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## **State Theory and the neo-Liberal Reconstruction of Schooling and Teacher Education: a Structuralist neo-Marxist critique of Postmodernist, Quasi-postmodernist, and Culturalist neo-Marxist theory**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the adequacy of various theories of the state, in relation to the restructuring of schooling and initial teacher education (ITE) and education more widely between 1979 and 2000 in England and Wales by both Conservative and New Labour governments.

The analysis advanced is *Structuralist neo-Marxist*. I distinguish this from a *Culturalist neo-Marxist* analysis, which lays greater stress on a number of aspects of agency and autonomy. I also briefly critique *Postmodernist* analysis, and, in more detail, what I term *Quasi-Postmodernist* analyses, associated with Stephen Ball.

### **Summary**

**In Part One: Policy on Teachers and Teacher Education England and Wales 1979-2000**, I set out the major policy developments of the period and locate these within *the progressively bigger pictures* of schooling, education, and wider government policy. I then analyse the underlying hegemonic projects of capital.

**In Part Two: How do Different Theories Explain these Changes?** I relate these policy changes to contemporary theories with their analyses of the relationships between *Capital, Class, State, and Government*, and *the role of Discourse, Agency and Resistance*.

The theories discussed are *Postmodernism*, *Quasi-Postmodernism* and *Culturalist neo-Marxism*. This last analysis comprises a political economy variant (associated with Michael Apple and Geoff Whitty) and a Resistance Theory variant (1) associated with Peter McLaren in his pre-structuralist phase and with Henry Giroux in his pre-postmodernist writing (2). Both types of culturalist neo-Marxism stress the relative autonomy of institutions/ apparatuses (such as schooling and initial teacher education) from and within the state, and the relative autonomy of individual agents (such as teachers, teacher educators, students). I argue that these theories fail to explain the policy changes.

In **Part Three: Structuralist Neo-Marxism and its Explanatory Value**, I suggest a *structuralist correction to Culturalist neo-Marxism*, advancing a new concept - *Althusser Extended: Economic Determinism in the Last Resort*. This observes and seeks to explain dominant shifts within global, European and domestic national state policies. In relation to the central issue of government changes to ITE, I attempt to show that in order to explain the restructuring of education systems in late capitalist states, social class must be centrally placed. Social class is, ontologically, an aspect of what capital actually *is*. This is downplayed or ignored in alternative theories.

I conclude briefly with some implications for policy and agency.

## **PART ONE: POLICY ON TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES 1979-2000**

### *The importance of teachers and teacher educators*

Both Conservative and New Labour governments have attempted to 'conform' both the *existing* teacher workforce and the *future* teacher workforce (i.e. student teachers) and *their* teachers, the reproducers of teachers- teacher educators. Why conform the teachers and the teacher educators at all? Like poets, teachers are potentially dangerous. But poets are fewer and reading poetry is voluntary. Schooling isn't. Teachers' work is *the production and reproduction of knowledge, attitudes and ideology* (Althusser, 1971; Harris, *passim*; Apple, 1979; Ainley, 2000).

Successive government 'reforms' of both the work of teachers and ITE are an attempt to control and 'mould' new teachers and student teachers, to prepare them for what governments have seen as the task of the economic, ideological, and cultural (re-) production of future generations of labour power, cohorts of workers, citizens (3). To some extent teachers are, like doctors, relatively socially prestigious, and have some power individually and collectively to legitimate or de-legitimate the current hegemonic project of capital. They also have the power of effective organised resistance (through their trade unions and quasi-unions) to government policy. Moreover, teachers are not widely perceived to be state functionaries, and may for this reason be attributed with extensive critical power.

### *The State and the Restructuring of Initial Teacher Education*

In order to consider theoretical approaches to policy developments over the past twenty-one years, then it is necessary to consider an account of these changes that relates them to the broader project of capital.

In education policy, the Conservative governments' re-forming schools and ITE between 1979-1997 has been described as part of a 'Conservative Restoration'. This concept is developed, for example, in Apple (*passim*) and Shor (1986). The term 'restoration' needs developing. In the latest stage of capitalism *the contracting state* is not so much a restoration, as a *restructuring* of the state into a contracting state in two senses of the word: concentration of power to the centre,

and contracting (i.e. franchising) as a mode of operation (Ainley and Vickerstaff, 1993). This is part of a 'neo-liberal restoration'.

Ideologically the policy changes have sought to orient, to reconstruct teachers away from supporting *one-nation* attitudes and policies and toward supporting a *two-nation* hegemonic project (Hall, 1983; Gamble, 1983, 1988; Jessop, 1990; Ainley, 2000). The British State, in the period of economic growth of the post-war three decades, focused on a *one nation hegemonic project*, typified by welfarist, corporatist, social, economic and fiscal policies, and by one-nation rhetoric. In the 1960s, especially, 'education for education's sake' was widely supported, for 'the full flowering of the individual'. In addition, education rhetoric and policy exhibited an avowed, social class-based social justice dimension. Unlike New Labour, Conservative government and think-tank policy and discourse was, with very rare exceptions, unmitigated two-nation rhetoric. The poor got poorer, the excluded got vilified, their benefits cut or withdrawn.

