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TOWARD A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY:
THE LIMITS OF TRADITIONAL MARXIST
THEORY IN EDUCATION

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

Toward a Critical Pedagogy: The Limits of Traditional Marxist Theory in Education

Master of Arts, 1998

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The intent is to examine some of the theoretical limitations of educational analyses which primarily focus on the capitalist economy and its dominance over the education system. The author selects two traditional Marxist analyses - Nicos Poulantzas, and Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis - to develop a framework of capitalist development and show how the education system is ultimately linked to this process. By examining the imperative connections between the capitalist economy and the education system, the author questions if these predominantly economic analyses thoroughly provide for a realistic grounding for developing alternative structures through which the education system can be reformed. The author refers to Michael Apple to suggest that although theories aimed at uncovering economic connections are essential to understanding how the education system operates, they fall short in developing a critique of what occurs within the school itself. It is with an understanding of both the external connections between the school and the economy as well as the internal tensions within the school that educational reforms aimed at correcting some of the implications of capitalist development can be reached.
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INTRODUCTION

Despite current neo-liberal trends aimed at improving the ‘quality of education,’ these measures may be moving in the wrong direction. Recent educational developments have focused on such initiatives as: centralized control of the educational system, standardized curricula, as well as standardized testing and evaluation. These agendas obviously coincide with philosophies that suggest that if we allow students to compete on identical playing fields we will therefore have ‘equality of opportunity’ in our schools (i.e., every student will have the same opportunity to advance within the education system). However, maintaining and creating standards, whether they be in curricula, testing, or in the knowledge that is transmitted to the student, must be closely scrutinized if we are to understand what these standards produce within schools.

In light of current government proposals that claim to be supporting ideals aimed at improving student achievement, these aims do not adequately deal with how the school functions within society. In other words, current neo-liberal thought in education does not concern itself with how the school selects, trains and allocates students for specific positions within society. The school system is a facilitator of social control as it ensures that our current social order is reproduced by distributing the student population into the workforce. Therefore, acknowledging that education reform is at the top of many government agendas in the industrialized world, reforms which consider the relation
among the school, the state, and the economy must be brought up-to-date to best anticipate the direction in which we should be moving.

Although the capitalist economy depends upon social and economic disparities for its growth and reproduction, capitalist ideology attempts to legitimize these relations through emphasizing strategies for social mobility. Opportunities for advancing among social hierarchies do exist within the capitalist system; however, focusing on these opportunities distracts from issues, such as class reproduction, that need to be addressed if we are to begin to understand the role of the education system within the capitalist economy.

The education system will be isolated as an illustration of how the capitalist state maintains its dominance as well as how the education system has potential to play a corrective role in the capitalist structure. This is to suggest that even though the future of capitalism remains strong in North America as governments continue to encourage an increasing amount of private enterprise rather than public ownership, the education system can be used to reduce existing inequalities within this current political structure.

The function of the education system in capitalist society can be viewed in one of two ways:

1. As an avenue for social and economic mobility.
2. As a process which reproduces the social and economic relations of the capitalist system.
As mentioned above, views concerned with social and economic opportunity do not adequately provide us with the necessary tools needed to identify how the capitalist system reproduces itself (i.e., understanding movement among social classes does not imply an understanding of how social classes are maintained and reproduced). Therefore, this first view of education will not be addressed. It is on the second view, rather, that this thesis will focus, to identify the role education plays in capitalist reproduction and how changes to the current education system may provide opportunity for alternatives aimed at reducing existing disparities in society.

Although crucial in helping to discern the position of the education system in the capitalist system, a purely economic analysis (see: Poulantzas 1975, Bowles and Gintis 1976, 1980) provides for an incomplete understanding of what is created within the school itself (i.e., how is: “What is taught?” related to: “Who succeeds?”). In other words, economic analyses, which concentrate primarily on how the education system is dependent on the needs of capitalism, do not allow for the education system to respond against capitalist needs and demands. Even though viewed as neutral institutions by some, I will argue that the school is built around political barriers and transmits knowledge and ideas that act in accordance with dominant views and capitalist power structures. However, I will maintain that these political barriers can be dismantled, helping to create an environment in which class reproduction can, at least, be curtailed. I will take Michael Apple’s position as an example:

[Knowledge] is a form of cultural capital that comes from somewhere, that often reflects the perspectives and beliefs of powerful segments of our social collectivity. In its very production and dissemination as a
public and economic commodity - as books, films, materials, and so forth - it is repeatedly filtered through ideological and economic commitments. Social and economic values, hence, are already embedded in the design of the institutions we work in, in the ‘formal corpus of school knowledge’ we preserve in our curricula, in our modes of teaching, and in our principles, standards, and forms of evaluation (Apple 1979, pp. 8-9).

Apple further suggests that we must unpack certain concepts, perceptions, and attitudes which act to define ‘legitimate’ knowledge that is transmitted in our schools. Understanding what constitutes this knowledge will allow for a better analysis of how schools act to maintain and perpetuate cultural, economic, and social relations that materialize in society as a result of the process of schooling. Also, the relations that exist within the school setting, as a result of the dominant nature of the structure and content, must be viewed as corresponding to the unequal relations in the capitalist economy. This is to suggest that, although disguised in both the overt and hidden curriculum (i.e., the values, norms, and attitudes that are passed on to the student directly and indirectly from his/her day-to-day interactions within the school and the underlying meanings within the subject materials), there are definite linkages between the social and economic relations in society and the knowledge transmitted, and not transmitted, to the student. Questions such as: “Who defines this knowledge?” and “Who benefits from this knowledge?” must first be discussed to understand how cultural knowledge is linked to these relations.

This thesis will begin with the premise that the role of schools is to reproduce social and economic inequalities. It will be shown how this reproduction happens as: 1) a state system acting to maintain economic subordination, and 2) as a social institution
acting to maintain and distribute knowledge and culture. What will be of significance to this discussion is how these economic and cultural forms of dominance act and depend on each other to reproduce capitalist relations. Through linking the cultural forces within the school to the economic relations of society, I will begin to uncover some important connections that will identify possibilities aimed at changing the relations that are reproduced within the school. As the title suggests, the purpose of this thesis is to identify the limits of traditional Marxist theory in education. Traditional Marxist theory refers to analyses that deal with the macro-functions of the education system within a capitalist system. In other words, these views primarily deal with the education system as being controlled by the capitalist state and used to further the capitalist agenda. I will argue that these reductionist views are wrong in their intention and fail to acknowledge that schools can exist as autonomous institutions acting to correct existing capitalist relations.

This argument will be organized in the following way: First, a traditional Marxist explanation (re: Poulantzas) of social reproduction will establish a framework through which we can better understand how capitalist relations are perpetuated. Second, an illustration (re: Bowles and Gintis) showing how the education system serves the interests of the capitalist class (i.e., those who depend on unskilled/semi-skilled labour to further profit from the means of production) by producing a surplus of workers. Third, an examination (re: Apple) of the school itself will provide for a more integrated approach to how the knowledge presented within the school curriculum contributes to reproducing dominant relations within society.
In *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (1975), Poulantzas offers an approach that specifically deals with the state and how the state acts to maintain capitalist relations through its apparatuses (i.e., institutions of control such as the judicial and education systems). We begin with his analysis, not only since he is considered to be a key contributor to current debates about the theory of class and class conflict, but also because he stresses the importance of the education system in reproducing class hierarchies. Poulantzas's treatment of social reproduction provides a basis from which education can be analyzed in relation to the state and also allows for a treatment of the capitalist state engaged in contradiction with its apparatuses. This dynamic approach, which locates the education system among certain contradictory relations, allows for it to be examined as a possible counter-force to the existing relations of capitalism (i.e., education system may have capacity to produce relations that do not correspond to capitalist relations).

To provide for specific illustration of the relationship between the education system and the capitalist society, I will provide an analysis that links the economic need of society to the function that the education system provides. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) provide an illustration of the U.S. education system that revolves around a functional approach similar to that of Poulantzas'. However, whereas Poulantzas offers a purely theoretical interpretation of the function of the education system and its role in the reproduction of capitalism, Bowles and Gintis empirically examine the role of education to attempt to show the imperative links between the economy and the school. The fundamental conclusion Bowles and Gintis arrive at is that the school system can do nothing but support the exploitative capitalist class.
In *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), Bowles and Gintis suggest that the education system is a function of capitalist development and responds to needs for surplus workers according to the economic conditions within society. The education system only amends itself according to the needs of the capitalist economy. Therefore, any drastic change to how the education system functions, according to this analysis, necessarily implies a change in the capitalist system. Dissatisfied with the implications of this treatment of education, Bowles and Gintis (1980) present a more dynamic approach that links the education system to the class struggle rather than to the economic base. This new formulation, presented in “Contradiction and Reproduction in Educational Theory,” stresses the contradictions among numerous social functions which act to maintain and reproduce the relations of production rather than their initial base-superstructure interpretation that emphasized the relationship between the school and the state. However, considering their new formulation, Bowles and Gintis still maintain a reductive economic view of the relationship between the school and other social functions, thereby limiting their conclusions to a restructuring of the social/political/economical tensions that exist within the present form of the capitalist economy.

