the amount of effort teachers and curriculum workers put in. Indeed, few groups of people work harder and in more uncertain, difficult, and complex circumstances than teachers and administrators. Rather, it became clearer that the institution itself and the connections it had to other powerful social agencies generated the dominant rules and practices of educators' lives. Blaming teachers, castigating individuals, was less than helpful. Figuring out how and especially why the institution did what it did in ways that went beyond these individual actions, that constrained these actions in ideological and material ways, seemed much more ethical. In this way we could make much better decisions on warranted curricular and pedagogical action. While an understanding of control was but a small step in challenging that control, it was a step I felt was essential if we were ever to see the control for what it was and to begin to realize the differential benefits—both economic and cultural—that resulted from it.

At the same time, as I became even more aware myself of these differential benefits and the structures in which education found itself, it altered my own practice politically. The analysis, while still deficient in ways I was beginning to grasp, was compelling in other ways. It required an even deeper involvement in socialist politics and action at a variety of levels, thus, ultimately acting back on my original analysis. My original work did not seem to "theorize" adequately the kinds of things either myself or the groups of workers, parents, and progressively oriented teachers with whom I was working were doing. This became all the more pressing.

CONFLICT AND CONTRADICTION IN LABOR AND CULTURE

After reading the prior section of this chapter, concerning simple reproduction theories and their problems, it is probably clear to you that part of the problem was the very fact that the dominant metaphor behind most of the analysis that went into *Ideology and Curriculum* was the idea of reproduction. I had broadened it to include cultural as well as economic considerations, and I had argued for a notion of the school as a productive, as well as reproductive, apparatus. However, the orientation here still remained at too functional a level. It saw schools, and especially the hidden curriculum, as successfully corresponding to the ideological needs of capital; we just needed to see how it was really accomplished. What was now more obviously missing in my formulations at this time was an analysis that focused on contradictions, conflicts, mediations and especially resistances, as well as reproduction. For while I had argued against mechanistic base/superstructure models where economic form totally determines cultural form and content, and while I wanted to show that the cultural sphere had some degree of relative autonomy, I had a theoretically underdeveloped notion of determination. It was a notion that led me to drift back to a logic of functional correspondence between what schools taught and the "needs" of an unequal society and one that could not fully account for what else might be going on.

In struggling with this problem, my colleague Erik Olin Wright's work on the nature of determinations became quite helpful. He identified a number of basic modes of determination, some of which indicated a situation where an institution or a practice simply reproduced a given ideology or social order. But he also showed a good deal more could be going on. There could be meanings and practices that contradicted the overt—and covert interests of a dominant class. There were important "institutions"—

such as the state—that mediated the interests of capital. And, most importantly, there could be concrete actions and struggles, though sometimes not conscious ones, by real groups of human actors that existed and which might be both mediating and transforming existing structures and meanings in significant ways.[44]

I began to realize that functionalist accounts of the hidden curriculum—accounts that sought to demonstrate both that students, like workers, were effectively socialized and that the power of technical/administrative forms used by capital was unchallenged—were part of the very process of ideological reproduction I wanted to struggle against. This meant that I had to examine two areas—resistances at both the school and the workplace. If Wright (as well as my own personal experience) was correct, then I should be able to find contradictory processes at work in these institutions, not only a correspondence between what industry wants and what goes on. And these contradictory processes should be exacerbated as the structural crisis unfolds.

This growing awareness of the way contestation and resistances operated, and my own political work with people involved in factories, schools, and offices, led me to examine the rapidly growing research on the day to day control of labor. Something quickly became rather apparent. When one examines the labor process, the actual life of men and women in our offices and factories, it becomes clear that what is found is a more complex picture than one has been led to expect from the literature on the hidden curriculum where simple correspondences between the school and the economy emerge in some straightforward fashion. This complexity is quite important since the truth of correspondence theories is dependent upon the accuracy of their view of the labor process. Rather than finding workers at all times being guided by the cash nexus, by authority, by expert planning, and by the norms of punctuality and productivity, however, the actual organization and control of the labor process illuminates the extent to which workers at all levels often resist and engage in action that is rather contradictory. A quote from Chapter 3 will give a sense of my later argument.

