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## **Education, Social Class and Marxist Theory**

*Dave Hill*

*The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. . . Our epoch. . . has simplified the class antagonisms .. into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. (Marx and Engels [1848] 1978: 35—36)*

### **Abstract**

In this chapter I discuss the relationship between social class, society and education. The perspective adopted is Marxist. In Part One, I discuss social class and how it is measured. Here I discuss Weberian 'gradational' and Marxist 'relational' classifications and definitions of class. In Part Two, I present some of the main concepts of Marxist social class analysis. In Part Three, I relate these concepts to Marxist theory of education. In Part Four, I differentiate between two types of Marxist analysis -Structuralist neo-Marxism and Culturalist neo-Marxism.

### **Part One: What is social class and how is it measured?**

*What is Social Class?*

What social class are you? What social class were the people you went to school with, or work or study with? One classification, social class, is generally recognised as having particular significance, as both reflecting and causing major social, economic, and cultural differences in, for example, income, wealth, status, education, and lifestyle. Income (pay packet, salary, and dividends) and wealth (what we own, such as housing, shares, money in the bank, and possessions) reflect our social class position. However, not only does social class *reflect* such social differences, it also *causes* them. Our social- economic background, social class, social class-related ways in which we present ourselves, tend to affect the ways in which we are treated by teachers, the police, friends, employers, sexual partners, and by many others in society. As with racism and sexism, this can take the form of *personal discrimination* — positive or negative stereotyping, labelling and expectation. It can also take the form of *structural discrimination* — taking place on a systematic, repetitive, embedded nature within particular social structures such as schooling, housing, employment, credit agencies, police, armed forces.

In the education system there are different social class-related patterns of: attainment (such as SATs scores, GCSE exam passes, university entrance); teaching methods (or pedagogy); 'hidden curricula' or patterns of expectations and labelling of individuals and social groups; formal (subject) curricula (despite the existence of a National Curriculum in schools in countries such as England; where you go after school (work, vocational education, low or high-status university); and job destinations.

Of course, not all sons and daughters of the upper class go into higher education and subsequently take up jobs with high social status, a high degree of power over others, and a high income. But most do.

## *Official measurement of social class*

The Registrar-General's classification of occupations used for official government purposes) was the most commonly used system in the UK of classifying people between 1911 and 1998. It is based on Weberian notions of the status value of different occupations. Unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled manual workers – workers engaged in manual labour- were denoted 'working class'. The 'working class' (Classes C2, D and E) was differentiated from 'the lower middle class' — employees such as those in 'routine', low-paid white-collar jobs (Class C1). These, in turn, were differentiated from other, better paid, more highly educated, and higher status sections of the middle class (Classes A and B). These 'official' classes are still used as the basis for the A, B, C1, C2, D and E social class/consumption group indicators used by sociological research, market research bureaux, opinion pollsters and advertisers. (Adapted from Ipsos, 2009)

In November 1998 the Registrar-General's classification was amended to take into account changes in the occupational structure and has been used for the census since 2001(Office for National Statistics, 2016).

A similar 'gradational' model of social class, grading social groups hierarchically, developed by Mike Savage and his associates, and popularised in the UK by the BBC's website, 'What Social Class Are You' (BBC 2015) includes seven classes (Dorling, 2015; Savage et al, 2013; BBC, 2013). These were based on Bourdieu's (1997) analysis of cultural capital and social capital (existing alongside economic capital). Participants were asked if they enjoyed any of 27 cultural activities including watching opera and going to the gym. According to their lifestyle cultural choices (impacted of course by ability to buy these choices) people were identified as belonging to one of seven classes.

### **BBC / Savage et al Classification of Seven Classes (adapted from BBC, 2013/ Savage et al., 2013)**

- **Elite:** This is the most privileged class in Great Britain who have high levels of all three capitals.
- **Established Middle Class:** Members of this class have high levels of all three capitals although not as high as the Elite. They are a gregarious and culturally engaged class.
- **Technical Middle Class:** This is a new, small class with high economic capital but seem less culturally engaged.
- **New Affluent Workers:** This class has medium levels of economic capital and higher levels of cultural and social capital.
- **Emergent Service Workers:** This new class has low economic capital but has high levels of 'emerging' cultural capital and high social capital.
- **Traditional Working Class:** This class scores low on all forms of the three capitals although they are not the poorest group. The average age of this class is older than the others.
- **Precariat:** This is the most deprived class of all with low levels of economic, cultural and social capital. The everyday lives of members of this class are precarious (BBC, 2013)

These are *gradational* categorisations. People are graded in a hierarchy, a ladder, according to how much income, wealth, education, power over others, , their choice of leisure activities for example. Positions within this wealth/income/status hierarchy have important correlation, with for example, health, diet, conditions at work, years of healthy life, age of death, and, of course, educational attainment.