Instead of simply identifying the obvious dominance the capitalist economy has over schools, Michael Apple examines how culture (i.e., language, ideas) plays an integral role in determining what is considered ‘legitimate’ knowledge. This is to suggest that culture can be examined as an autonomous force within the school which acts to reward and sanction students according to their particular social/economic/gender/cultural group.
Apple's primary concern consists of not what education alone does, but rather how it fits into the overall economic and social structure of society and how it relates to gender, race, class and the distribution of power (Apple 1982, p.7). The school curriculum will be briefly examined to provide an illustration of how 'control of knowledge' is related to the social and economic outcomes of the school.

Although traditional Marxist theory can help to uncover some of the contradictions between the education system and the capitalist economy, it does not allow for a critique of the tensions that exist within the school itself. A complete analysis of how the education system reproduces capitalist relations must concern itself with an understanding of both the economic forces that influence the education system (i.e., macro-economic view), as well as the internal cultural forces which act to legitimate relations of inequality. It is through an examination of how conservative trends dominate discourse in schools that we can begin to discuss progressive alternatives that may reduce or eliminate specific social and economic tensions that currently exist.
CHAPTER 1

THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

The process of social reproduction, according to Poulantzas (1975), deals with the relationships among the state, class struggle, and the state apparatuses. Poulantzas's argument emphasizes the effect that class struggle has upon the state apparatuses (i.e., institutions which act to maintain and further the state agenda) and how these apparatuses are internally defined as a result. The state apparatuses do not have 'power' of their own, but rather are dependent upon the nature and change of the class struggle. This suggests that as a result of the changing forms of capitalism, and its subsequent effect on the nature and dynamics of class struggle, the state apparatuses will amend themselves accordingly.

The central purpose of beginning this thesis with an analysis of Poulantzas is to provide an initial framework, within a traditional Marxist analysis of social reproduction, to locate the education system within the capitalist society and identify the role that it plays in maintaining existing relations.

The structure of social classes (i.e., how social classes are defined and represented) must first be examined before beginning the task of uncovering how these social classes are maintained and reproduced. Within Marxist theory, social classes are defined by their economic location in the social structure as well as in their relation to other social classes. Social classes, generally understood, are groupings of social agents which are primarily, but not exclusively, defined by their economic location in the production process (Poulantzas 1974, p. 14). Although the economic sphere plays a predominant role in
determining social relations, this does not imply that it is sufficient in understanding the formation of social classes. When analyzing class structure, one must also consider the impact that both the ideological and political spheres have, along with the economic, in determining social hierarchy. Also, class contradiction and class struggle, both of which are part of the same development, exist as processes which assign the parameters to social classes in society (Poulantzas 1975, p. 14). Social classes, therefore, are not defined in-and-of-themselves but are rather defined as a relation to, or opposition to, other social classes. Specifically, class structure is manifested through the class struggle which is subject to change according to the relations of production dictated by the capitalist system.

Although class determination (i.e., the defined boundaries of the class ideology) is linked to both the class struggle as well as ideological and political processes, it also provides a framework from which objective positions are assigned to individuals within the relations of production against their will (Poulantzas 1975, p. 14). However, class determination, which defines the limits of the class’s struggle and establishes the relational ideology of the class’s interests, must not simply be reduced to an individual’s objective class position. This distinction is important because members within a particular social class may enter into a position that does not fulfill their class interests. In other words, members of a particular social class may enter into positions that reflect a different class ideology; however, according to Marxist theory, this does not change an individual’s class position, due to his/her structured class determination (i.e., even though the economic relations may change, the ideological and political do not). For example, although the job
description of an ‘upper-level’ worker (i.e., a foreman) may include certain bourgeois\(^1\) authoritative duties, his/her class position remains unchanged (i.e., that of a worker) due to the prescribed ideological, political, and economic relations that define his/her social class. Therefore, even though one can work according to an ideology outside of one’s corresponding class ideology, this does not affect one’s class position.

Poulantzas argues:

To reduce the structural determination of class to class position would be tantamount to abandoning the objective determination of the places of social classes for a ‘relational’ ideology of ‘social movements’ (Poulantzas 1975, p. 16).

Class determination must not simply be understood as the result of economic class struggle, but also as a result of the effects within the political and ideological spheres. To locate a specific class within the economic sphere also implies identifying ideological and political practices specific to that class. For example, working class ideology and political practice would possibly concern itself with revolutionary principles aimed at social change.

Another important aspect within the Marxist framework of social classes is the imperative link to class struggle. Marxism does not concern itself with struggles \textit{within} a particular class but rather concerns itself with the struggles \textit{among} social classes. For example, examining social inequalities within a particular social class (i.e., based on rates of poverty, unemployment), which are \textit{effects} on individuals due to their economic location in society, is unnecessary in reaching one of Marxism’s main objectives: the

\(^1\)This term is used to describe the middle or ruling classes in capitalist society who are assumed to have an interest in maintaining capitalist interests especially in regard to private property and working relations.
abolition of the division of society into classes. Although I will ultimately reject the necessity to wait for such an abolition, this discussion of class analysis and social reproduction will establish some essential connections between the state and the education system.

The analysis of the opposition among social classes, rather than the internal relations within a social class, is paramount to understanding how society is socially and economically structured. Because the emphasis is placed on the relationships among social classes, rather than on the internal dynamics within social groups, it follows that the effects on certain social groups (i.e., income level, social inequality) also play only a minor role in defining social hierarchies. What is of primary importance are the classes in the class struggle.

When interpreting the nature of the class struggle, one must consider strata of society that include more than traditional analyses have involved in the past. These hierarchies have typically included: masters and slaves during the slave mode of production, lords and serfs during the feudal mode of production, and owners and workers in the capitalist mode of production. The central problem in applying these two-tiered approaches is that they present a far too reductive position in attempting to understand a society, or social formation, which is much more complex and dynamic in its social relations (i.e., involves more than two classes and consists of various modes and forms of production). Although no social formation involves only two classes, the two principal classes within any social formation are found in the dominant mode of production (i.e.,
owner and worker in capitalist mode of production) (Poulantzas 1975, p. 22). However, social formations are not merely the grouping together of modes and forms of production:

The social formation in which the class struggle is enacted are the actual sites of the existence and reproduction of the modes and forms of production. A mode of production does not reproduce itself, or even exist, in the pure state, and still less can it be historically periodized as such. It is the class struggle in the social formation which is the motor of history; the process of history has these formations as its locus of existence (Poulantzas 1975, p. 23).

Here Poulantzas suggests that one cannot properly analyze class structure and class struggle by simply analyzing the modes and forms of production. Rather, it is through an analysis of the class struggle between the two fundamental classes within the primary mode of production that we can begin to interpret how other classes have developed around these predominant classes. In capitalist societies, for example, the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has considerable effect on the development of other classes. Also, social classes do not exist independently in relation to each other in one social formation, but exist in relation to other classes within other social formations (i.e., class relations of this formation with those of other formations).

The problem now is to define and address the function of the state apparatuses in order to further develop the problem of how social classes are reproduced.

Poulantzas states:

The principal role of the state apparatuses is to maintain the unity and cohesion of a social formation by concentrating and sanctioning class domination, and in this way reproducing social relations, i.e. class relations. Political and ideological relations are materialized and embodied, as material practices, in state apparatuses (Poulantzas 1975, p. 25).
These state apparatuses include, but are not limited to: the repressive apparatus (i.e., army, police, prisons), the ideological apparatuses (i.e., education, church), the information apparatuses (i.e., press, television), the cultural apparatuses (i.e., theatre, cinema) and the political apparatuses (i.e., bourgeois political parties). Along with the state apparatuses, the economic apparatuses (i.e., the business or factory) also contribute to the economic determination/subordination of social classes.

Because class determination involves both political and ideological relations, as mentioned above, the understanding of social class must consider the relationship between class struggle and these particular apparatuses, and in particular, the state apparatuses:

Social classes and their reproduction only exist by way of the relationship linking them to the state and economic apparatuses; these apparatuses are not simply 'added on' to the class struggle as appendices, but play a constitutive role in it (Poulantzas 1975, p.25).

It is important at this stage to emphasize that the apparatuses exist not as a causal effect of social classes, but as a manifestation of class relations. This approach runs contrary to what is referred to as the 'institutionalist-functionalist' tradition which suggests that it is the apparatuses and institutions which determine social classes.