> Rather than the labor process being totally controlled by management, rather than hard and fast structures of authority and norms of punctuality and compliance, one sees a complex work culture. This very work culture provides important grounds for worker resistance, collective action, informal control of pacing and skill, and reasserting one's humanity.... Men and women workers seem engaged in overt and informal activity that is missed when we talk only in reproductive terms.

Clearly, then, workers resist in subtle and important ways. They often

contradict and partly transform modes of control into opportunities for resistance and maintaining their own informal norms which guide the labor process. Whatever reproduction goes on is accomplished not only through the acceptance of hegemonic ideologies, but through opposition and resistances. We should remember here, though, that these resistances occur on the terrain established by capital, not necessarily by the people who work in our offices, stores, and industries.

We need also to remember a point I noted earlier, one that I shall argue in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4. These informal cultural resistances, this process of contestation, may act in contradictory ways that ultimately tend to be reproductive. By resisting and establishing an informal work culture that both recreates some sense of worker control over the labor process and rejects a good deal of the norms to which workers are supposedly socialized, workers may also be latently reinforcing the social relations of corporate production. Yes, they can partly control the skill level and pacing of their work, but they do not really impinge on the minimal requirements of production; nor do they effectively challenge the "rights" of management. Resistances on one level may partially reproduce the lack of control on another.

All of these analyses of life in our workplaces were of no small import to me. My work on "the other side of the hidden curriculum," on what the labor process actually looked like, had given me a considerable amount of insight into the way oppositional cultural forms developed in day to day life. My interest in ideology and the relative autonomy of culture remained strong, for if resistance and contestation were real, then they could be employed for serious structural change as well. They could be used to "win" people to the other side, if you will. Base/superstructure models were clearly too limiting here both theoretically and politically, and I was going beyond them in some important ways now. My attempts to go further—to deal with culture as well as economy more seriously, to articulate the principles of knowledge production as well as reproduction—were also stimulated by something else, however. A significant amount of progress was being made on the very topic of cultural production and reproduction, especially by Marxist ethnographers.

Recent ethnographic investigations, in particular those carried out by people such as Paul Willis at The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, provided critical elements that enabled me to apply some of what I had learned about the labor process to the school. Willis and others demonstrated that rather than being places where culture and ideologies are imposed on students, schools are the *sites*

where these things are produced. And like the workplace, they are produced in ways that are filled with contradiction and by a process that is itself based on contestation and struggle.[45] Once again resistance and the importance of lived culture came to the fore. The general points I laid out in my earlier discussion about reproduction were now no longer mere abstractions. The heritage of mechanistic perspectives was now being pushed aside some more.

These ethnographic investigations helped make it abundantly plain that there was no mechanistic process where the external pressures from an economy or the state inexorably mold schools and the students within them to the processes involved in legitimation and in the accumulation of economic and cultural capital. Students themselves have power based on their own cultural forms. They act in contradictory ways, ways that both support this reproductive process and partially "penetrate" it.[46] As my discussion of some of the major literature on class and cultural resistances in Chapter 4 will show, groups of working-class students often expressly reject the world of the school. This resistance will be filled with contradictions and will generate, in part, attempts by the state to intervene in times of intense social and ideological upheaval.

Besides Willis's work, other studies in the United States showed similar things. For example, Robert Everhart's ethnography of junior high school students illuminates how these predominantly working-class youths spend a large amount of their time "goofing off" and recreating cultural forms that give them some degree of power in the school setting.[47] While these students do not totally reject the formal curriculum, they give the school only the barest minimum work required and try to minimize even those requirements. These students, like the lads in Willis's work, resisted. They gave only what was necessary not to endanger the possible mobility some of them might have. Yet, they already "knew" that this was only a possibility, one that was not guaranteed at all. Most of them would, in fact, remain within the economic trajectories established by their parents. The elements of self-selection, of cultural forms of resistance, that both reproduced and contradicted the "needs" of the economic apparatus, all of this demonstrated the relative autonomy of culture. It also provided a critical element in any serious evaluation of what schools do. For without getting inside the school, without seeing how and *why* students rejected the overt and hidden curriculum, and without linking this back to non-mechanistic conceptions of reproduction and contradiction, we would be unable to comprehend the complexity of the work that schools perform as sites of ideological production.[48]

The notion of a specifically Marxist ethnography was very significant here. For unlike vulgar representations that look for the imprint of economic ideology on everything, a more sophisticated approach would see ideology differently. It was not a form of false consciousness "imposed" by an economy. Rather, it was part of a lived culture that was a result of the material conditions of one's day to day practices. It was a set of meanings and practices that indeed did have elements of good sense as well as reproductive elements within it. And because it had these elements of good sense, just as in the case of the workers whom I had examined, that made it objectively possible to engage in activity centered on political education that would challenge the ideological underpinnings of the relations of patriarchy, dominance, and exploitation in the wider society. The objective possibility of political education is something to which I shall return in later chapters.