## *Increasing Inequalities- Immiseration/ Austerity Capitalism*

Reports by organisations such as The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) testify to the depth of poverty, low pay, reduction in welfare benefits. (see Hill et al, 2016). In the social universe of austerity capital, there are huge differences in living conditions, shown for example in the 2016 Ken Loach film *I, Daniel Blake* highlighting the inhumanity and deliberate humiliation of the welfare claimant system run by the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) in the UK. And there are huge social class differences in years of healthy life- in London

*Women living in Richmond can look forward to 72 years of “healthy life”- compared with just 54 for women in Tower Hamlets. That equates to people in the East End’s most deprived borough losing almost a year for every stop on the District line that links them to Richmond. The difference is only slightly less for men - with 70 healthy years for those in Richmond, compared with 55 in Tower Hamlets’ (Lydall and Prynne, 2013).*

Under ‘Austerity Capitalism’ ‘the gap between the lifespans of rich and poor people in England and Wales is increasing for the first time in almost 150 years’ (Pells, 2016).

## **Part Two: Marxist analysis of social class**

Workers are paid only a proportion of the value they create in productive labour. The rest of the value they create, surplus value, is taken by the capitalist class as profit. The capitalist mode of production is a system of exploitation of one class (the working class) by another (the capitalist class). It is the Labour - Capital Relation, *the economic relation of production*. While superficially it appears that the worker receives a ‘fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay’, the extraction of surplus value reveals the deep reality of class exploitation.

*Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, by the dimensions of the share of the social wealth of which they dispose and their mode of acquiring it. (Lenin, 1919/ 1965: 421)*

For Marx this class exploitation and domination are reflected in *the social relations of production*. These are how people relate to each other — for example relationships between ‘bosses’ and senior management, supervisors/foremen/ women/middle management and, for example, shop-floor, chalk-face, workers.

### *Class consciousness*

Marxists believe that the point is not simply to describe the world but to change it. In Marx's words, ‘The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it’ [1845]. Class consciousness does not follow automatically or inevitably from the objective fact of economic class position. Marx’s *The Poverty of Philosophy* [1847] distinguishes between a ‘class-in-itself’ (an objective determination relating to class position) and a ‘class-for-itself’ (a subjective appreciation of class consciousness). The Communist Manifesto [1848] explicitly identifies ‘the formation of the proletariat into a class’ as the key political task facing communists. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* [1852] Marx observes,

*In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of life, their interests and their cultural formation*

*from those of the other classes and bring them into conflict with those classes, they form a class. (Marx [1852] 1974: 239)*

The process which links economic and social class is that of *class consciousness*. The class conflict arising from class consciousness and class struggle is fundamental to understanding economic, political and educational change. It is in periods of extreme class differentiation, periods of the intensification of the extraction of surplus value- profit- from the labour power of workers, that more and more workers perceive, subjectively, the objective nature of their exploitation. Nineham (2010: 15) draws on Lukacs concerning periods of capitalist crisis: 'in the midst of panic, the role of state institutions is exposed, as politicians vote to bail out the banks, or police forces attack unemployed protestors'.

Since the global crisis of finance capital of 2008, and the subsequent years of austerity politics, which David Harvey calls 'war from above' (Harvey 2005) there is now a broad understanding and appreciation of the 99% being ruled, fooled and exploited by the 1%, as for example, represented by the banner on myriad anti-austerity marches and demonstrations, 'We are the 99%'.

### *The changing composition of social classes*

In the introductory quotation to this chapter Marx refers to two mutually antagonistic classes, the proletariat (working class) and the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class). However, social class, for Marx, is not static. Under capitalist economic laws of motion, the working class, and indeed, the capitalist class, is constantly decomposed and reconstituted due to changes in the forces of production, technological changes in the type of work. New occupations, such as telesales and computing have come into existence; others, such as coal mining, manufacturing and other manual working-class occupations, decline. Within the capitalist class there has been a change from the mill owner, the factory owner, to chief executives of national and global corporations- together with their owners and (other) major shareholders.

### *Class as internally differentiated*

There are manifestly different layers, or strata among the working classes. Professional workers and skilled workers in general have a higher standard of living than semi-skilled or unskilled workers, and those in 'the precariat' (Standing, 2014) for example on zero-hours contracts, or unemployed workers. Whatever their stratum, or 'layer' in the working class, however, Marxists assert that there is, objectively, if not subjectively, a common identity of interest between these strata.