Since state apparatuses are defined as the materialization of social relations, they do not possess a 'power' of their own (Poulantzas 1975, p.26). Also, the State does not exist independently but is itself a materialization of class conflict. This suggests the following interpretation: First, the economic, political, and ideological apparatuses are not 'neutral' in their function but are controlled by the State (i.e., the State structures these
apparatuses so that the ‘product’ or ‘result’ that is generated from these institutions corresponds to state ideology). For example, according to this interpretation, the State acts to structure the judicial system to ensure that laws support the dominant class. Second, because state control is present in determining the structure of these apparatuses, any radical change in social relations must concern itself with both a change in state power as well as a dramatic overhaul of the apparatuses themselves:

> In the process of a socialist revolution, the working class cannot confine itself to taking the place of the bourgeoisie at the level of state power, but it has also radically to transform (to ‘smash’) the apparatuses of the bourgeois state and replace them by proletarian state apparatuses (Poulantzas 1975, p. 26)

Because state power, defined through the class struggle, controls the functioning of the state apparatuses, the radical transformation of the apparatuses cannot be achieved unless state power has been seized. In other words, the function that certain apparatuses (i.e., education system) have in representing class interests and reproducing social relations depend on state power, and not on what transpires within the apparatuses themselves. It is not, therefore, the materializations within these apparatuses which produce social change, but rather the class struggle which determines the forms of the apparatuses (Poulantzas 1975, p. 27). This approach, which I will ultimately reject, leaves no room for educational reform of any nature within a capitalist system.

The analysis of social class, because it is defined through the class struggle, must therefore concern itself with the process of class struggle, or more precisely, the historical development of class struggle. In other words, class structures are never completely static but rather are continually transformed as a result of the changing nature of the very class
struggles which they determine (Apple 1982, p. 18). As a result, this dynamic perspective of social class reproduction must be approached through an examination which depends not only on reproducing the economic strata, but also on political and ideological relations. This is why it is essential to consider state apparatuses, which contribute to the reproduction of ideological relations, in this treatment of social class reproduction.

One of the most fundamental sectors of state apparatuses is the ideological apparatus, which does not create class divisions, but does contribute to them, thereby perpetuating class reproduction. It must be understood however, that the state apparatuses do not control the class struggle, although they do contribute to class reproduction, but rather it is the class struggle which governs the state apparatuses:

The particular role of the ideological apparatuses in the reproduction of social relations (including relations of production) is in fact of the utmost importance, for it is their reproduction which dominates the process of reproduction as a whole, particularly the reproduction of labour-power and the means of labour (Poulantzas 1975, p. 28).

There are two predominant aspects involved in the extended reproduction of classes. First of all, the places occupied by individuals are reproduced (these places structurally outline the determination of classes) and secondly, individuals themselves are distributed into these places. It therefore can be assumed that the second aspect of reproduction (i.e., into what positions are individuals reproduced and how and when does this happen) is somewhat dependent on the first aspect, that is, what positions are being reproduced and how these positions change through time. In other words, although individuals are being reproduced to occupy certain positions in society, this is of secondary importance when examining social class reproduction:
... the distribution of agents does not depend on their own choices or aspirations but on the reproduction of these places themselves. This is because the principal aspect of class determination is that of their places, and not of the agents that occupy these places (Poulantzas 1975, p. 29).

It has been suggested that it is not the apparatuses which determine and define the class struggle but the class struggle which governs and determines the boundaries of the state apparatuses. The education system is an ideological state apparatus since it imparts, for example, knowledge, opinions and behaviours that coincide with pre-defined dominant ideology. As an ideological state apparatus, the education system does not create, or even change the structure of social classes, but rather it is the struggle (political, ideological, economic) which determines the current effect that the education system produces. As a result, education is also marked with contradictions and opposition. Poulantzas argues that, 'because of this cause-and-effect relationship between class struggle and the effects produced within the state apparatuses, it follows that any radical change within these apparatuses also depends on the change and evolution of class struggle.

It can now be argued that the economic reproduction of social classes does not take precedence over either political or ideological forces which are found within the state apparatuses. It is the class struggle which produces the primary reproduction of social classes, and apparatuses which contribute to their extended reproduction via various political and ideological institutions. Because the primary reproduction of social classes depends on the class struggle, and the class struggle necessarily changes throughout
history as a result of the relations of production, the formation and parameters of these social classes are also subject to change according to the class struggle at that time:

Any given reproduction of the bourgeoisie, of the working class, of the peasant classes, of the old and new petty bourgeoisie, depends on the class struggle in that formation (Poulantzas 1975, p. 30).

This is to suggest that consideration must also be given to the changing structure and corresponding effect that the state apparatuses will be subjected to as a result of this change in class struggle.

One attempt that Poulantzas makes in illustrating how the education system contributes to the extended reproduction of social classes occurs when he distinguishes between mental labour (i.e., employment generally associated with independent and creative aspects of work) and manual labour (i.e., employment generally associated with repetitive, mundane and regimented aspects of work). This distinction, he claims, can only be understood within ideological and political relations, as opposed to economic. This is not to assume that mental/manual divisions do not exist within the economic sphere; they are just not understood as economic relations but as ideological or political. However, these ideological/political apparatuses do not create these divisions between mental and manual labour, but do contribute, in their capitalist structure, to reproducing these forms:

. . . . the reason why the school reproduces within itself the mental/manual labour division is that because of its capitalist nature, it is already situated in an overall context characterized by a division between mental and manual labour; the reproduction of the educational system as an apparatus is also functionally determined by that division (Poulantzas 1975, p. 31).

It is important here to note that ideological apparatuses do not create ideology but do reproduce and perpetuate the existing ideology of the dominant classes (i.e., it is not the
church which creates religion, but religion that perpetuates the church). It is also of importance to understand that it is not just the ideological, political and economic apparatuses that contribute to the extended reproduction of social class, but also the branches of the repressive state apparatuses.

The expression of the repressive apparatuses does not, in the present capitalist form of society, necessarily imply physical force. This dominance rather materializes in forms that maintain and perpetuate the ‘conditions’ of subordination. For example, branches of the repressive apparatus are responsible for the judiciary and prisons which are controlled and maintained based upon the ideology of the ruling classes. This approach typically assumes that laws and punishments are designed and implemented to reward the capitalist classes while sanctioning the subordinate classes. Thus, just as the ideological apparatuses have repressive roles (i.e., children must attend school) the repressive apparatuses maintain the ideology of the dominant classes in society.

Along with the reproduction of social classes, as discussed above, the second aspect of reproduction concerns itself with the reproduction of individuals. This includes both the training of individuals for specific positions in society, and the distribution of these individuals to these places. It is necessary to understand the relations between these two aspects in order to construct a critical response to what is referred to as ‘social mobility.’ Generally, the principal notion behind ‘social mobility’, as defined by dominant ideology, identifies the possibilities of the ‘circulation’ of individuals among hierarchies in society. This necessarily assumes an ‘equality of opportunity’ for individuals to move,
depending on factors such as an individual's ambition, among already defined strata. The problem with this analysis is that the structure of capitalist relations (i.e., social classes) does not change in any fundamental way even if there was a large displacement of people from one class to another. The maintenance of these social classes is a crucial point in understanding the process of reproduction in the capitalist structure.

The education system can be seen to play a dominant role (i.e., in training and distributing students into positions in society) in terms of how this reproduction of individuals is carried out. Although not simply a production unit training students based upon the technical needs of the workplace, the education system acts to subject students to pre-defined dominant ideological and political relations. It must also be emphasized that capitalist classes are not castes in which individuals have no chance of moving among social classes - the task here was not to prove, or even suggest this point. It was intended, however, to show how social reproduction takes place, according to Marxist theory, and how economic, political, and ideological apparatuses play an integral role, governed by class struggle, in contributing to this reproduction. According to Poulantzas, the education system is not simply an instrument of the bourgeoisie as a means to effect its domination over other groups but is the result of struggle between dominant and dominated groups. Due to the subordinate position of the state apparatuses, there is no room for reforming these apparatuses outside of dismantling the capitalist system. This reductive approach, therefore, inhibits the potential for the education system to play a corrective role in capitalist development.
Having discussed some of the important implications within one particular traditional Marxist theory which links the education system to the state and class struggle (i.e., the education system has no 'power' of its own, but simply responds to external contradictions that dictate its function), this discussion will now turn to a specific analysis that is not only similar to Poulantzas's treatment of the education system, but also provides for a clear illustration of how the education system is connected to the capitalist economy in the United States. In *Schooling in Capitalist America*, Bowles and Gintis claim, also from a traditional Marxist frame of reference, that any explanation or proposal for change within the education system must be based on an understanding of the capitalist economy. In other words, education exists, and is called upon, to reproduce the relations of production in society. I will now turn to this analysis.
CHAPTER 2
AN ILLUSTRATION OF A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH
TO EDUCATION

In their initial argument formulated in Schooling in Capitalist America (1976), Bowles and Gintis present an analysis based on the educational system in the United States that is similar to Poulantzas’s theory. This method of analysis suggests that the education system is a function of capitalist development (i.e., changes within the production sector). The education system, which reproduces the relations of production, therefore depends upon changes in production, and amends itself as a result. Any explanation of the schooling process and its functions, according to Bowles and Gintis, depends on understanding the present economy. This analysis will subsequently focus on the fundamental elements of capitalism and its effects on class struggle and development. However, this model does not maintain that the school is a technical training ground, simply producing students according to the needs of the workforce, but rather as a system which molds views and attitudes in students:

To capture the economic import of education, we must relate its social structure to the forms of consciousness, interpersonal behavior, and personality it fosters and reinforces in students (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p. 9).