Currently, New Labour's rhetoric in education, as in wider policy areas, espouses a socially inclusive *one-nation* rhetoric. This, however, exists alongside and is contradicted by a *two-nation* moral authoritarian, exclusivist rhetoric, geared to reincorporating *some* of the socially excluded (the deserving poor) into the one- (deserving)-nation. At the same time, however, it vilifies the others, 'the undeserving poor', those who refuse, or fail to climb out of their social exclusionary status.

These contradictory discourses are matched in the policy arena by an *overall* adherence to, a continuation and a deepening of neo-liberal (and neo-conservative) education policies based on a regime of low public expenditure and privatisation, and that are essentially competitive, selective, divisive, hierarchically elitist (4). Neo-liberalism, through its stress on flexible, de-regulated labour markets actually generates *more* of those described as 'social excluded.' Neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies are, contradicted, but scarcely impeded, by some examples of inclusivist, redistributionist, Social Democratic micro-policies (Gamarnikow and Green, 1999; Hill, 1999, 2000a, b; Muschamp et al, 1999; Power and Whitty, 1999; Docking, 2000) such as Chancellor Gordon Brown's largesse in his July 2000 public expenditure plans for 2002-2005 (5). In education policy, the comprehensivist inclusivist, 'one-nation' policy ideal has been demonised and replaced in policy terms- by both parties.

#### *Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses in Schooling and Initial Teacher Education*

Dale observed how the State reformulation of education policy since the 1970s has involved not merely the promotion of particular values but also the exclusion of others:

*there is a qualitative change in the nature of control over the education system ... there is a change in the core problems of the State, bringing about a tighter - and quite possibly different - specification of the requirements of each of the state apparatuses, and the necessity, following the re-specification, of attempting to curtail all state activity which now appears to be irrelevant or non-effective. (Dale, 1989:38)*

Changes to, the curtailing of, schooling and initial teacher education have been effected through the *repressive* as well as *ideological* means available to the State (see Althusser, 1971; Poulantzas, 1972; Hill, 1989, 1990). As Althusser suggests, *every Ideological State Apparatus is also in part a Repressive State Apparatus*, punishing those who dissent:

*There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus...Schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks'. (Althusser, 1971:138)*

Ideological State Apparatuses have internal 'coercive' practices (for example, forms of punishment, non-promotion, displacement, being 'out-of-favour'). Similarly, Repressive State Apparatuses attempt to secure significant internal unity and wider social authority through ideology (for example, through their ideologies of patriotism and national integrity). For Althusser, the difference between an ideological and a repressive apparatus of state is one of degree, a matter of whether force or idea predominates in the functioning of particular apparatus (see Benton 1984:101-102). It is a matter of debate as to whether Ofsted and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) are primarily ideological or repressive state apparatuses.

Between 1979-2000, the relative autonomy of education state apparatuses diminished remarkably. This is despite the increased autonomy and self-regulation which apparently derives from de-regulation (as, for example with 'self-governing' Universities, further education colleges and schools). Within this deregulation are hugely increased surveillance and control mechanisms- compulsory and nationally monitored assessments, publication of performance league tables and a policy emphasis on, 'naming and shaming', closing, or privatising 'failing' schools and LEAs (Jeffrey and Woods, 1998; Thrupp, 1998; Woods and Jeffrey, 1998).

By means of Ofsted, and the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) and its replacement TTA, 'providers' of ITE are rigidly controlled. They can now have their resources reduced, their staff contracted- made redundant, retired/pensioned off, dismissed, staff specialisations thereby altered, and specialist centres, with their staffing expertise and resources, closed (6).

Alongside legislation and statutory circulars - such as the Education Reform Act of 1988, the 1994 Education Act (setting up the Teacher Training Agency), and the various requirements for initial teacher education - there has been:

- 1) A discourse of sustained criticism, under both Conservative and New Labour governments of 'trendy' and 'politically correct' liberal- progressive and socialist-egalitarian forms of schooling, and of teacher education (e.g. under New Labour, Blunkett, 1999; Woodhead, 1999) (7). For Whitty, these two separate discourses, 'both state and market forces imply a 'low trust' relationship between society and its teachers' (Whitty, 1997:307) with a resulting denigration of professional autonomy.
- 2) Sustained ministerial and media 'spinning', slanted presentation of government advisory reports such as the HMI and Ofsted *New Teacher in School* reports of 1988 and 1993 respectively (HMI, 1988; Ofsted, 1993; see Blake and Hill, 1995).