### *The Middle Class, The 'Petit Bourgeoisie and Intermediate class locations — the 'new middle class'*

Marx never completed his writing on social class (Rikowski, 2002). As well as the bourgeoisie/ capitalist class and the proletariat, Marx did at various times refer to other classes. Marx and Engels, in various writings (e.g. Marx and Engels, 1848; Marx, 1852), referred to a third class, the 'lumpenproletariat', people who live in poverty, an underclass, a rabble proletariat'. However, Marx, Engels and subsequent Marxist sociologists analyse the old middle class or petit bourgeoisie, and, separately, the new middle class, of professional, often state, workers. Marx wrote of the 'petit bourgeoisie' (e.g. Marx and Engels, 1848), and various subsequent Marxists from Pannekoek (1909) have analysed this 'middle class', a class standing between capital and labour, the old middle class, or petit bourgeoisie.

Since the 1960s in particular there has been the growth of what is termed the new middle class- the professional and managerial stratum, such as supervisors, personal managers, social workers, teachers, lecturers. These are 'between capital and labour' in the sense that while being entirely dependent on capital, employed by the national or local state, or in private companies/ corporations, they exercise *supervisory functions* over the working class. Teachers or supervisors or office managers are not capitalists — they do not themselves take profit from the surplus value extracted from working-class labour. Nor are they working class in this specific, particular sense- inasmuch as they do not have surplus value directly extracted from their own labour. For many sociologists and analysts they are a new middle class, occupying a contradictory class location (e.g. Wright, 1989, 2002).

For Poulantzas (1975) they are not part of the working class, because their work is 'unproductive labour'. Thus, 'I have a rather limited and restricted definition of the working class. The criterion of productive and unproductive labour is sufficient to exclude unproductive workers from the working class' (pp. 119-121). Poulantzas assigned non-productive workers to the 'new petty bourgeoisie' (p. 117) asserting that '... the new petty bourgeoisie constitutes a separate class' (p. 115).

However, their conditions of work and pay have been proletarianised —with loss of autonomy, status, pay and also loss of jobs. Many of 'the new middle class' identify with the aims and values of the working class. Many Marxists adopt a binary notion of class (e.g. Kelsh and Hill, 2006), where the 'new middle class' workers are defined as part of working class. There are basically two classes in society- those who sell their labour, the working class on the one hand, and the capitalist class- those who buy workers' labour and labour power, on the other. This is a relation, a relationship, the Capital-Labour relation. To repeat, in summary, the criticism of the sociological, gradational, life-style, categorisations above, the 'box-people', those who classify people according to umpteen criteria into umpteen 'social classes' are missing that essential relation (Rikowski, 2001).

### *Criticisms of Marxist social class analysis*

There are a number of objections to Marxist social class analysis put forward by rival sociological theories such as Weberian analysis, Structural-Functionalism and Postmodernism.

#### 1. Social class and individualism

Some say, 'we are all individuals, why can't we treat people simply as individuals?'

This ignores '*the economic relationships of production*'. Are we owners/ senior shareholding managers, or are we employees. It also ignores the social relationships we have with our employers/employees, our teachers, '*the social relations of production*', the power relations of patterns of control or deference between bosses, managers and workers.

#### 2. Social class and post-Fordism/Post-Modernism

Since the consumer boom of the 1950s, some claim that social mobility — moving from one class to another — has been made easier by the expansion of higher education since 1960s, people are less imprisoned (or liberated) by their class — 'anybody can become anything they want'.

Postmodernists argue that as a result of economic changes such as the transition from a mass production ('Fordist') to a specialist production ('post-Fordist') economy, the *relations of production* have been superseded in political, educational and social

importance by *relations of consumption*, that there is no mass production assembly line culture, no longer mass production or mass consumption. Instead there are myriad ways of working, types of work, types of product, types of consumption, brand names, niches in the market. The social and cultural order organised around class has been replaced, they allege, by a 'new order' based on individual rights, social mobility, job mobility, geographical mobility, consumer choice, lifestyle choice, choice over sexual identity and type of sexuality.

However, individuals work in computer- and consumer-driven niche production, their relationship to the means of production is essentially the same.

### 3. Social class and identity

Postmodernists proceed to say that people no longer identify themselves by their social class, or if they do, it is one, not a hugely important, self-identifier. They suggest that class identity and affiliation are outdated concepts, class it is taken as one amongst a plurality of social relations shaping education and the social world. They criticise the Marxist project of class struggle on the grounds that it denies or suppresses 'social difference'. David Harvey summarises their critique: 'Concentration on class alone is seen to hide, marginalise, disempower, repress and perhaps even oppress all kinds of 'others'' (Harvey 1993: 101).