Bowles and Gintis accept that any attempt in understanding the relationship between education and the capitalist economy must begin with the assumption that schools produce workers. However, they reject traditional theories which suggest that schools simply transmit skills to students, in turn making them more productive workers.
Profit is seen as the 'motor', or drive, behind the capitalist economy. This surplus value is generally produced as a result of the difference in value between the price paid for labour and the value of the goods produced by labour. This production of surplus value primarily depends on: 1) a population of individuals whose sole source of livelihood is the sale of their labour power; 2) the employer who has ownership of the means of production and therefore has control over workers' wages and power over surplus value. Although partly a technical process, Bowles and Gintis propose that capitalist production is also a social process. This implies that workers have their own consciousness aimed at personal aims and satisfaction and are not simply machines involved in the production process. As a social process, employers must act to respond to these personal needs and conditions in order to mediate the tensions that may arise due to the unequal balance of powers.

Through their studies on education in the United States, Bowles and Gintis found that education plays a dual role in the social process where profit is created. Through transmitting social and technical skills, schools act to develop and increase the productive value of students. Also, education is disguised as a neutral playing field acting to reduce the conflicts that exist as a result of the relations of production. This second role of education acts to reproduce the social, political, and economic tensions within society.

This model, which deals with social hierarchy, lends itself to the following interpretation. First, personal development and economic inequality are defined and influenced by power relationships and the market economy. Second, the educational system does not change, in any way, existing inequality or dominant political or social
relations. Education rather reflects and legitimizes social relations through pre-existing structures within the system:

Schools foster legitimate inequality through the ostensibly meritocratic manner by which they reward and promote students, and allocate them to distinct positions in the occupational hierarchy. They create and reinforce patterns of social class, racial and sexual identification among students which allow them to relate 'properly' to their eventual standing in the hierarchy of authority and status in the production process. Schools foster types of personal development compatible with the relationships of dominance and subordinacy in the economic sphere, and finally, schools create surpluses of skilled labor sufficiently extensive to render effective the prime weapon of the employer in disciplining labor - the power to hire and fire (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p.11).

The third implication of linking education to capitalist production is that those within the educational system (i.e., teachers, administrators) do not act intentionally to create these divisions of hierarchy, but rather it is through the correspondence between the workplace and the educational system itself that these divisions are created. In other words, the hierarchy in the workplace is reproduced in the education sector between such positions as: administrator and teacher, teacher and student, student and student. This power of authority in the school, from the administrator at the top of the hierarchy to the student at the bottom, acts to control the student over what he/she learns in a similar fashion to that of the worker in his/her control over what he/she produces. Although this comparison may be somewhat crude in linking the school to the workplace, it is used to establish how authority is used in both situations to monitor and control what transpires within. Motivational tools in the classroom also act in a similar way in the workplace. The student is motivated through short-term rewards such as grades and the threat of
failure rather than through the internal rewards of learning itself, while the worker is rewarded through his/her wages and threatened by the possibility of unemployment.

Fourth, although the educational system generally acts in conformity with dominant groups, and helps to reproduce unequal relations, it does not do this without resistance. The authoritarian and repressive forms of control within the school establishes an environment which allows for rebellion and conflict among students who either reject or fail to understand the dominant ideology presented. These resistances in the educational system reflect conflicts that exist between the education system and society. Precisely, these tensions are fueled by the struggle and contradictions that arise from subordinated groups who believe that the education system can be used to socially and economically advance.

Lastly, Bowles and Gintis emphasize the similarities between the school structure and the job structure. Both the education system and the workplace are responses to economic and political struggles which arise from the process of capital accumulation. Fundamental changes within the education system are thereby dependent, not only on changes within the school system, but also on dramatic changes within the economic structure of society. Bowles and Gintis state:

... the key to reform is the democratization of economic relationships: social ownership, democratic and participatory control of the production process by workers, equal sharing of socially necessary labor by all, and progressive equalization of incomes and destruction of hierarchical economic relationships (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p. 14).
Education reform is a major component in this overall transformation and must be used to allow for students to have full control over their future. In other words, educational reform must concern itself with breaking from the rigid structure currently in place which acts to stream and fragment students into hierarchical relationships.

In developing this link between the economy and the education system, Bowles and Gintis identify the need to understand economic relations in society in order to be in a position to propose educational reform. Although the focus will now briefly shift to an analysis of economic theory in a capitalist market, it must remembered that, according to this proposed analysis, uncovering the economic relations of capitalism is essential to plan how best to reform the educational system.

As mentioned above, the reproduction of capitalism depends on the increasing accumulation of profit. The workplace, where profits are generated through a workforce who sell their labour power at a fraction of the price at which the products they have produced are sold, generates a conflict of interest between the workers and the owners. These conflicts generally revolve around working conditions, treatment of workers, and workers’ wages.

By first dealing with the property and market relations of capitalism, Bowles and Gintis suggest we can come to an understanding of economic domination. Specifically, the unequal ownership of financial and productive resources acts to subject those who have no control over these resources to sell their only productive property (i.e., their
labour power) at a wage set by the owner. This dominant relationship over the worker is further maintained through an abundance of labour in society. This is to suggest that, although workers form the majority within a particular workplace, they have little power to resist due to the threat of unemployment because of a surplus of workers.

It becomes apparent that the model of education presented by Bowles and Gintis in *Schooling in Capitalist America* is similar in certain aspects to that of Poulantzas's analysis. The central argument that runs through both theories suggests that the education system reflects the relations of production and acts to maintain and perpetuate them. As a relation of capitalist inequality, the function of education changes according to the changes within the class struggle. Also, the education system does not exist without contradiction itself, as there are internal conflicts and resistances responding to how it operates and maintains its dominance.

One of the main shortcomings of the analysis presented within *Schooling in Capitalist America* arises from the lack of autonomy granted to the education system (i.e., it is described as a system which primarily depends on and responds to the capitalist market). Also, the argument presented by Bowles and Gintis provides for little understanding of how class conflict within the educational system may influence capitalist production. Instead, they understand the education system simply as a process through which class struggle is mediated:

In supporting greater access to education, the progressive elements in the capitalist class were not so much giving workers what they wanted as giving what would minimize the erosion of their power and privilege.
within the structure of production (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p. 240).

This suggests, along with the following claim, that class conflict within the educational apparatus does little to influence either the curriculum or the structure of the school system:

The evolution of U.S. education over the last century and a half was the result of a compromise - granted an unequal one - between the capitalist class and the very social classes it had unintentionally but nonetheless inexorably created. Though the business interests often struck their compromise under severe duress, and - as we have seen in numerous cases - did not always prevail, they were highly successful in maintaining ultimate control over the administration of educational reform. Working people got more schooling, but the form and content of schooling was more often than not effectively out of their hands (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p. 240).

The second implication of this analysis revolves around the emphasis placed upon the education system as a reproductive tool. This form of reproduction refers specifically to reproducing the labour force through allocating students according to their social class background. In other words, Bowles and Gintis claim that the primary function that education plays is that of reproducing and legitimating social and economic inequality. This reproduction is carried through as a result more of ideological subordination than economically repressive means. This suggests that the school curriculum and the messages it transmits play a more important role than the technical training of students (i.e., to increase the skill level of workers) in how education reproduces the relations of production.

The analysis presented by Bowles and Gintis, which focuses primarily on the capitalist economy, denies any purpose to amendments within the present educational
system without a complete overhaul of the capitalist economy. Bowles and Gintis respond to proposed educational reforms as follows:

Some, like local control of schools, would extend to urban areas some of the privileges of the relatively class-and-race-homogeneous suburbs. At the same time, however, local control would further the fragmentation of working people . . . All would, with hard work, have the effect of improving, to some degree, the future lives and present comforts of our youth. As such, they are desirable indeed. However, we have argued that none, within its own framework, is capable of addressing the major problems facing U.S. society today . . . Only revolutionary reforms have this potential (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p. 262-3).

Any proposal for change in how schools function within the capitalist system, therefore, is a futile attempt since the education system is part of, and controlled by, capitalist interests and dominance.