- 3) The weakening of teachers' union power, the diminution of their national pay, conditions and negotiating arrangements.
- 4) The diminution of the 'core' of full time teachers on permanent contracts and the accompanying increase of the 'peripheral' teachers on part-time and short-term contracts, and the forthcoming stratification of the teaching force through the introduction of different pay scales and Performance Related Pay (Ainley, 1999; Allen, 1999).
- 5) The abolition of corporatist arrangements with a majority of teacher union members, such as the Schools Council, which endorsed and prioritised the input of teachers' unions and representatives to curriculum developments, *pace* New Labour's setting up of a General Teaching Council- a body with less powers and little intended corporatism.
- 6) The substantial control of teachers' work via the selection of educational content through the National Curriculum and its associated publishable assessment results. This is even more apparent under New Labour with the heavily prescriptive 'Literacy Hour' and 'Numeracy Hour' in Primary schools. This also applies to the ever more prescriptive 'national curriculum for teacher training', with its very tightly prescribed 'standards' under the Circular 4/98 (DfEE, 1998). These intensified the regulation of ITE 'standards' (to be attained prior to Qualified Teacher Status) of the 1992 (Circular 9/92) (DFE, 1992) and of the 1993 (Circular 14/93) (DFE, 1993a) criteria. They also followed, in most respects the Conservative government criteria and their pre-election proposals in 1997 (TTA, 1997) (see Hill, 1999).
- 7) The prescription of curriculum content has been accompanied by a virtual exclusion of the study of equal opportunities issues, and of the sociological, political and psychological aspects and contexts of learning, teaching and schooling. Spaces for the development of 'critical reflection' virtually squeezed out (8), a development exacerbated by the partial replacement of four year by three-year and other, shorter, undergraduate ITE courses.
- 8) The insistence on subject, as opposed to topic-based inter-disciplinary Primary curriculum (DFE, 1993b). New Labour has extended this pedagogical control by insisting that unless mixed ability methods are being markedly successful in a particular school, then the setting of children by ability should become the norm (see Woods and Jeffrey, 1998; The Government, 1999:10).
- 9) The increased managerialisation of schooling and intensification of teachers' work, with 'teachers...driven to burnout' (Whitty, 1997:305), and the proletarianisation of teachers in schools and in higher and teacher education (Harris, 1982; Carlson, 1987; Ainley, 1994, 2000; Allen et al.1999).

Why should the State restructuring of education identified by Dale and, in particular ITE and schooling, have taken this particular course since the late 1970s?

In response to the declining profitability of British capital within this increasingly competitive and deregulated international economy, the *logic of capital* has required that education and training systems should, a) be geared more directly to the perceived vocational and economic imperatives of national capital, and, b) provide ideological support for the restructuring of the British state - the economy, polity and society - in accordance with the needs of British capital (Green, 1997; Cole, 1998; Hill, 2001a). Conservative government changes to schooling since 1979, and to ITE in the period 1984-1997, under both the Thatcher and Major governments, showed direct relation to international economic competition in their chosen strategy of

attempting to create a low-wage, low-skill, neo-Fordist (Brown and Lauder, 1997) offshore economy with increased levels of social and academic *differentiation*. New Labour appears to be continuing a *neo-liberal* competition/low public expenditure policy aimed at creating a modernised high-tech, 'post-Fordist' 'fast capitalist' economy (Rikowski, 1999; Neary and Rikowski, 2000). Indeed, 'Britain under the Labour government has gone further than any other European country in adopting and implementing' the transnational business project for education generated and disseminated through key organisations of the international economic and political elite such as the Organisation for Economic Cupertino and Development (Hatcher 2000a: 1; see also Hatcher and Hirtt, 1999).

## **PART TWO: HOW DO DIFFERENT THEORIES EXPLAIN THESE CHANGES?**

I have so far associated policy changes with historical developments in the relationships between capitalism, state and government. In pursuit of a wider theoretical explanation, I now look to relevant aspects within postmodernist, quasi-postmodernist and culturalist neo-Marxist theories. Since I have (co-) written on the problems of postmodernist analysis elsewhere (9), I simply summarise those criticisms. In addition, since some of the criticisms applied to quasi-postmodernist theory and to Culturalist neo-Marxist relative autonomy theory also apply to state autonomy theory, I do not refer specifically to state autonomy theory (10).

### **The Problems with Postmodern Analysis**

#### *Capital, State and Class*

The limited analytical and political validity of postmodernism is evident in its account of the relationship between state and capital, particularly when this is applied to the restructuring of ITE, and to the bigger picture of the restructuring of education and of social and economic policy. In its reliance on post-Fordist 'New Times' economic concepts (see Hall and Jacques, 1989), postmodernism posits the death of class and diminishes the significance of the capital-state- government relationship in the implementation of policy, as well as in resistance to those policies.

Major aspects of recent and continuing policy changes in schooling and ITE are: marketisation and differentiation of schooling and of routes into teaching, apparent de-regulation of schools, pseudo-consumer choice- where entry into school or 'teacher training' is related, *inter alia*, to cultural capital (Liljander, 1998; Hill, 2001b), the salience of quality control, and the end of 'totalising' mass provision and uniformity in schooling and initial teacher education. These *appear to postmodernists* to be a manifestation, and indeed, in some cases, a vindication, of postmodern fragmentation, of consumerisation and heterogeneity.

However, 'to regard the espousal of heterogeneity, pluralism and local narratives as indicative of a new social order may be to mistakes phenomenal forms for structural relations (Whitty, 1997: 300) (See also Apple and Whitty, 1999). Post-Fordist changes in production and consumption, where they are taking place, are not fundamentally altering workers' relations to the means of production, even if many more are 'self-employed' and/or now work at home.