### 4. Nomenclature

Issues of nomenclature — what we call people — are crucial in understanding the nature of social class. For example, the use of the terms 'upper class' and 'lower class' can set out not simply a description of a group's/ class' place on a ladder of possession, but also a justification for the existence of differentiated social classes, and indeed, a moral hierarchy. Such a 'gradational' classification says very little about the relationship between these classes. For Marxists, the terms 'ruling' and/or 'capitalist class', on the one hand, and 'working class', on the other, however, implies a specific relationship between them. To repeat, for Marxists, class is a relational concept.

### 5. Hiding the ruling capitalist class and its solidarity

Weberian, official, consumption-based classifications hide the existence of the capitalist class — that class which dominates society economically and politically. This class owns the means of production (and the means of distribution and exchange). These classifications mask the existence of the super-rich and the super-powerful — the ruling class. In the Registrar-General's classification, mega-rich capitalists are placed in the same class as, for example, university lecturers, journalists and solicitors.

### 6. Hiding working-class unity and its solidarity

A related criticism of consumption-based classifications is that, by segmenting the working class, they both hide the existence of the working class and serve a purpose of 'dividing and ruling' the working class. They inhibit the development of a common (class) consciousness against the exploiting capitalist class.

Similarly, Marxists see the promotion of ethnic or 'racial' divisions between black and white workers, between women and men and between heterosexuals and homosexuals, between public and private sector workers, between the employed and those on benefits,

between the young and the retired. It serves to weaken the solidarity and ‘muscle’ of the working class.

Marxists recognise that sex or ‘race’ exploitation (and other exploitations) are deep, widespread and damaging, and sometimes murderous. However, in contrast to the exploitation of women and particular minority ethnic groups, Marxists note the *fundamental* nature of class exploitation in capitalist economy (Hill, 2009). Social class exploitation is necessary for the continuation of capitalism. Capitalism can (and may) survive with sex and ‘race’ equality — indeed, for some neo-liberals these are desirable attributes of an economy and education/training system — but to conceive of equality between different social classes in a capitalist economy and society is impossible. Capitalism is defined as the exploitation of one class by another.

This is not to trivialise the issue of identity and of identity politics. However, for millions, the duality ‘worker/boss’ is not abstract. Indeed, the proportion of British voters believing there is a ‘class struggle’ in Britain rose from around 60 per cent in the early 1960s to 81 per cent in the mid-1990s, according to Gallup (Deer 1996). The 2015 British Attitudes Social Survey found that 60% of Britons regard themselves as working class (Butler, 2016).

#### 7. Demobilising the Working Class: Social class, class conflict and political strategy

Various media, Conservative MPS and Labour MPs opposed to Jeremy Corbyn argue that ‘the class struggle is over’, that we live in a free and meritocratic society where class struggle belongs in the history books only. These are attempts to demobilise, ideologically and organisationally, a class-conscious working class.

There is not just ‘class war from below’, such as workers on strike, or occupations of factories, workplaces, universities, or protest movements, there is permanent class war from above, sometimes open, sometimes disguised. The ruling capitalist class controls and uses the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the state to weaken organisations of actual or potential working class power such as trade unions, seeking to promote nationalism, jingoism, racism, young against old, employed against unemployed, and identity politics, as ‘Divide and Rule’ strategies in the ongoing class struggle.

### **Part Three: Marxist theory and education**

What are the detailed explanations for working class under-achievement in schools and in education, and what, therefore, should be the locus and focus of policy? Should ‘blame’ be attached to:

- the individual child, as ‘lazy’ or individually unintelligent?
- the working class itself — its ‘defective culture’ and child-rearing patterns, its supposed attitude to life such as the demand for ‘immediate gratification’, or its ‘defective genetic pool’?
- individual schools and ‘ineffective’ teachers? Will the problem of differential social class achievement be resolved by naming and shaming and improving ineffective schools and going along with the ‘Effective Schools Movement’, improving school management and performance, appointing ‘superheads’?
- Capitalist society itself — where schools’ formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum are deliberately geared to failing most working-class children, and to

elevating, middle- and upper-class children above them? In other words, is the problem with the way society is organised around the exploitation of the working classes by the ruling capitalist class with the assistance — willing or unwilling — of teachers?

### *Marxist Analyses of Education*

In this section, I set out salient Marxist analyses relating, seeking to critically analyse and understand capitalist education. In addition, Marx and Marxism have influenced a broad range of critical scholars, including Bourdieu and Bernstein. Such thinkers offer ideas, concepts and arguments which *complement* Marxism rather being Marxist *per se*.