One clear difference between this argument and that of Poulantzas’s is that, although both suggest that class conflict is reflected in the educational apparatus, Bowles and Gintis do not discuss the effects of this internal conflict or how it could potentially be dysfunctional to capitalist development. In other words, Bowles and Gintis do not discuss how conflicts within the superstructure could possibly act as avenues for revolutionary struggle and change in the capitalist structure. Poulantzas’s theory, on the other hand, allows for alternative approaches within the educational apparatus that would present interests contrary to that of the capitalist economy. Thus, Poulantzas’s view would allow for various stages of conflict within the state apparatuses that would not necessarily correspond to the contradictions that exist within the capitalist relations of production. Bowles and Gintis reject, or at least dismiss, the importance of state apparatuses being used to correct class-based relations within the capitalist economy.
In “Contradiction and Reproduction in Educational Theory” (1980), Bowles and Gintis criticize their earlier work because of the limited conclusions it implied. As noted above, Bowles and Gintis argue in *Schooling in Capitalist America* that the structure of schools change *only* when the relations within the economic base dictate. This necessarily suggests that any educational reform will be limited to the requirements of the capitalist system and will remain a function of economic development. Dissatisfied with the implications of their model, Bowles and Gintis reformulate their analysis to an examination of change found *within* the school system (Bowles and Gintis 1980, p. 55). Allowing for this interpretation within the school, Bowles and Gintis attempt to uncover ways in which the school can become a more responsive and humane place for human development.

The reworking of their analysis suggests a reformulation of their initial base-superstructure interpretation of the relationship between the school and the state. This former analysis (1976) places schools in a situation whereby they are completely dependent on the economic base, limiting the potential for change outside of this relationship. Bowles and Gintis' new formulation suggests that any relationships that are formed with the education system are a result, not of the economic base, but of the nature of the class struggle. Instead of treating a social formation as an economic ‘base’ controlling numerous social functions, Bowles and Gintis suggest that “society be treated as an ensemble of structurally articulated *sites of social practice*” (Bowles and Gintis 1980, p.55). A *site* refers to specific social relations or structures and include: the state, the family, and the mode of capitalist development. These three sites are fundamental to the formation of advanced capitalist social relations. They further this analysis and state:
... the site of capitalist production is characterized by private property in the means of production, market exchange, wage labor, and capitalist control of production and investment. The state is characterized by the institutions of liberal democracy and the family site by the structure of power and kinship known as patriarchy (Bowles and Gintis 1980, p. 55).

The relations within a site cannot be understood from its structure, but rather: “we must view sites as merely structuring the practices occurring within them.” (Bowles and Gintis 1980, p.56). Practices must not be mistaken as effects of the structure of sites, but as elements of social dynamics. In other words, the structure allows for, but does not dictate or manipulate, the social relations that transpire within. Specifically, a practice refers to: “a social intervention on the part of an individual, group, or class, whose object is some aspect of social reality, and whose project is the transformation (or stabilization) of that object” (Bowles and Gintis 1980, p. 56). Bowles and Gintis emphasize four basic types of practices: appropriative, political, cultural, and distributive. Appropriative practice refers to labor power transforming nature in order to produce products. A political practice is defined through the actions taken to transform the nature of social relations within a particular site. Cultural practice generally refers to the tools and methods used by individuals to communicate and establish forms of social cohesiveness, while distributive practice concerns itself with creating avenues for changing social and economic distribution. Every social formation, then, includes sites which are characterized by social relations involving these above mentioned practices (Bowles and Gintis 1980, p.56).
Bowles and Gintis proceed to develop principles for how these sites work and respond within an advanced capitalist economy. They categorize the function of these sites as acting as a *contradictory totality*. In other words, the contradictory nature of the state, the family, and capitalist production, along with the practices within, produce the dynamics (i.e., reproduction or contradiction) within society as a whole. Capitalist production limits what can occur in the state, and this illustrates how one site can limit another, while practices of one site can be used in another (i.e., business practices used within the state). Delimitation, in this context, refers to the constraints placed upon a particular site due to its relationships with other sites. The mixing of these sites and practices illustrates two distinct relations: reproduction and contradiction. For example, the economic site places certain management strategies upon the education site enabling capitalism to be reproduced within this state system.

To further explore the contradictions found within the education system, Bowles and Gintis emphasize the tension that originates as a result of a state site, which is concerned with person rights, reproducing capitalist relations, which concerns itself with property rights:

... education is directly involved in the contradictory articulation of sites in advanced capitalism and is expressed in terms of the property/person dichotomy: education reproduces rights vested in property while itself organized in terms of rights vested in persons (Bowles and Gintis 1980, pp. 62-3).

It is here that Bowles and Gintis emphasize the *form* of the educational system and its situation in society, rather than the content (i.e., curriculum) that accounts for its
reproductory role in the capitalist system. This contradictory function found within the education system can be further illustrated by how school ideologies (i.e., philosophies of schooling) do not always coincide with the effects that education has on students. For example, ideology which emphasizes 'equality of opportunity' and democratic approaches to learning can run counter to what actually transpires within the school (i.e., an overrepresentation of lower and working class students entering vocational education; and, teachers and administrators controlling what is taught and how it is taught). However, these contradictions, according to Bowles and Gintis, can serve as ammunition in the overall class struggle.

*Schooling in Capitalist America* stresses the need for a complete dismantling of the capitalist system in order for there to be successful educational reform. However, in “Contradiction and Reproduction in Educational Theory,” Bowles and Gintis reformulate their theory to allow for structural changes without such a disruption to the capitalist mode of production. They tackle this issue by stressing the importance of “localized” control of the education system maintained by the direct initiatives of both teachers and parents:

> For teachers, as workers, will surely be involved in the movement for the democratisation of economic life and parents, as community members, will similarly be involved in the extension of the powers of local community decision-making (Bowles and Gintis 1980, p. 63).

Bowles and Gintis continue by suggesting that the aims of education should focus around developing students’ independence as citizens and allow for greater involvement for students to determine and control certain fundamental aspects of the educational system.
Even with the general rejection of their initial base-superstructure model, Bowles and Gintis maintain a functional approach to how capitalism is maintained and reproduced through the education system. Their analysis of how sites ‘structurally delimit’ other sites shows there are implicit relations and dependencies among sites that act as causal agencies reproducing the relations of production. Although moving away from a strict economically deterministic (i.e., base/superstructure) approach to education, Bowles and Gintis redesign their analysis around the tensions among sites in a social formation and the nature of the class struggle. However, since the driving forces behind this dynamic revolve around the economic needs of the capitalist economy, this revised proposal deviates very little from their initial model and subsequent economic implications.

The direction of this thesis will now turn to a discussion around what is created within the school itself. Both Poulantzas’s theoretical framework of social reproduction and Bowles and Gintis’s empirical study of the U.S. education system have clearly illustrated the necessary, but ultimately limiting, connections between the economy and the school. Understanding the effects of what transpires within the school is necessary to fully understand how the school functions and responds to the needs of capitalist development. I will now examine Michael Apple’s treatment of culture and curriculum within the school to show some of these connections.
The purpose of this chapter is to situate the education system within specific cultural and economic tensions. Since I have discussed certain economic ties between the education system and the economy in the previous chapters, my discussion will now turn to examining cultural capital and its effect on students within the school. Cultural capital refers to specific kinds of accumulated knowledge and the connection of this knowledge to how society is controlled and organized. This prior knowledge is determined by differences in, for example, class, culture and language. Ultimately, my goal is to establish a connection between economic and cultural forces to help identify the relationship between schooling and the maintenance of unequal relations. Once this relationship is uncovered, it will be evident that education reform is possible within the present political climate. It will also become apparent that Marxist analyses examined within chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis are clearly aimed in the wrong direction. Poulantzas as well as Bowles and Gintis not only position the education system in a subordinate relationship with the state, but also do not acknowledge the purpose of changes to the education system without a dismantling of the capitalist system. The school must not be viewed as a passive institution, but as an active force which helps to legitimize and perpetuate social and economic relations that are connected to it. It is this active force which needs to be examined.
Michael Apple (1979, 1982) plays down the importance of analyses that deal only with the external relationships between the educational system and the capitalist economy. Instead, he suggests that schools are not simply institutions of economic reproduction, but rather are places in which ideological and political dominance is produced and reproduced. Although Apple does accept certain findings outlined by such theorists as Bowles and Gintis, which identify the apparent distribution of students into specific occupations (i.e., through streaming), his primary concern is how this happens within the school setting itself. Through uncovering how this dominance is maintained and perpetuated within the school, as well as how the distribution of students into the workplace is connected to this internal dominance, we will begin to discover alternative possibilities aimed at more representative, critical, and democratic approaches to teaching and learning.