Postmodernist analysis, therefore, can be seen as a theoretical extrapolation of sectorally (and, indeed, on a global scale, geographically) *limited* economic and social change.

State policy on ITE is neither free-floating, nor a superstructural correspondence to what are mistakenly perceived to be overall changes in a post-Fordist economic base. Conservative government changes, substantially continued (indeed, deepened, see Hill, 1999) by New Labour, are

*underpinned by market-led strategies ...in line with the current requirements of late capitalist societies [a consideration] denied, ignored, or underplayed or else the changes are designated merely as 'postmodern' in the discourse of postmodernism. [This omission] serves to uphold the Radical Right in their two-nation hegemonic project... incorporating the creation of a hierarchy of provision in the public services... in which education...has become a central target. (Cole and Hill, 1996: 27-28)*

The postmodernist shift of conceptual emphasis from capital, state, class and solidarity affects the postmodernist view of the relationship between capital, the state and education policy. Hartley, for example, is a postmodernist who locates ITE changes *only partially* within the economic imperatives of capitalism (1993: 92, cf. 1997). Like Usher and Edwards (1994), he profoundly underestimates both the intention and effects of government policy. For example, he suggests that the decline of academic disciplines in ITE is due to their 'being rooted in the age of modernity', and that 'in the culture of postmodernism, we should not be surprised by this' (ibid.: 91). Such passive acceptance of the displacement of theoretical tools for reflection on the social is highly questionable. Having expelled social class as a salient objective social phenomenon within contemporary society, Hartley (1993, 1997) cannot therefore *recognise* the essentially class-based policies of the British State within the educational arena (11).

#### *Localism, Contingency, Identity and Resistance*

Postmodernist analyses of educational, social and cultural change clearly indicate the weakness of concentrating on the 'small scale', the local, the specific, the contingent, and the micro-level. For example, the focus on fractured subjectivity and fractured solidarity, typical of postmodern and postmodern feminist writing (e.g. Biesta, 1998; Lather, 1991, 1998; Butler, 1990, 1998) is rooted in postmodernism's theoretical refusal to recognise the validity of the concepts of solidarity for social class, or 'women', or 'race'.

Since the refusal of solidaristic concepts also *ensures* the theoretical inability to construct a mass solidaristic oppositional transformatory political project, the 'big picture' of overall state policy and capitalist oppression is necessarily ignored, along with the 'big movement' of, for example, social class or women's solidarity, or, presumably, gay and lesbian solidarity, or, indeed, any mass movement.

In this respect, postmodernism's tunnel vision and myopic limitations have particular consequences when it comes to, *first*, the theoretical de-constructive analysis and assessment of developments within state policy, and, *second*, an inability to agree on and define a re-constructive socially and economically transformatory vision of the future. *A third*

consequence is its inability to draw up and develop a politically and effective project and detailed programme to work towards and actualise that social and economic vision, and a *fourth*, to define, or secure a politically effective agreement on a political strategy- to suggest how to get there. A *fifth* consequence is an inability to define what *effective* and solidaristic role radical educators might play in that political strategy. As far as I am aware, no postmodernist theorist, of any theoretical bent, has gone beyond *deconstruction* into constructing a coherent programme for *reconstruction*. This is precluded by a postmodern theoretical orientation. This applies to Giroux's most recent work (1999) as much as to his tentative suggestions of what a postmodern school might look like (in Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991, critiqued in Hill, 1993). It also applies to his first avowedly post-Marxist, postmodern book (1993). Similarly, Usher and Edwards (1994) suggest that any 'reconfiguration is provisional and open to question'. What this 'reconfiguration' looks like, in both cases, is redolent of 1960s individualistic, student-centred ultra-pluralism with its attendant dangers of separat(e)ist development. Theorists such as Giroux are genuinely trying to reconcile postmodern anti-foundationalism with a modernist metanarrative and political project – but they are attempting to square the circle.

I now proceed to discuss in more detail the postmodern emphasis on localism, on discourse, and its analyses of social class, capitalism and the capitalist state in relation to the 'quasi-postmodernist writings of Stephen Ball and his colleagues.

### **The Problems with Quasi-Postmodernist Analysis**

#### *Pluralism and the attack on 'economic reductionism'*

Ball's specialisms within his sociological analysis are his *focus on the micro-politics* of schooling and education policy and his use of a (Barthian) concept of resistant human agency and autonomy in the transmutation of (government regulatory curricula) texts. He sees these as 'writerly'- capable of being co-written and transformed. He criticises what he terms 'reductionist Marxism' for adhering to,

*a theoretical analysis which is rooted in a conception of economic forms which have increasingly less relevance to the specifics of high-modernist, post-Fordist, multi-cultural western societies and a set of backward looking 'possibilities' arising from the critique of those forms ... In practice there are no conceptual links in the theoretical chain which they stretch from capital to educational practice. Because their a priori position eschews or trivialises mediation and interpretation they must rest their case upon untheorised or invisible relations between capital and the state, the state and policy and practice. (Ball, 1994:178-9)*

Ball finds this position susceptible to exactly those criticisms which Stuart Hall (Hall, 1988:170-171) aims at the 'labourist left', because,