### **Bukharin and Preobrazhensky**

Marxist analysis of the role education performs in capitalist society was set out by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky in 1920(1920/1959),

*In bourgeois society the school has three principal tasks to fulfil. First, it inspires the coming generation of workers with devotion and respect for the capitalist régime. Secondly, it creates from the young of the ruling classes 'cultured' controllers of the working population. Thirdly, it assists capitalist production in the application of sciences to technique, thus increasing capitalist profits.*

Bukharin and Preobrazhensky describe each of these tasks:

*Just as in the bourgeois army the 'right spirit' is inculcated by the officers, so in the schools under the capitalist régime the necessary influence is mainly exercised by the caste of 'officers of popular enlightenment'. The teachers in the public elementary schools receive a special course of training by which they are prepared for their role of beast tamers. .... The ministries of education in the capitalist régime are ever on the watch, and they ruthlessly purge the teaching profession of all dangerous (by which they mean socialist) elements.*

In Western capitalist economies, we can say that the aim is to `withhold `critical' secondary and higher education from working class youth despite the best efforts, and love indeed, of many teachers, education is perceived for working class youth as `skills training', devoid of `deep critique'. There is the suppression of critical space in education, the strict control of teacher education, of the curriculum, of educational research (Hill, 2006). Of course, many teachers resist. As Althusser notes,

*I ask the pardon of those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they 'teach' against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped. They are a kind of hero. (1971)*

Some of the most influential Marxist theorists of education, and those influenced by Marxism (such as Bernstein and Bourdieu, and Duffield and associates) are:

- **Gramsci** (1971) and his concepts of (capitalist) hegemony of ideas, of the social role of teachers as intellectuals, his insistence on developing counter-hegemonic `good sense' (as opposed to hegemonic capitalist `common sense', in settings outside the school as well as within, his call for and notion of `resistance' (and the role of an organised party) and his (culturalist) asserting of the importance of ideology and ideological contestation.

- **Bourdieu** (1990, 1997; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1997) and the theory of Schooling as Cultural Reproduction, and the concepts of Habitus, Cultural Capital and Symbolic Violence, whereby schools recognise and reward middle-class / upper class knowledge, language, body language, and diminish and demean working class and some minority-ethnic cultures.
- **Anyon** (2011), **Bernstein**, (1977), and **Duffield et al.** (1998) addressed the significant social class differences in pedagogy, with middle class students being given more discussion time and less time-consuming writing and reading tasks than working class children, with there being distinct differences in the 'ethos' and the hidden curriculum- the pattern of expectations and acceptable/ desired norms of behaviour for children/ students from different social classes.
- **Bowles and Gintis'** (1976) theory of Schooling as Economic Reproduction, whereby 'The Correspondence Principle' explains the way in which the hidden curriculum of schools reproduces the social (and economic) class structure of society within the school, training school students for different economic and social futures on the basis of their social and economic pasts — their parental background.
- **Althusser's** (1971) theory of Schooling as Ideological Reproduction, whereby schooling as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) works to persuade children that the status quo is fair and legitimate, and if that doesn't work- then schools (and other state apparatuses) also function as a Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), disciplining and punishing what they regard as unacceptable 'deviance' or non-conformity/ rebellion
- **Rikowski's** (2001, 2002) theory of the crucial role of schooling (at all levels) of developing labour power-, firstly, skills, and secondly, attitudes, personal personality characteristics, potential, suitable for capitalism. For Rikowski (2001) 'teachers and trainers are implicated in socially producing the single commodity - labour-power - on which the whole capitalist system rests. This gives them a special sort of social power' which includes the power to subvert, to teach against capital'.

### ***Gramsci: Hegemony, Intellectuals and Contestation***

Other than Gramsci, the above are Marxist Reproduction theorists. Giroux (1983) expertly summarises the differences between Marxist Reproduction Theorists and Marxist Resistance Theorists. This latter group have been very much influenced by Gramsci. For Gramsci, the state, and state institutions such as schools, rather than being the servant of the interests of capitalism and the ruling class, were, instead, an arena of class conflict and a site where hegemony has to be continually striven for. Thus, schools and other education institutions are seen as relatively autonomous apparatuses, providing space for oppositional behaviour. For Gramsci, as for Marxists in general, education is class struggle. Banfield (2016) notes, '[I]t is part of what Gramsci has aptly called the 'war of position' (Gramsci, 1971) where the trenches of civil society are won in classrooms, workplaces, pubs and on street corners such that socialism becomes the 'enlightened common sense of our age'. For Gramsci, teachers / educators have a very special role, 'All men (*sic*) are intellectuals but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals'.

### Common Sense and (class conscious) Good Sense

For Gramsci, and indeed for millions of communist, Marxist, critical, Freirean teachers and educators (and cultural workers) historically and today, this means challenging. critically interrogating, deconstructing accepted wisdoms, curricula, pedagogies, and working - as part of the working class (as 'organic intellectuals') - developing its own

world view, its own 'good sense', its own analysis, vision, programme. Gramsci's influence on the Critical Pedagogy movement globally (and of Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy) has been immense (coupled with the work of Freire and of the Frankfurt School).