As all of this was going on, as I began to make much better sense of how a more refined conceptual framework could help me understand the political and cultural practices I was seeing (and engaging in), I began to realize that I now could also begin to answer more coherently even some of the more traditional questions that plagued education. If I wanted to understand why our reform efforts often failed, why even our most creatively designed curricula seemed not to be able to reach many of the most "disadvantaged" students, the research tools and conceptual framework that emerged from Marxist oriented ethnographies provided major insights. We were much closer to understanding this fully because of these studies of resistance, contestation, and lived culture.

EDUCATION AND THE STATE

The original stimulation I had received from Wright on contradictory processes and institutions that mediate economic pressures and which have their own needs, needs that may not be totally reproductive of the interests of capital, pointed me to an area that provided an ideal counterpart to my focus on the creation of ideological hegemony and the relative autonomy of culture. This was the political sphere, the state, and its own interaction with ideology and economy. The state became an essential ingredient in my analysis as I began to realize that the power, amount, and scope of state regulation of and intervention into the economy and the entire social process tends to increase in part as a function of the "gradual unfolding of the process of capital accumulation," of the need for consensus and popular support of this process, and the accompanying

continuous "declassing" of people by reorganizing political and legal discourse around individuals as economic agents,[49] among others. Hence, there was a dynamic interplay between the political and economic spheres which was found in education. While the former was not reducible to the latter—and, like culture, it had a significant degree of relative autonomy—the role the school plays *as a state apparatus* is strongly related to the core problems of accumulation and legitimation faced by the state and a mode of production in general?[50]

It seemed odd to me that we had so thoroughly ignored the state in education, except for some predominantly liberal research on the "politics of education."[51] After all, the mere recognition that approximately one-sixth of the labor force in the United States is employed by the state,[52] and that teaching itself is a form of work that will respond to changes in the over-all conditions of state intervention in the labor process, should make us sit up and take notice of it in all of our discussions surrounding education in the first place. This is especially the case if we are interested, as I was, in the building and rebuilding of hegemonic ideologies through state apparatuses like the school.

It became considerably more clear to me that the notion of hegemony is not free floating. It is in fact tied to the state in the first place. That is, hegemony isn't an already accomplished social fact, but a process in which dominant groups and classes "manage to win the active consensus over whom they rule."[53] As a part of the state, education, then, must be seen as an important element in attempting to create such an active consensus. Linkages to my earlier concerns became readily apparent. First, the literature on the state enabled me to go further in my arguments against the dominant theories of education, theories that acted as if education was an essentially neutral enterprise.

Just as importantly, however, the investigations on the state let me deepen my arguments against some of the other figures on the left who seemed to be still relatively economistic. Unlike them, I believed that the fact that education is an aspect of the state and is an active agent in the process of hegemonic control should not cause us to assume that all aspects of curriculum and teaching are reducible to the interests of a dominant class.[54] Like most aspects of liberal theories, this assumption too was simply incorrect. The state itself is a site of conflict among classes and class segments, and among gender and racial groups as well. Because it *is* the site of such conflict, it must either force everyone to think alike (a rather difficult task that is beyond its power and would destroy its legitimacy) or generate consent among a large portion of these contending groups. Thus, to maintain its own legitimacy the state

needs gradually but continuously to integrate many of the interests of allied and even opposing groups under its banner.[55]

This involves a continual process of compromise, conflict, and active struggle to maintain hegemony. The results, therefore, are not a simple reflection of the interests of an economy or dominant classes. Even reforms proposed to alter both the way schools are organized and controlled and what is actually taught in them will be part of this process. They too will be part of an ideological discourse that reflects the conflicts within the state and attempts by the state apparatus both to maintain its own legitimacy and that of the surrounding process of accumulation.