Concerned with treating schools as more than input/output devices (i.e., a constant relation between what is taught and what is learned), Apple's approach considers the internal dynamics within the school as playing a large role in how unequal relations are reproduced. In other words, the effects of what is taught to each student vary according to several factors. These dynamics, which focus on the social, cultural, and economic backgrounds of students, must first be exposed to link these tensions to external inequalities within the capitalist economy. Apple and Lois Weis (1983) criticize base-superstructure models of education and claim:

... [that] what is actually taught, what is actually learned, what is rejected, and how the lived experience of class, race, and gender actors acts as a mediating force in producing the outcomes so well studied by stratification researchers are missed in this kind [i.e., base/superstructure] of analysis (Apple and Weis 1983, p. 13).
Not only will this discussion deal with these internal concerns within the school, but it will also attempt to identify specific relationships between cultural forces and capitalist inequality.

Apple establishes the importance of examining the internal relationships of the school through identifying the responsibilities that are attached to this process. For example, due to the function of the school within a capitalist society (i.e., to provide for opportunity for advancement in society), and the apparent growth in inequalities in capitalist society, schools have come under scrutiny to provide answers to why these disparities continue to escalate. Radical criticism of the school system stems from this immediate observation and attempts to deal with the following question: If education is designed around the principle that everyone is on a 'neutral' playing field, then why do unequal relations in society continue to persist? This criticism has helped to trigger an investigation into what is taught in the schools and who ultimately benefits from this process.

Apple attempts to discuss the factors that are involved in the schooling process which act to maintain and reproduce unequal relations in society. He suggests that, although the intentions of educators are to benefit the student, the overall result of the schooling process may in fact have negative consequences for some. In other words, the perpetuation of dominance created and maintained within the school may be unrecognized
by those involved in this social process. Apple identifies the role of schools and the actions of educators within 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 (Apple 1982, p. 13).

Those who concern themselves with the first interpretation as the primary focus of education may be unaware of the overall consequences of our school system. Rather, it is the second interpretation that must be emphasized in order for the school to be examined as a reproductory institution.

Apple’s argument does not imply that schools simply reproduce existing inequalities through transmitting dominant views upon subordinate students. This approach is far too mechanistic and falls short in two ways. First, it identifies the student as a passive agent, merely internalizing what is presented to him/her. This view does not account for students of varying cultures/races/classes who either mold the dominant perspectives to fit in with their own lived experiences or flatly reject these meanings altogether. Second, this view inadequately deals with contradictions that exist within the school itself. Apple provides the following example:

... 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 for legitimation (they maintain an inaccurate meritocratic ideology and, therefore, legitimate the ideological forms necessary for the recreation of inequality) (Apple 1982, p. 14).
These two functions of schools, however, can often contradict one another. For instance, the production of highly-credentialed individuals in schools may run counter to the economy's need for such individuals. Also, although teaching students to be critical may help them to decipher certain meanings and perspectives, these skills may be aimed at contradicting the need for capital accumulation, and, in effect, delegitimize the capitalist economy. It is with this second point that Apple is concerned with, which attempts to uncover how ideologies (and their contradictions) work within the school.

Instead of defining ideology as merely a set of beliefs, Apple prefers a more dynamic interpretation:

[Ideologies] are . . . 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 (Apple 1982, p. 15).

Ideologies are seen to be constantly changing depending on the dominant forces and internal struggles that act to define these ideologies. According to Apple, schools are crucial institutions in which these ideologies are produced and transmitted. Apple further suggests that because the economic system cannot provide for all of the conditions necessary for its reproduction, control over ideological institutions (i.e., the school) must also be maintained to ensure dominant views are reproduced. Therefore, according to this position, superstructural institutions, such as the school, have significant autonomy and serve to fulfill a distinct function (i.e., reproducing dominant ideology) in reproducing capitalist relations. However, it must be restated that this ideology is a result of
antagonistic relations and is therefore subject to constant change. It is this process, or struggle, which produces ideology that is of utmost importance.

For Apple, culture is made up of the lived experiences and interactions that develop among specific groups in society. Certain groups have the ability to 'commodify' this culture (i.e., use it to socially and economically advance). However, this framework of how 'reality' is socially constructed does not address either how certain meanings and not others are transmitted in schools or how this control of knowledge is linked to the dominance of specific groups in society. Apple's discussion revolves around culture as a force and what the effects of this distribution are (i.e., how culture and control are related).

The school curriculum and how it is related to ideological and economic structures will be used as an example of how dominant knowledge is produced and what its relationship is to hierarchical structures in society. The language used within educational discourse and curriculum, according to Apple, tends to be both apolitical and ahistorical (Apple 1979, p. 29). This 'neutral' medium allows for social and economic meanings to be disguised in their transmittance to students. The language used within schools, therefore, does not provide for adequate tools necessary to address questions relating to the links between culture and economic reproduction such as: "What is actually taught in schools?" and "What are the social functions, or effects, of the knowledge that is taught in schools?"
Apple identifies two distinct ways school knowledge is generally understood by educational researchers. The first revolves around academic achievement, while the second is concerned with viewing schools as socialization mechanisms. In the academic achievement model, knowledge that is taught in schools can be assessed by comparing how each student internalizes this knowledge (i.e., through testing). This is to suggest that each student has the ability to internalize what is taught in the same capacity (i.e., there are no internal barriers based upon previously acquired knowledge or perspective). According to this view, meanings within knowledge go unexamined and ways of understanding student achievement are usually based on external social factors such as educational resources and family background. The socialization approach, on the other hand, does examine school knowledge, but restricts its examination to the social norms and values that are taught in schools. In other words, it inquires into how schools socialize students around these morals and values that are considered the norm within society. Although they allow for us to understand what is taken for granted, Apple suggests that both of these approaches fall short in linking culture to economic power. The academic achievement model fails to uncover any hidden messages that are transmitted to students and thus is unable to seriously connect economics to the structure of the school. The socialization approach, although concerned with how students are socialized through defined and understood values and norms, does not inquire into how these specific values have come to dominate this process.
Apple refers to Michael Young (1971) in beginning his analysis on uncovering specific connections between the culture transmitted in schools and the social and economic relations in society. Young argues:

... [there is a] dialectical relationship between access to power and the opportunity to legitimize certain dominant categories, and the processes by which the availability of such categories to some groups enables them to assert power and control over others (Young 1971, p. 8).

In other words, a fundamental question that needs to be addressed is: How are unequal relations maintained in society through the 'transmission' of culture? It becomes obvious that if we are to seriously consider this question the school must be closely examined since it reproduces culture.

Apple uses Pierre Bourdieu’s (1976) analysis as an example of how culture is used within the school to act as a form of dominance and control. Bourdieu argues that the existing ‘middle-class’ culture acts as a guise to reproduce social and economic inequalities in society. For example:

... schools partly recreate the social and economic hierarchies of the larger society through what is seemingly a neutral process of selection and instruction. They take the cultural capital, the habitus, of the middle class, as natural and employ it as if all children have equal access to it. However, by taking all children as equal, while implicitly favouring those who have already acquired the linguistic and social competencies to handle middle-class culture, schools take as natural what is essentially a social gift, i.e. cultural capital (Apple 1979, p.32-33).

Bourdieu suggests that we should consider cultural capital in the same way as we understand economic capital. In other words, just as those who have access to economic resources are generally in a better position to economically succeed, so to are those who
have access to cultural capital. Therefore, we must not examine culture as neutral, but as a force that acts to determine who succeeds and who fails in the schooling process.

Cultural capital, according to Apple, acts within the school to process both knowledge and people (Apple 1979, p.33). Culture can be viewed as a filter through which individuals are distributed, often by class, into specific positions in society. Apple is not suggesting that culture is mechanistically created by the economy, but rather is attempting to establish a relationship between cultural control and social and economic hierarchies in society. It must also be emphasized that this inquiry is not concerned with epistemological questions regarding the truth and validity of our knowledge, but rather is to establish a connection between, for example, the school curriculum and the social and economic outcomes of the school.

The lack of attention the nature of conflict gets in school curriculum will be isolated as an example of how dominant ideology is allowed to perpetuate itself within the school. The topic of conflict is crucial because by dealing with conflict in society students may develop a sense of how their own lives (i.e., social/cultural/gender/economic location) are situated within society, and how dominance over them is maintained. The understanding of conflict may enable students not only to understand the dynamics of subordination, but also may encourage them to locate means by which to change these relations.
We may find, through uncovering the knowledge presented in subject textbooks such as History and Social Studies, that these views are not only prejudiced, but offer a static view of society:

A basic assumption seems to be that conflict among groups of people is inherently and fundamentally bad and we should strive to eliminate it within the established framework of institutions, rather than seeing conflict and contradiction as the basic ‘driving forces’ in society (Apple 1979, p. 87).

Although some schools discuss issues of controversy, these issues tend to be discussed within the prescribed boundaries of activity. Ideas challenging these parameters themselves never seem to come to the forefront. The school curriculum acts not only to downplay the importance of conflict in specific subject areas, but when ideas of conflict arise, acts to define the arena in which these issues are to be dealt.