### ***Bourdieu: Schooling as cultural reproduction***

Concepts of culture and cultural capital are central to Bourdieu's analysis of how the mechanisms of cultural reproduction function within schools. For Bourdieu, the major function of the education system is to maintain and legitimate a class-divided society. In his analysis, schools are middle-class institutions run by and for the middle class. Cultural reproduction, for Bourdieu, works in three ways.

#### Cultural capital — knowing that

Firstly through the formal curriculum and its assessment. The curriculum and examinations privilege and validate particular types of 'cultural capital', the type of elite knowledge that comes naturally to middle- and, in particular, upper-class children, but which is not 'natural' or familiar to non-elite children and school students. At the same time, and as a consequence, it disconfirms, rejects, invalidates the cultures of other groups, both social class groups and ethnic minority and immigrant groups.

#### Cultural capital — knowing how

Secondly through the hidden curriculum. This type of cultural capital is 'knowing how', how to speak to teachers, not only knowing about books, but also knowing how to talk about them. It is knowing how to talk with the teacher, with what body language, accent, colloquialisms, register of voice, grammatical exactitude in terms of the 'elaborated code' of language and its associated habitus, body posture, or way of behaving.

*In a number of social universes, one of the privileges of the dominant, who move in their world as a fish in water, resides in the fact that they need not engage in rational computation in order to reach the goals that best suit their interests. All they have to do is follow their dispositions which, being adjusted to their positions, 'naturally' generate practices adjusted to the situation. (Bourdieu, 1990:108-9)*

For Bourdieu, and for non-Marxists such as Stephen Ball (2003) and sociologists in general, children and teenagers bring their social-class backgrounds into school with them. Ball (2003) points out, '[W]ithin the educational system almost all the authority remains vested in the middle classes. Not only do they run the system, the system itself is one which valorises middle rather than working-class cultural capital'. This echoes Bernstein (1977) and his theory of class specific Language Codes, whereby schools privilege and reward middle-class so-called 'Elaborated Language' and devalue and demean working-class so-called 'Restricted Language.'

#### Cultural reproduction through separate schooling

Thirdly, cultural reproduction works, in Britain, through the separate system of schooling for the upper and upper-middle classes, nearly all of whom send their children to private (independent) schools. The system of secondary education exemplifies and reproduces class differentiation, which is rigidly separated into a flourishing, lavishly-funded private sector, as compared to demoralised, underfinanced

public sector, itself divided into schools in wealthy areas and those in inner-urban / inner-city areas.

***Class-based Pedagogies in the classroom: Jean Anyon, and Jill Duffield and her colleagues: Jean Anyon and Class-Based Pedagogy***

Jean Anyon's studies of the early 1980s (summarised in Anyon, 2011) were in five schools of four different social class types (two of the schools were 'working class', one was 'middle class', one 'affluent professional' and one 'executive elite' (capitalist) class. She showed distinct differences in pedagogy and expectations of teachers of children/ students from different social classes.

*The Working-class school*

*In the two working-class schools, work is following the steps of a procedure..usually mechanical, involving rote behavior and very little decision making or choice. Steps are told to the children by the teachers and are often written on the board. The children are usually told to copy the steps as notes.*

*Rote behavior was often called for in classroom work. The children had no access to materials. These were handed out by teachers and closely guarded. The teachers continually gave the children orders. Only three times did the investigator hear a teacher in either working-class school preface a directive with an unsarcastic "please," or "let's" or "would you." Instead, the teachers said, "Shut up," "Shut your mouth," "Open your books,"*

*The Middle-class school*

*In the middle-class school, work is getting the right answer. If one accumulates enough right answers, one gets a good grade... Answers are usually found in books or by listening to the teacher. Answers are usually words, sentences, numbers, or facts and dates; one writes them on paper, and one should be neat.*

*The Affluent-Professional School*

*Work is creative activity carried out independently. The students are continually asked to express and apply ideas and concepts. Work involves individual thought and expressiveness, expansion and illustration of ideas... The products of work in this class are often written stories, editorials and essays, or representations of ideas in mural, graph, or craft form. The products of work ... should show individuality.*

*The Executive-Elite School*

*In the executive elite school, work is developing one's analytical intellectual powers. Children are continually asked to reason through a problem, to produce intellectual products that are both logically sound and of top academic quality..... The teachers were very polite to the children, and the investigator heard no sarcasm, no nasty remarks, and few direct orders. The teachers never called the children "honey" or "dear" but always called them by name.*

Jill Duffield and associates

Pedagogies — the teaching and learning methods used by teachers and pupils — vary according to the pupils' social class. Duffield et al. (1998), influenced by Bourdieu, followed two classes in each of four Scottish schools through their first two years of secondary education, observing 204 lessons. They found that children in the two working-class schools spent between 3 and 6 per cent of their time in English class discussion compared with 17 to 25 per cent in the middle-class schools. Pupils in predominantly working-class secondary schools were given more time-consuming reading and writing tasks than children in middle-class schools and had less opportunity for classroom discussions. 'Teachers of English in the two middle-class schools were more likely to give a reading or writing assignment as homework leaving time in class for feedback and redrafting written work'.