*it does not understand the necessarily contradictory nature of human subjects, of social identities. It does not understand politics as a production. It does not see that it is possible to connect with the ordinary feelings and experiences which people have in their every day lives, and yet to articulate them progressively to a more advanced, modern form of social consciousness. It is not actively looking for and working upon the*

*enormous diversity of social forces in our society. It doesn't see that it is in the very nature of modern capitalist civilisation to proliferate the centre of power, and thus draw more and more areas of life into social antagonism. It does not recognise that the identities which people carry in their heads - their subjectivities, their cultural life, their sexual life, their family life and their ethnic identities, are always incomplete and have become massively politicised. (cit. Ball, 1994:179-180)*

In this instance, the pluralist perspective advocated by Ball is related to social identities, to forms of consciousness and principles of motivation, and is set against Marxist reductionism. This is in line with the 'New Times' proposal, defined in 1989 by Hall and Jacques, that the transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist economy has involved cultural changes which, in turn, have resulted, if not in the disappearance, or 'death', of class, than in its subsumption into and derogation into one identity among many. As they have no Marxist analysis of social class (because Marxism – for Hall and Jacques at least – is also 'dead'), they are in no position to pronounce on the 'death of class' from a Marxist perspective. As Sanders, Hill and Hankin (1999) make clear, social class is a necessary feature of capitalist society.

There is detailed data indicating the salience of class-consciousness and of social class and its modern re-composition and redefinition (Marshall et al., 1988; Kelly, 1989; Crompton, 1993; German, 1996; Sanders, Hill and Hankin, 1999, Hill and Cole, 2001). Similarly, there is little denial of the existence of a small group of people owning tremendous material wealth, wielding immense power, sharing similar cultural backgrounds and aspirations, often (but not necessarily) reinforced by close family and other personal ties, who defend and promote their own interests within both the economic field of extraction of surplus value from their workforces, and in the policy field.

In fact, a theoretical reply to Ball's view of subjectivities needs a reference to the Marxist formulation of class theory, which perceives classes as internally differentiated entities. Class, for Marx, is not simply monolithic. Marx took great pains to stress that social class, as distinct from economic class, necessarily includes a political dimension which is in the broadest sense 'culturally' rather than 'economically' determined (see *The Poverty of Philosophy* [1847] in Tucker, 1978).

Postmodernists object to a concentration on class and to an emphasis on class-consciousness *per se*, on the grounds that it denies or suppresses the facts of 'social difference'. As Harvey observes:

*Concentration on class alone is seen to hide, marginalise, disempower, repress and perhaps even oppress all kinds of 'others' precisely because it cannot and does not acknowledge explicitly the existence of heterogeneities and differences. (1993: 101)*

One of the most influential aspects of postmodernist and poststructuralist writing has been the account of identity in terms of fragmented, de-centred subjectivity. I have acknowledged, with Sanders and Hankin, that,

*in some respects we recognise this as an advance on former monolithic 'vulgar Marxist' accounts of social class which substantially ignored questions of ethnicity, sex, sexuality in both theoretical terms and in terms of political action and mobilisation. Thus, we would argue that the concept of decentred subjectivity is both correct and possesses useful explanatory power when we come to confront the question of declining class-consciousness. (Sanders, Hill and Hankin, 1999:113-114)*

Some postmodernists admit that class remains a possibly valid basis of identity (given that no identity is 'essential' and all are constructed). Postmodern feminists - strategically over-privilege cultural notions of identity and under-privilege material explanations of human and social class behaviour. This emphasis on 'identitarian' analysis and politics has reactionary implications. (12)

Whereas sex or 'race' identities are exploitable (and admittedly are, on a near universal basis), the nature of class exploitation- a class exploitation which is gendered and 'raced'- is fundamental to capitalism. Capitalism can survive with 'race' equality, for example. Indeed, for neo-liberals, these are desirable meritocratic attributes of an economy and education/training system. But to conceive of social class equality and the continuance of capitalism is a contradiction in terms. Social class is necessary to the constitution of capitalist society. To show that social class is really 'dead', or, at any rate, has lost its objective salience in society, postmodernists and quasi-postmodernists would have to assure us that expressions of antagonistic social class interests are not fundamental to the nature of capitalist society. Relying on strike statistics, voting patterns or survey evidence only scrapes the surface. The 'death of class' implies the end of capitalism. But Ball provides neither an account of the constitution of capitalist society, nor an analysis of its demise. Marxist analysis, on the other hand, would go beyond superficial 'analyses' and seek to discover the new forms in which class antagonisms are expressed. Only if no concrete social expressions of antagonistic social interests could be found would the 'death of class' start to make sense, but the evidence shows the contrary (see Rikowski, 1996).

*Human Agency, Ball and Barthes: throwing out the baby with the Ba(r)thwater*

Ball and his co-writers concentrate on human agency, resistance and what they see as the success of adapting and modifying, or colonising, state policy. Using Barthian concepts of texts being 'writerly' or 'readerly', they talk of the National Curriculum as a 'writerly text', being 'not so much "implemented" in schools as being "re-created", not so much "reproduced" as being "produced"' - a cycle which emphasises the contextualisation and re-creation of policy.