This had important implications for my analysis of schools and the day to day curricular and pedagogical activity that goes on within them. It meant that I had a better way of understanding why these curricular and teaching practices are never the result of "mere" imposition; nor are they generated out of a conspiracy to, say, reproduce the conditions of inequality in a society. The fact that exactly the opposite is the case, that they will be guided by an urge to help and make things better, can be understood if we recognize that only in this way can various social interests *be* integrated within the state. By integrating varied ideological elements from differing and often contending groups around its own unifying principles, consensus can be gained[56] and the sense that practices based on these hegemonic principles actually help these contending groups can be maintained.

How is it that the state is able to appear as a set of "neutral institutions" acting in the general interest?[57] The most effective hegemonic strategy seems to be "to integrate popular democratic and economic corporate claims into a programme that favours state intervention in the interests of accumulation."[58] That this is exactly the strategy being employed currently will become very clear in my discussions of the state's contradictory role in accumulation and maintaining hegemonic social relationships in Chapters 2, 4, and 5. There we shall see how the school is a site where the state, economy, and culture are interrelated and how many of the current reforms being proposed and curriculum innovations now in place "reflect" these interrelations.

IDEOLOGY AND CURRICULUM FORM

So far I have talked about the state, the labor process, and the hidden and overt curriculum in two sites. I have described my own realization of how ideologies work in contradictory ways in both the workplace and the school. At the same time, I have argued that the usual ways the left has

examined these sites have tended to be somewhat limited. Even given the movement of my own thinking over the last years, we should be careful, however, not to overstate the case against reproduction metaphors. For I do not want to imply that the logic and ideology of capital do not enter into the school and its curriculum in some very powerful ways. In fact, as will become clear in Chapter 5, such a logic is having a profound impact on day to day school practice. In order to understand this, we need to return to the idea of culture not as a lived experience, but as commodified form. This provides another opening into how schools act as sites of ideological production and reproduction.

Throughout my inquiries over the past decade, I have maintained that if we are to understand fully how ideologies work in schools we need to look at the concreta of day-to-day school life. Currently of immense import here is the way the logic and modes of control of capital are entering the school through the *form* the curriculum takes, not only in its content. And this relationship between form and content will be critical in my analysis of reproduction and contradiction here.

If we are to understand why some of these notable things are happening in schools and to our lives inside and outside of them, we need to comprehend the historical progression of our social formation. Without being reductive, we do need to understand changes and crises in our economy and in the ideological form and content that are in part both generated by it and act upon it. Curricular knowledge once again became rather significant for me in this regard.

It is important to interrogate two aspects of curriculum. The first concerns the content itself. What is there? Just as crucially, what is missing? In Macherey's words, thus, one interrogates the silences of a text to discover ideological interests at work.[59] Following Raymond Williams, I have called this analysis of the actual stuff of the curriculum the "selective tradition.[60]

The second aspect to be examined is the form. How is the content, the formal culture, put together? What is going on at the level of the organization of the knowledge itself? Let me provide an example here, one that will be considerably deepened later on. For a variety of economic, political, and ideological reasons, a large amount of curricula in the United States is organized around individualization. That is, no matter what the specific content of the mathematics, social studies, science, reading, and so forth, it is put together in such a way that students often work at individual skill levels, on prespecified individual "worksheets," on individual tasks. Take one of the most popular sets of reading curricula, for instance, that manufactured by Science Research Associates (a subsidiary of IBM), the SRA Reading Kit.

Here, students are given tests to establish appropriate skill levels; they are individually placed at a specific color-coded level; and they then proceed through the standardized sequence of material, working on individual stories and "skill builders."

Notice the form itself. Most important pedagogic, curricular, and evaluative activity are designed in such a way that students only interact with the teacher on a one to one level, not with each other (except during "breaks"). The teacher "manages" the system. This both increases efficiency and helps discipline. One could ask, what could be wrong with that? This is the wrong question if one is interested in ideological reproduction and how the school responds to crisis. A better question is, what is the ideological coding in the material? How does it organize our experiences in ways similar to the passive individual consumption of prespecified goods and services that have been subject to the logic of commodification so necessary for continued capital accumulation in our society?