This seems in many ways to replicate the findings of Bowles and Gintis' (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America* referred to below, concerning the class-based reproductive nature of the curriculum of schools and to Bernstein's (1977) work on pedagogies in the classroom.

### ***Bowles and Gintis: Schooling as economic reproduction***

For Bowles and Gintis (1976) it is the 'hidden curriculum' rather than the actual 'formal' or subject curriculum which is crucial in providing capitalism with a workforce which has the personality, attitudes and values which are most useful. The structure of social relations in education develops the types of personal demeanour, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social-class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationships of education — the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work — replicate the hierarchical division of labour. Thus there is a structural correspondence between the social relations of the education system, and those of production.

Bowles and Gintis suggest that school values correspond to exploitative logic of the workplace, whereby pupils learn those values necessary for them to toe the line, to fit uncomplicatedly, into menial manual jobs. For such children/ students, the passive subservience (of working-class pupils to teachers) corresponds to the passive subservience of workers to managers, the acceptance of hierarchy (teacher authority) corresponds to authority of managers, and the system of motivation by external rewards (that is, grades rather than the intrinsic reward of learning and discovering) corresponds to being motivated by wages rather than job-satisfaction.

### ***Althusser: Schooling as ideological reproduction***

Althusser was concerned with a specific aspect of cultural reproduction, namely, ideological reproduction, with the recycling of what is regarded as 'common sense' — in particular, with an acceptance of current capitalist, individualistic, inegalitarian, consumerist society and economy.

How does the school function as an ISA? Althusser suggests that what children learn at school is 'know-how'.

*[b]esides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, rules of respect for the socio—technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. The school takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years in which the child is most 'vulnerable', squeezed between the family state apparatus and the educational state apparatus, it drums into them,*

*whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology in its pure state (Althusser, 1971).*

### **Rikowski: Schooling as the Development of Labour Power, and the crucial Role of Teachers**

For Rikowski (2001, 2002) schools do not just play a major role in reproducing educational, social, cultural and economic inequality, schools and colleges and universities – education- is 'is a key process in the generation of the capital relation; this is the skeleton in capitalist education's dank basement' (2001). explains,

*The substance of capital's social universe is value. Or, more specifically, capital's existence rests on surplus value -Labour-power, the capacity to labour (or labour capacity) is the primordial form of social energy within capital's social universe. (Rikowski, 2001)*

Rikowski highlights two aspects to the social production of labour-power- skills- and willingness to use those skills- attitude! Firstly (Rikowski, 2001) 'the development of labour power *potential*, the capacity to labour effectively within the labour process'. Secondly, there is 'the development of the willingness of workers to utilise their labouring power, to expend themselves within the labour process as value-creating force'. He points to the focus on 'attitudes' in recruitment studies, and 'the exhortations of employers that schools must produce 'well motivated' young people, with sound attitudes to work, recruits who are 'work-ready' and embody 'employability'.

Rikowski ascribes a special place for teachers, trainers and educators, because they are crucial to 'producing the single commodity - labour-power - on which the capitalist system rests. This gives them a special sort of *social power*. They work at the chalkface of capital's weakest link, labour-power'. Hence '[T]eachers are in a special position regarding their capacity to disrupt and to call into question the capitalist class relation'- they can subvert, colonise, hegemonic curricula and pedagogies, and 'insert principles of social justice into their pedagogy' (2001).

### **Part Four: Two types of Marxist analysis: Culturalist neo-Marxism and Structuralist neo-Marxism**

Culturalist neo-Marxists, such as Resistance Theorists, criticise Structuralist neo-Marxists for focusing on the way in which the capitalist economic structures 'determine' state policy, with the capitalist state 'inevitably' reproducing the capitalist system within and through education.

Culturalist neo-Marxist writers suggest that teachers and schools can make a difference, that they can work to, and have some degree of success in promoting, an ideology, understanding of, and commitment to, for example, antiracism and anti-sexism. Culturalist neo-Marxists emphasise the degree of 'relative autonomy' that teachers in classrooms, individual schools, and Departments of Education, and governments can have in relation to the demand of Capital, in relation to what capitalists, the large corporations, would like them to do. As such they refute what they see as the pessimism, determinism and fatalism of structuralist neo-Marxists, and stress the power of human agency, the power of people to intervene and to change history.