Thus, the micro-political processes of schools provide the milieu for policy recontextualisation and mutual re-definition. This is expressed most emphatically in the summary of how the National Curriculum has been 'read' in various schools:

*While schools are changing as a result, so too is the National Curriculum. This leaves us with the strong feeling that the state control model is analytically very limited. Our empirical data do not suggest that the State is without power. But equally...such power is strongly circumscribed by the contextual features of institutions, over which the state may*

*find that control is both problematic and contradictory in terms of other political projects. (Bowe and Ball with Gold, 1992:120)*

Ball's pluralist revision includes the 'writerly' emphasis on discourse and text, which leads him (1990) to consider the spoken and written intentionality of leading elite figures involved in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Evans and Penney (1995) criticise Ball's focus on the microanalysis of discourse. They focus in particular on the internal disagreements within what they term 'the New Right' on the PE working parties, pointing out, however, the coercive role of the government and state, its use of non-discursive forms of power. Thus they note that,

*as in the making of other NC subjects, central government control over the curriculum was often exercised subtly through an expression of discursive power, but it also drew on positional and material forms of power. The actions of the members of the working group appointed by the Government to 'advise' on an NCPE were consistently regulated by both discursive codes which contrived to establish a particular form of social order (cultural restoration), and production codes which reached out to a(n)(economic) context (p.42). (see also Evans, Davies and Penney (1995).*

The same points about text, discourse and state power can be made about teacher education policy. CATE and TTA circulars can be read in different ways. A degree of conversion/subversion can be made at the micro-level - in individual lectures, or staff appointments, for example. Yet this potential to co-produce, to subvert the intentions of these Circulars is less potent than the power of the TTA and Ofsted to insist on their implementation (Hill, 1996). In a discussion of state policy, an emphasis on policy recontextualisation within Ball's policy cycle thesis gives too much power to human agency and underestimates the Hillcole Group's judgement on the Radical Right in education, that 'force, much more than consent has been the basis of its influence' (Hillcole Group, 1993: 4).

Ball appears as a pluralist with added Foucault (the Foucauldian emphasis on the dispersal of power) and Barthes plus dashes of 'critique' - i.e. aspects of neo-Marxism - and therefore to occupy what Troyna and Hatcher describe as a 'critical pluralist' position, 'a revision of conventional pluralism designed to take account of the structured inequality of power in capitalist societies' (Hatcher and Troyna, 1994: 157).

This particular aspect distinguishes Ball's approach from *culturalist neo-Marxist theorists* as well as from the more *structuralist neo-Marxists*, with whom he nonetheless shares several other critical concerns relating to his concern for social justice and his analysis of the effects of the market in schooling (e.g. Gerwitz, Ball and Bowe, 1995). Unlike full-blown postmodernists, Ball and his quasi-postmodernist colleagues presumably regard the increasing inequality, for example in schools or, it might be argued, in the production of teachers within a status hierarchy of routes/institutions into teaching, *not* as an inevitable feature of postmodernity and of post-Fordism, but rather as a particular Radical Right set of responses (by both Conservatives and New Labour) to such post-Fordism.

Ball's difference from postmodernists is that, of the two broad types of postmodernist along the postmodern continuum (see McLaren, 1994a, b; Giroux, 1994; Cole and Hill, 1995, 1996, 1999;

Cole, Hill and Rikowski, 1997,) one end of the continuum (anchored by Nietzschean postmodernists of reaction) simply shrug their shoulders at anti-egalitarian effects of postmodernity (poverty being just one aspect of difference). The second end of the continuum (resistance postmodernists), lacking both a theory of the state and a theory/project of solidarity would differ from Ball. They passionately share his distaste for the inequality of the Radical Right agenda, but virtually ignore the state in a movement of resistance, calling instead for resistance by ('non-totalitarian') coalitions of micro-interests.

*Delimitation: Capital, the State and Autonomy*

In a related critique of Ball's policy recontextualisation thesis, Dale (1992) criticises approaches similar to Ball's as 'severing implementation from formulation of state policy (which) involves a serious misunderstanding of the role of the State in education policy' (p.393). For, on the crucial issue of state theory, Ball is ambivalent. On the one hand, he *does* theorise the state, locating the restructuring of education within a hegemonic project of capital. However, his emphasis on the degree of autonomy available to teachers to *co-produce* and thereby recreate texts such as the National Curriculum, marks a shared interest with -yet a theoretical distinction from- various forms of neo-Marxism, on the central question of the relative autonomy of the state. He attempts 'to replace the modernist theoretical project of abstract parsimony with a somewhat more post-modernist one of localised complexity' (1990b: 14). While he talks of post-Fordist education, he accepts that a postmodern culture is not dominant, and repudiates notions of hyper-reality, of fractured and commercially dominated individual selves. For these reasons, Ball's position is not fully postmodernist and, I suggest, is more appropriately comprehended as *quasi-postmodernist*.