Perhaps an example taken from another element of the cultural apparatus of a society, and one that aided me quite a bit in my own initial understanding of these questions, may be helpful here. It is taken from Todd Gitlin's provocative examination of how the formal device of prime-time television entertainment encourages viewers to experience themselves as anti-political, privately accumulating individuals. He points to the following characteristics as important in the reassertion of hegemony. The "standard curve of narrative action" where standard characters deal with a new version of a standard situation, the thickening of the plot where "stock characters" show their standard stuff, the resolution of the plot over twenty-two or fifty minutes, all of these regularities of the repeated formula are "performances that rehearse social fixity." They "express and cement the obduracy of a social world impervious to substantial change."[61]

These formula are not isolated, however. They need to be seen in relation to temporal structures and commercialization. For, by organizing the "free time" of individuals into end-to-end interchangeable units, television "extends, and harmonizes with, the industrialization of time. Media time and school time, with their equivalent units and curves of action, mirror the time of clocked labor . . . ." In this way, free time is industrialized, duration is homogenized, and, given the formula employed, even personal excitement is routinized by the standard plot structure used. The form of this aspect of the cultural apparatus is the important component here.[62]

Even the form of the social experience of the actual viewing process contributes to the recreation of ideological experience. One sits isolated as a viewer, often only engaging in social interaction during commercials.[63]

Commercials determine the times at which things happen in the plot. The very fact that commercials are so dominant speaks to the consequences on the contours of our consciousness over all. They play a large part in getting us "accustomed to thinking of ourselves and behaving as a *market* rather than a *public,* as consumers rather than citizens."[64] Notice that this extended example of the ideological impact of one element, television, of the larger cultural apparatus did not look at the content—what happened, whose perspectives were presented, and the ideological role of the selective tradition at work in this. While these issues are of critical importance, we miss what is just as important if we neglect the form that the content takes—its organization of our meanings and actions, its temporal sequences and interpersonal implications, its integration with the processes of capital accumulation and legitimating ideologies. Exactly these kinds of questions need to be asked about curriculum form and social interaction in schools as well. For it is on the grounds of the dominant curricular forms that control, resistance, and conflict are worked out. And it is on this very same field that the structural crisis becomes visible and questions about the hidden curriculum, state intervention, and the control of the labor process are integrated at the level of school practice.

In order to see the implications of these arguments fully we need to remember a point that was implied in my brief discussion of the state. Schools are places of teachers' *work*. This is something we tend quite regularly to forget. Yet alterations in curricular form like those I have been discussing also have a profound impact on such work. They embody a fundamentally changed relationship between a person's labor, skills, consciousness, products, and other people. At the same time, by stressing these changes as I shall in Chapter 5—and they will be just as contradictory as the changes we see today in any aspect of the labor process in general—we shall have a key to laying out possible actions progressive groups may take within schools and among teachers. This dual realization—that new curricular forms engender both new modes of control and possibilities for political action—opens up a door to our understanding of what happens in schools and provides us with a key building block in our analysis. How? Certain principles based in large part on the technical/administrative knowledge originally produced by the educational apparatus have guided the organization and control of places where people work in corporate economies. These principles have entered not only into the shop-floor in factories but have found their way more and more in all aspects of the productive apparatus of society. Blue- and white-collar labor, manual and mental labor, selling and assembling, and, yes, even teaching, have slowly but surely been incorporated into the logics of these

forms of organization and control. In ways that are not inconsequential, teaching is a labor process, one that, to be sure, has its own specific characteristics that are not reducible to working on a shop-floor, an insurance company office, or as a salesperson, but one that is a labor process none the less. And it is on the terrain of the school as a workplace that the technical/administrative knowledge that was once produced by the school enters back into the school to control and rationalize the work of both teachers and students.

In fact, as I shall argue, because of the current structural crisis in the economic, political, and cultural spheres of social life, the primary elements used to organize and control the labor process in our society—among them the separation of mental from manual labor, the divorce of conception from execution, the logic of deskilling and controlling a work-force—all are being reconstituted in complex and paradoxical ways in schools at the present time. And like other workplaces and cultural settings, these elements are subject to acceptance and rejection at one and the same time. By returning to the day to day life of schools to examine this in Chapter 5, we can complete the circle of our inquiries into how schools both reproduce and contradict the "needs" of our unequal society.

III
THE CIRCULATION OF TECHNICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE

This chapter has, of course, only introduced what are clearly complicated issues of the state, class, culture, reproduction, resistance, contradiction, knowledge, and schooling. However, my prior claims about curricular form and its relationship to the labor process of teaching returns us to the conceptual point at which I began the middle section of this chapter, the school as a productive, as well as reproductive, apparatus.