A further feature of Culturalist neo-Marxists is the retreat from class analysis into forms of identity analysis and identity politics. 'Race', gender (and other) oppression(s) are deemed to be of equal, or 'parallel', or in the case of Critical Race theory for example, of

being more important to focus on academically, programmatically, politically, than issues of social class and the Capital - Labour Relation.

Deborah Kelsh and I (Kelsh and Hill, 2006, see also Hill, 2001) present a detailed critique of Culturalist neo-Marxism, for example that of Michael W. Apple, and his neo-Weberian analysis of class. We criticise those 'who have participated in the conversion of the Marxist concept of class to a descriptive term by culturalizing it -pluralizing it and cutting its connection to the social relations of exploitation that are central to capitalism'.

We continue,

*As the revisionist left now uses class, the term 'social class' refers to social divisions, social strata, that are effects of market forces that are understood to be (relatively) autonomous from production practices, that is, from the social relations of capitalism that are the relations of exploitation between labor and capital (Kelsh and Hill, 2006:4-5. See also Farhamandpur,2006).*

Apple (2006:680) accuses an unspecified 'mid-Atlantic' group (by whom he was referring to Peter McLaren, Mike Cole, Dave Hill, Paula Allman, Glenn Rikowski and co-thinkers) of being Marxist fundamentalists, of being 'Bowles and Gintis look-alikes, of being mechanistic and deterministic, seeking to purify' 'the' Marxist tradition of the taint of culturalism and of the sin of worrying too much about, say, gender and race at the expense of class'. He was, in turn replied to, by Glenn Rikowski, who critiques Apple's 'neo-Weberian, mainstream sociology of education, with its radical veneer (in which Marx plays an inhibited role) and its dalliances with postmodernism' (2006:68).

## **Conclusion**

Neoliberals and Postmodernists explain contemporary developments in society and the restructuring of schooling and education systems, for example the 1988 Education Reform Act in England and Wales, and the subsequent marketisation of and fragmentation of the schooling system through diversity in types of schools, as reflecting the increased diversity of society, the increased self-perception of people as consumers.

Marxist interpretation, whether Culturalist neo-Marxist or Structuralist neo-Marxist, is quite different. Such changes are seen as rendering the schooling and education systems as more locked into and more supportive of the current requirements of capitalism.

I think that Culturalist neo-Marxists have two major theoretical, and thereby, political agitational and organisational flaws.

*Firstly*, they are too starry-eyed about the 'relative autonomy' of teachers and schools and education state apparatuses, and about the possibility of major change through the education system. With 'human agency', with human resistance, and collective class consciousness and action, Marxists would argue, then, although there are major difficulties, people can successfully struggle to change events and systems — at micro-levels and at societal levels. In this struggle for social justice the ideological state apparatuses of education can play an important role. But educational change, to misquote Basil Bernstein (1970), cannot compensate for or overthrow (capitalist) society. *Secondly*, I do think that Culturalist neo-Marxists, and, in the political field, reformists, social democrats, downplay, indeed, subvert and impede, class analysis and class struggle prioritising identitarian analysis and identity politics.

We are faced with the imposition of the capitalist dream for education- to produce and reproduce a hierarchically skilled and unequally rewarded labour force that is socially and politically quiescent and integrated with no dissonance, resistance, into capitalism. The capitalist strategy, in the USA, in England, elsewhere, is the same at various times and in different countries, to:

- rubbish and underfund the state school system, then propose vouchers/ pre-privatisation (e.g. Academy Schools and Free Schools in England, Charter Schools in the USA);
- outlaw or circumscribe teacher membership of trade unions;
- enforce individualised pay bargaining/ merit pay/ Performance Related Pay for teachers;
- end tenure/ secure contracts for teachers
- suppress and compress deep (societal) critical thought, critical pedagogy and critical teachers.
- Welcome to education's dystopia in the USA. And perhaps England and other countries in 5 or 10 years' time? Unless we successfully resist.

Anti-hegemonic, socialist, Marxist struggle, must take place in arenas outside the classroom, school and education apparatus, and needs, as I and others argue (e.g. in Hill, 2012, 2017) (Marxist) analysis, activism, organisation, party, (socialist/ Marxist) programme. And that analysis must be a Marxist class analysis. This is a revolutionary Marxist programme, to replace, overcome, overthrow, go beyond capitalism, to abolish the Labour - Capital relation, to progress into a democratic Socialist Society. In this, in the forthcoming period, youth have a major role to play.

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