We will isolate Social Studies as one subject within the school to show how hidden knowledge is transmitted and how conflict is neglected in explaining society. Generally, society is portrayed as an integrated and cooperative system and does not rely on conflict or tensions for its maintenance or progress (Apple 1979, p. 93). This ‘cooperation’ is required by all members in order for society to function:

Internal dissension and conflict in a society are viewed as inherently antithetical to the smooth functioning of the social order. Consensus is . . . a pronounced feature (Apple 1979, p. 93).

Apple continues by suggesting that ‘man/woman’ is generally perceived as either a ‘knowledge-transmitting’ or ‘knowledge-receiving’ agent, rather than ‘knowledge-creating.’
What must be emphasized here is that not all current perspectives and values transmitted in the school are wrong, but rather knowledge acts in accordance with specific ideological, cultural, and economic viewpoints. These underlying forces must be uncovered within specific domains, such as Social Studies, to gain a more diverse understanding of how society is constructed. School knowledge is not only taught within organized and authority-based classrooms, but it also emphasizes such values as orderliness, cohesion, and equilibrium in subject material. Also, the repetitiveness of subjects (i.e., the same subjects taught in the same way with the same content) may deny the student (and teacher) a clear understanding of progress and how views, values and perspectives change over time.

Apple uses an economic educational ‘kit,’ entitled *Our Working World* as an example of how order, lack of conflict, and consensus are legitimated through school curricula. The following is a quote from this primary grade course found in a unit subtitled ‘Families at Work’:

*When we follow the rules, we are rewarded; but if we break the rules we will be punished. So you see, dear, that is why everyone does care. That is why we learn customs and rules, and why we follow them. Because if we do, we are all rewarded by a nicer and more orderly world* (Apple 1979, p. 95).

This example shows how what is taught may conform to following rules within pre-defined boundaries of acceptance, as well as limit what is *created* by the student, thereby inhibiting creativity and imagination aimed at challenging these assumptions.
Curriculum that deals with inquiry and criticism also tends to act within specified boundaries of acceptance. The assumption found in school curriculum that conflicts must be resolved acts as an example of how solutions must be found that correspond to the existing social order. Although Apple does not deny that rules do help to govern our day-to-day activities, he does suggest that there is too much emphasis on maintaining order within a stable set of structures. Also, he suggests that conflict, when dealt with in schools, is portrayed as dysfunctional to orderly social development (Apple 1979, p.96).

As mentioned earlier, because our social ‘reality’ exists in how we perceive it, we must understand how this knowledge has been constructed and whose interests it is serving. Although school curricula transmit knowledge that reinforce dominant assumptions, there have been attempts to challenge mainstream curricula agendas. Apple points to such subjects as Black and Women’s Studies which focus on conflict and group struggle, and attempt to challenge some preconceived notions of the history of marginalized groups. Although these are the areas that Apple would generally applaud, these approaches tend to stress group resistances or protests within accepted norms, rather than individual leadership and lack of conformity. Therefore, it must be emphasized here that it is not so much the content of the subject matter, but rather how the content is presented that is important. Specifically, we must move toward an approach that encourages students to challenge boundaries of conformity rather than to always follow authority and think within the confines of conventional wisdom.
It is possible to counter accepted barriers of knowledge with more flexible interpretations and meanings that would allow for students to define their own knowledge and perspectives. This approach would challenge values and norms that have generally been taken-for-granted and viewed as empirically grounded. Also, by allowing for more flexibility in how we perceive ‘reality,’ as well as presenting society not as a static entity but engaged in a variety of tensions, this may highlight the purpose and need for an understanding of conflict to provide for progress in society (i.e., change in society depends on contradictions and tensions among conflicting opinions and values). In other words, to analyze social ‘reality’ we must have a clear understanding of the nature of conflict and how it acts to challenge boundaries, and consequently, change existing social structures. However, this understanding of conflict is neglected in our school curriculum. Conflict should not merely be viewed as acting to diminish our moral code, but rather as creating avenues for new perspectives and opportunities which may allow for more flexibility in how we understand our social ‘reality.’

Through specific curricular changes, schools can present a more balanced appraisal of society and how it can be viewed. For example, courses in History and Social Sciences should not only deal with such groups as workers, natives, and women, but more importantly, should explain how their struggles have had and continue to have a direct impact on society. Resistances among these subordinate groups tend to be portrayed as ‘negative reactions’ to the established order, whereas many of these resistances provided for and continue to provide for increasing equality.

The fact that laws had to be broken and were then struck down by
the courts later is not usually focused upon in social studies curricula (Apple 1979, p. 100).

However, it was through these very activities that social and economic progress was, and continues to be, made. Not only would these examples provide students with the origins of how social/economic/working conditions came to exist, but they would encourage progressive alternatives aimed at further equality for marginalized groups.

The significance of specifically dealing with the knowledge that is transmitted to the student in the school is to show how dominant perspectives act to reinforce the existing social order, thereby perpetuating social and economic inequalities in society (i.e., because students are not encouraged to think beyond our current social order or challenged to think about why our society works the way it does, this may be a reason why current forms of inequality continue). Schools are institutions which act to expose students to political, economic, and social ideologies, and it must not be overlooked how this knowledge has originated, whose beliefs it corresponds with and who ultimately benefits.

Through examining some of the underlying assumptions found within the hidden curriculum, initiatives aimed at providing opportunities for students to create and participate in social action become evident. *Existing* school curricula, according to Apple, “. . .may contribute significantly to the ideological underpinnings that serve to fundamentally orient individuals toward an unequal society (Apple 1979, p. 102).”
Current school curricula generally serve to legitimate the existing social structure because the idea that individuals can create and challenge knowledge is neglected within the system. Instead of providing opportunities for students to challenge the existing social order, curricula and textbooks present a ‘one-way’ learning approach that fails to engage the student in the process of changing the existing boundaries. It has been suggested that the nature of conflict be further exposed in future curricula proposals to help challenge some of the preconceptions and biases in current educational content. Apple maintains that a theoretical examination of these complex issues such as knowledge, power, and culture are an important step in understanding the nature of the school and its connection to society. However, he cautions against relying completely on theory and suggests that we should act with the guidance of theory to create specific avenues within the school for students to become more aware and involved in how existing social and economic structures come into existence, and more importantly, how they can be changed.

In “The Case for Democratic Schools” (1995), Apple and James Beane attempt to explain how democratic approaches may help to ameliorate some of the apparent problems in curriculum and administration in our public school system. Acknowledging that the definition of democracy has become ambiguous in recent times and is used in rhetoric to further both ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’ agendas, Apple and Beane suggest we revisit democratic approaches to attempt to improve and focus the direction of current educational reforms. Instead of providing a definitive meaning of democracy, Apple and Beane prefer to list seven conditions educators and administrators should work toward. They are as follows:
1. The open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible.

2. Faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems.

3. The use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies.

4. Concern for the welfare of others and "the common good."

5. Concern for the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities.

6. An understanding that democracy is not so much an "ideal" to be pursued as an "idealized" set of values that we must live and that must guide our life as a people.

7. The organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life (Apple and Beane 1995, pp. 6-7).

These conditions suggest that those involved in the school system must establish and maintain democratic conditions in the schools if we expect students to fully understand and work toward achieving a more democratically-oriented society within a capitalist system. Moving toward more democratic approaches, not only to learning, but also to how curriculum is established (i.e., allowing for educators, parents, students and community activists to participate in establishing school curricula) assumes that a variety of opinions and perspectives will arise in this engagement. These tensions, however, which have been argued as an essential component in changing the status quo, are necessary to challenge existing curricula and administrative structures. Apple and Beane argue:

Such contradictions and tensions point to the fact that bringing democracy to life is always a struggle. But beyond them lies the possibility for professional educators and citizens to work together in creating more democratic schools that serve the common good of the whole community (Apple and Beane 1995, p. 8).
Apple and Beane identify two separate, but equally important, areas within the school which must be considered in order to achieve democratic principles and opportunities. These two areas revolve around the administration of schools and the school curriculum.

First, democratic administration, or as Apple and Beane prefer to describe it, democratic structures and processes, must include decision making by all who are directly involved in the school (Apple and Beane 1995, p.9). This may include: students, parents, members of the community, school councils and committees, who would actively participate in the decision making within a particular community or school. This decision making process, which would not work toward pre-defined goals, would not only determine the structures of the school (i.e., how surplus of funds are spent, length of time in school), but also the structures of the classroom (i.e., teacher and students would engage in decision making process that would consider the interests of both). This participatory process would allow those directly involved to make decisions regarding these specific areas.

Apple and Beane caution us at this point that although democratic action can serve a very practical and rewarding purpose, there may also be communities who wish to use this democratic process to segregate specific groups of students based on such factors as: race, religion, culture, class:

...left entirely to local discretion, we might still have schools characterized by legal racial segregation and denial of access to all but the wealthy. In short the realization of democratic schools does in part depend on selective
intervention of the state, especially where the process and content of local decision making serve to disenfranchise and oppress selected groups of people (Apple and Beane 1995, p. 10).