With regard to the economy-state- education relationship, Ball suggests that,

*While the social composition of the state ensures a sympathetic hearing for the interests of capital, the state also responds to other interests and has other concerns. There is no absolute relationship here between the political and the economic: the state develops and pursues its own independent purposes. Thatcherite education policies, in particular, are marked by a combination of the ideological, technocratic, pragmatic and popular. (cited in Hatcher and Troyna, 1994:159)*

The conventional Marxist riposte to the supposed autonomy of the state is that history is littered with the literal and figurative corpses of state rulers who were in fundamental conflict with the existing national dominant class, and who attempted to assert their autonomy.

As Ball's theory weakens the power of the state through the process of the local, recontextualisation of state policy, so it attenuates the link between the state and the interests of capital. These aspects relate to Ball's uncertainty regarding structural limitation as a whole:

*I am struggling here with not wanting to 'give away' materialism - but neither wanting to accept an unproblematic, law-governed, normative version of social and educational change. We desperately need to account for the inconsistencies of social reproduction, and the 'cracks, fissures and contradictions' .... which appear within Thatcherism.... The reality of fiscal crises, changed strategies of accumulation and mode of production, and*

*concomitant changes in the mode of regulation and the role of the state are not in question; but their effects in the field of education cannot just be read off (as many writers want to do). (Ball, 1990:16-17)*

He suggests an important difference between recognising that there are boundaries to the possibility of structure, and arguing that those possibilities are structurally pre-ordained. He supports the idea that,

*Structural limitation ... is especially important for understanding the sense in which economic structures 'ultimately' determine political and ideological structures, and make some of these possible forms more likely than others, but they do not rigidly determine in a mechanistic manner any given form of political and ideological relations (Olin Wright, 1979:15-16, in Ball, 1990:13).*

For Ball, the relative autonomy of the 'political' and the 'ideological' from the 'economic' is best characterised and theorised as *delimitation* as opposed to *determination*.

This issue of state power and effectiveness is a central problematic for Ball. It lies between the smaller and the bigger picture, the local story and the metanarrative, within the link this paper is pursuing - that is, the link between the historical account and the wider analysis of the restructuring under consideration.

### **PART THREE: STRUCTURALIST NEO-MARXISM AND ITS EXPLANATORY VALUE**

#### **The Problems with culturalist neo-Marxism**

If contemporary theories and analyses such as postmodernism and quasi-postmodernism do not address the big picture, how then are recent and current changes to the structure and to formal and informal content/curriculum of initial teacher education and schooling to be explained?

Culturalist neo-Marxist theorists exhibit some of the same problems of underestimating the structural limitations on autonomy, as do quasi-postmodernists, though to a lesser extent. Theorists such as Dale, Apple and Whitty *do* illuminate how and where the current project, or intentions and activities of capital, and its discursive rhetoricians have resulted in the neo-liberal and neo-conservative restructuring of education systems (Apple, e.g. 1993a, 1996; Dale, 1989; Whitty, 1985, 1994, 1997). However, they do not adequately demonstrate the salience of economic determination within 'the big picture'. I will argue that they over-emphasise the importance of culturalist-idealist (as opposed to structuralist-materialist) analysis, and that they also over-emphasise various aspects of autonomy and disarticulation in the relationships between capital, state, government, education, and teachers/ teacher educators.

There are variations in specific projects of different fractions of capital, for example between manufacturing and finance capital, between multinational and national capital, between Atlantic and Euro-centred capital, between post-Fordist and neo-Fordist capital (see, e.g. Cole, 1998). However, culturalist neo-Marxists underestimate the ultimate and effective unity of

capital in Britain regarding the extent and effectiveness of state intervention in making schooling and initial teacher education *unashamedly* fit for capital, with the consistent attempts at repressing social democratic, socialist and liberal-progressive ends of education. This underestimation casts doubt upon their claims about the relative autonomy of education state apparatuses and agents.

### *Articulations and Disarticulations in the Policy Process*

There is, manifestly, *a* degree of relative autonomy attaching to education (and other) state apparatuses. They do not simply carry out all central or local state requirements. But state agents such as teachers and teacher educators *do* carry out and 'deliver' the curriculum. They *do* test for the 'standards' and SATs and are, albeit frequently under protest and/or fear, complicit in the current neo-liberal project for education. The spaces for oppositional activity within and by the educational state apparatuses have been squeezed tight, though not shut.

Schools and teacher education institutions *do* possess *a* degree of relative autonomy - from the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) - due to contradictions in Government policy, discontinuities in micro- policy, disarticulations between the vertical and horizontal levels of Government (Offe, 1975; Therborn, 1978), as well as the workings of the apparatuses of the education system itself. In addition, there is occasional Ministerial backtracking on certain aspects of schools policy, internal inconsistency, competing claims, micro- and macro- political, ideological and economic considerations, short-term crisis management, long-term crisis management, *refraction* (Freeland, cited in Whitty, 1985:94), *filtering* (Offe, 1975), and *resistance* (e.g. Giroux, 1983a, b). These can modify or disrupt policy.

Beyond this element of derived autonomy, contemporary theoretical analysis needs to answer the larger questions of the extent to which teachers and lecturers can exercise agency within educational contexts - and how much freedom individuals and apparatuses have for counter-hegemonic, radical or indeed revolutionary transformative action. At the theoretical level, a difficulty with culturalist neo-Marxist theory is that it diminishes not only the meta-explanation but also the *meta-analysis*, along with the importance of class, of capitalism and of state power. This is due to the acceptance of the concepts of *over-determination* (Althusser, 1971; Lipietz, 1993), and the post-Althusserian concept of *delimitation* (c.f. Whitty, 1985; Dale, 1989; Jessop, 1990; Ball, 1990).