One strand weaves its way through these arguments—the importance of technical/administrative knowledge and its accompanying ideology. The school helps produce it as a form of "capital"; it is found and contested in the workplace as a form of control; it enters the state and the school. Each of these sites transforms it until it reenters the school and is reproduced and produced again. Thus, a continuous yet contradictory process can be envisioned.

I want to make this point more clearly since it can act as a summary of many of the arguments I have made and will make here. Technical/administrative knowledge can be thought of as having a circulation as it is embodied in the economy, the state, and the school.

In many ways, this can be thought of as something of a circular process. Technical/administrative knowledge is produced over the long term in and through the organization of education. As we shall see in Chapter 2, its accumulation for use by those in power (through patent laws, hiring practices, credentialing processes, and so forth) is a strong tendency in our social formation. These forms of knowledge, or "cultural capital"—and the ideology of rationalization that both supports and is in part engendered by it—is employed in the economy and *increasingly in the state* as the state itself becomes caught in the larger crisis of capital accumulation and legitimation. In both the workplace and the school, however, workers and students mediate, transform, and even reject parts of it. In the process, it is altered somewhat but its circulation still spreads as the crisis continues. Hence, through a set of complex interconnections, the logic of capital embodied in technical/administrative knowledge returns to its source—the educational apparatus—as a form of control.

This is complicated, but so are the ties between the three spheres I have noted. If it were simple, the economic conditions that I described earlier which are now being faced by so many people might themselves be dealt with simply. Of course, they are not. For our problems are as much due to a lack of understanding of the connections among economy, culture, and politics, as they are due to both a lack of will and because of the objective conditions that make it so hard to build and maintain a large movement of working men and women to change them.

Now that I have laid out the growth of the conceptual, and political, framework I have employed here and prefigured in general my basic arguments, let me be a bit more specific about the content of each of the coming chapters.

Chapter 2 begins with culture as commodity by pointing out a number of the limitations of current economistic theories of what schools do, including some of the more respected Marxist approaches. In it, I deal with the dialectical interplay between the school as a productive and reproductive apparatus. By focusing on culture as a commodity, the ties between the school's function in assisting in the production of the technical/administrative knowledge needed for capital accumulation and the control of labor on the one hand, and the school's role in stratifying a student population and "creating" deviance on the other, are documented.

Chapters 3 and 4 turn to culture as lived experience and the contradictory role such a lived culture performs. Here, we shall see it as a fundamental grounding for the possible development of resistance and alternatives to the ideological practices of capital and the state at the same

time that it partly reproduces the conditions of existence of these very same ideological practices.

More specifically, Chapter 3 will again challenge the dominant economistic theories of reproduction, especially those concerned with the hidden curriculum. It will examine the labor process at the workplace itself by following up on Erik Olin Wright's points about the possibility of nonreproductive activity going on in particular sites. The focus will be on the day to day lives of *workers* in shops, factories, offices, and elsewhere. Rejection and contradiction, as well as reproduction, will be its guiding themes.

Chapter 4 will go further into my account of the processes of rejection, mediation, and transformation. There I shall analyze the way class- and gender-related cultural forms are lived out in many *students'* everyday patterns of interaction. It will continue my documentation of the exceptional importance of going beyond simplistic base/superstructure theories by showing the relative autonomy of culture. The connections and contradictions between the economic and the cultural/ideological will be apparent. At the same time, I shall link these connections and contradictions back to the crisis they cause in the state by scrutinizing the reforms currently being proposed to enable the school to respond more adequately to the structural crisis—such as tax credits and voucher plans. Finally, as in the previous chapters, suggestions for action will be made.

Chapter 5 returns us to the commodification process where technical/administrative knowledge reenters the school. Here cultural form and content is exhibited in its reified existence as the state and capital attempt to control both the content of what is taught, the form of its transmission, and the labor process of teaching. The chapter will analyze the curricular form now increasingly being found in schools and will relate it back to the arguments made previously about the labor process. In essence, Chapter 5 will enable us to see one of the major ways the state can integrate popular democratic and corporate claims together so that both legitimation and accumulation can be fostered.

Chapter 6 will summarize the arguments made and will examine the prospects for the success of progressive action in both the school and the surrounding institutions. Such progressive action is even more necessary today, for the shadow of the crisis is widening.