Apple and Beane suggest that proposals involving participation from a diverse population, ranging in, for example, age, occupation, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, abilities and opinions, are essential to create democratic schools. The goal of this process is not to reach a specific end, but is rather the participation and decision making that comes as a result. In other words, there is no pre-defined end in which these decisions must resolve, but rather decisions to act and change the existing system come as a result of informed discussion and debate among those involved.

The policy decisions that act to create and maintain democratic schools must consider giving all students, regardless of such classifications as race, gender and class, access to all programs in the school. Barriers such as ‘streaming,’ (i.e., distributing students into various levels within the school) which have the tendency to distribute students according to such external characteristics, must be eliminated or at least seriously re-evaluated and re-designed. Also, testing and evaluation must be closely monitored to identify any biases that may favour certain students over others.

Apple and Beane stress the role of educators in creating the conditions necessary for democratic schools:

... not simply to lesson the harshness of social inequalities in school, but to change the conditions that create them (Apple and Beane 1995, p.12).
This suggests that, for educators to 'change the conditions' which create social and economic inequalities, they must understand how current undemocratic practices in the school are related to the unequal relations that exist outside of the school:

... [educators] involved with democracy care deeply about young people, but they also understand that such caring requires them to stand firm against racism, injustice, centralized power, poverty, and other gross inequities in school and society (Apple and Beane 1995, p.12).

The notion of democracy implies diversity, cooperation, and equal opportunity for all. However, many schools in North America abide by dominant interests and agendas (i.e., business influenced curricula), stress competition, and have structured their school around 'streaming' which deny students, mainly from marginalized groups, equal access to all programs.

The second area which must be reformed in order to achieve democratic schools is that of curriculum. Although analyzing the hidden curriculum is important to understanding the underlying meanings and perspectives that are transmitted to the student, Apple and Beane also attempt to show how democratic participation in establishing the overt curriculum (i.e., what subjects are taught and in what context) must also come about.

Similar to their analysis on administrative control of the school, Apple and Beane suggest that school curricula should evolve from discussion from those who have a variety of opinions, perspectives and attitudes toward what specifically should be evaluated. Participation between the teacher and student will promote alternative views and
perspectives since those 'outside' of the dominant culture will be consulted to help in the design of school curricula. Instead of presenting knowledge as 'unbiased' and 'neutral,' students should be challenged to ask questions such as: "Whose perspective is this?" and "Why was it said?" In other words, an essential element of learning should concern itself, not with internalizing unchallenged views, but rather understanding that all knowledge has a history (i.e., knowledge always develops from specific influences and perspectives). This understanding will help students move toward accepting a wider range of opinions and points of reference.

Apple and Beane argue:

A democratic curriculum invites young people to shed the passive role of knowledge consumers and assume the active role of "meaning makers." It recognizes that people acquire knowledge by both studying external sources and engaging in complex activities that require them to construct their own knowledge (Apple and Beane 1995, p. 16).

In "Central Park East Secondary School: The Hard Part is Making it Happen" (1995), Deborah Meier and Paul Schwartz provide a specific example of a school in the United States which has undergone such reconstruction in its curriculum. This particular school, Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS), is an alternative high school located in New York City. CPESS currently has a student population of 450 (grades 7-12), and although this will not increase, its administration has begun creation of 11 new Coalition high schools in New York City. Eighty-five percent of the students are Latino or African-American from East Harlem, and more than 20 percent qualify for special education services. Through tracking students' records, CPESS reports that 97.3 percent of its students graduate from high school, and 90 percent of those graduates attend
college. The school is open to all students and stresses values which include: high expectations, a sense of personal decency, trust, and respect for diversity. At CPESS, the fundamental aim is:

...to teach students to use their minds well, to prepare them for a well-lived life that is productive, socially useful, and personally satisfying. The school's academic program stresses intellectual achievement and emphasizes the mastery of a limited number of centrally important subjects. This program goes hand in hand with an approach that emphasizes learning how to learn, how to reason, and how to investigate complex issues that require collaboration and personal responsibility (Meier and Schwartz 1995, pp. 26-27).

The final high school diploma at CPESS is not based on mastering specific units of instruction or time spent in class, but on achievement and presentation of 14 portfolios to a graduation committee. The topics of the portfolios range from Mathematics and Science to Community Service and Ethics. The majority of the work done on these portfolios is done in connection with the courses, independent studies, internships and seminars studied at the school. The two phases of the portfolio include: 1) preparation of the portfolio in collaboration with advisors and 2) presentation and defense of the portfolios in front of a panel. If the portfolio is not acceptable, it may be revised or expanded to meet approval.

CPESS is guided by the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools. These principles include:

1) **Less is more** - It is important to know some things well than to know many things superficially.
2) **Personalization** - Although the course of study is unified and universal, teaching and learning are personalized. No teacher is responsible for teaching more than 40 students or advising more than 15.

3) **Goal Setting** - High standards are set for all students. Students must clearly exhibit mastery of their school work.

4) **Student as Worker** - CPESS teachers "coach" students, encouraging them to find answers and solutions to learn by doing rather than by simply repeating what textbooks (or teachers) say (Meier and Schwartz 1995, pp. 26-27).

The programs in place at CPESS have originated from decisions made by students, parents, teachers, and administrators over several years. As a result of extensive discussion and debate it was decided that a graduate of CPESS should be able to address the following five questions:

1) How do you know what you know? (Evidence)

2) From whose viewpoint is this being presented? (Perspective)

3) How is this event or work connected to others? (Connection)

4) What if things were different? (Supposition)

5) Why is this important? (Relevance)
CPESS has organized their curriculum and assessment around the idea that each student is looking to answer these five questions when reading a text, completing an assignment, or trying to understand any aspect of the course material.

Apple emphasizes that we cannot ignore the dominant culture since it is needed to socially and economically advance in society. Rather, it is suggested that educators reconstruct dominant knowledge (i.e., to allow for criticism, encourage debate, and to view knowledge merely as a perspective) in order to help those who have difficulty relating to or understanding this knowledge. Not only would reconstructing dominant knowledge allow for a wider range of perspectives to be heard, but it would also allow for students and teachers to become active participants in what transpires within the school as well as providing for a connection between school knowledge and personal lived experiences.

Although concerned with unequal relations in society, this inquiry has outlined some of the internal forces within the school which act to legitimize these relations. Those engaged in the education system must be aware of how their actions contribute to reproducing these social and economic disparities. Because of the current neo-liberal trends in Canadian politics to centralize control and further cut education funding, those within the school system must come to understand the need for democratic education reform aimed at reducing social inequality.
CONCLUSION

Those currently involved in education reform in North America (including administrators, politicians, teachers and community members) must be aware of the apparent connections among the school, the state and the capitalist economy. There are definite problems within our present public education system in Canada.

Current reforms such as standardized testing and centralized control of administration and curricula are measures which do address who succeeds but do not address the more important question of how this happens in the schooling process. Further standardization within the school may help to identify who succeeds and who fails, but may further marginalize those who cannot compete or relate to the existing school structure or curricula.

This thesis has identified several links between the school, the capitalist economy, and the state. The intention was to examine specific educational Marxist analyses to identify the extent to which they can be used to explain existing inequalities resulting from the schooling process. Traditional Marxist analyses (re: Poulantzas, Bowles and Gintis) have helped to explain the nature of capitalist society, as well as helped to situate the education system within. These connections are essential to understand if we are to move in a direction which will respond to and address the growing social disparities in society.
Although the traditional Marxist analyses presented within this thesis help to discern some of the economic and cultural ties between the school and the economy, they fail to acknowledge the purpose of education reform without a serious overhaul and ultimate dismantling of the capitalist system. These analyses are clearly misguided, considering the current political and economic trends in North America. Any realistic analysis of our current education system must consider possibilities aimed toward reducing some of the serious problems associated with capitalist development, such as: homelessness and youth unemployment, not to mention the increasing disparities in wealth and social and economic conditions.

Although far from complete in addressing the extent of possible education reforms, this thesis has suggested some possibilities. What must be emphasized is that education reforms are dependent on local, democratic action, and must consider the particular conditions within a specific school and community. In other words, many reforms may not be transferable to other areas or schools because of existing social/economic/cultural differences.

In conclusion, I have shown aspects of how capitalism is reproduced and the important function that the education system plays in this reproduction. I have also attempted to define the limits of analyses which call for a necessary disruption to the capitalist system. My overall goal was to use Marxist analyses to show the links between the education system and the economy, and to go further and suggest that although the understanding of these connections is essential to examine how the education system
responds to the needs of capitalism, these analyses do not go far enough in addressing what actually occurs within the school and what can be done to correct unequal relations that continue to escalate.
REFERENCES