Such concepts over-emphasise relative autonomy, and the complexity and disarticulation in five ways. First, the relationships between capital and the state; secondly, within and between the economic, ideological/cultural and the political regions of the state; thirdly, between different fractions of the capitalist class and their ideological and political representatives in the Radical Right; fourthly between different vertical levels and different horizontal sectors of state apparatuses- the autonomy of schools and education departments/schools; and, fifthly, the autonomy of individual actors- teachers and teacher educators.

Culturalist neo-Marxist education theorists have moved too far away from economic determination, too far away from structuralist analysis, and therefore too far away from a concept of the big picture of capital, its attendant class conflict, and the policy and operations

of the overall conglomeration of state apparatuses (Callinicos, 1989; Hatcher and Troyna, 1994).

### **Structuralist neo-Marxism**

Two problems are immediately apparent with the structuralist neo-Marxist analysis I am advancing. Firstly, I recognise, in common with culturalist neo-Marxists, that state apparatuses perform a variety of 'sometimes conflicting' functions producing a labour force with the work skills necessary for continuing capital accumulation; legitimating the economic, social and political status quo; and securing social cohesion (see Dale, 1989:28).

Secondly, this paper itself focuses on the sectoral, the particular changes within initial teacher education and schooling. To deduce bold statements about the evolution of central state ideology from the activities in the evolution and activities of one particular state apparatus is not possible (as argued in Hill and Cole, 1995). However, if the 're-forming' of initial teacher education is contextualised within the larger scale policy and ideology - of the operationalising and restructuring of the wider ensemble of ideological and repressive state apparatuses - then the theoretical analysis of such relationships is indeed possible.

#### *A Structuralist Correction to Neo-Marxist Relative Autonomy Theory*

I suggest here an economistic correction to what can be seen as the above deficiencies of contemporary culturalist neo-Marxist theory and of its exaggerated notions of human agency and resistance. It is necessary to give greater weight in broad social explanation to the economic *contra* the political and the ideological. Callinicos develops Althusser's (13) concept of *over determination*, and elaborates the important concept of the *hierarchy of determination*:

*Althusser's genealogy of complex totality, his demonstration that the best Marxist thought has sought to understand social formations simultaneously as concrete wholes and as multiplicities of determinations, provides an important rebuttal of the argument that any totalisation necessarily involves the eradication of difference...conceiving a social formation as a multiplicity is not inconsistent with recognising a hierarchy of determination which materialist explanation seeks to respect. (Callinicos, 1993:44)*

Policy analysis regarding the specific apparatuses of teacher education must be viewed in terms of Althusser's 'complex totality' and 'concrete wholes' Such analysis needs to include, firstly, the *levels of state policy*, and secondly, *temporality*, the long or short-term aspect of policy. Whereas *micro-policy* and *short-term policy* may frequently exhibit the relative autonomy of state (e.g. education) policy from the logic of capital accumulation, *macro-policy* and *long-term policy* does not. (The 1970s rupture in the post-war political consensus, the break with social democracy, that Offe [1975], Dale [1989], Apple [1989] Hill [Hill 1990], Ainley [2000] refer to is inexplicable without reference to capital accumulation processes and crisis).

In the global view, differences and similarities exist in the various national struggles between capital and labour. In the advanced capitalist states in late twentieth and emerging twenty-first centuries developments and hegemonic projects have differed, differences explained by meso-

level theories analysing specific national political and economic circumstances. Yet the variation is limited.

It is possible to see that where the logic of capital as expressed in macro-policy and long-term policy is admitted, so aspects of *the two-nation hegemonic project* are becoming evident as part of the normal state response in relatively high wage Western advanced capitalist economies. There will, of course, be different levels of resistance in different states. Outcomes will vary. But they are varying, albeit in fits and starts, in a neo-liberal direction, whatever the names and histories of the governing parties. It is that *limited* nature of the *meso-* (national) level variation that is explained by the macro-level theory advanced in this paper.

When a *micro-level* policy such as the reconstruction of teaching and of teacher education is seen in the context of *'the big picture' of capital accumulation*, when local ITE changes are seen as part of a *macro-level* and/ or *long-term* overall policy, then the nature of those changes becomes comprehensible. Thatcherism's attempt to deal, for example, with a crisis of capital and its accompanying labour insubordination crisis involves a whole ensemble of state apparatuses, and included the quest for a more ideologically and politically compliant, economically low-waged, de-unionised workforce. This explains how teachers and teacher educators as a whole have been perceived and persistently targeted as (actually or potentially) resistant members of oppositional sectors.

#### *Althusser Extended: Economic Determination in the Last Resort*

For Althusser, *Economic Determination in the Last Instance* means, 'in the last "overdetermined" analysis. It is the bottom line. Although (and this is the fundamental difference of Marxist from non-Marxist analyses) Althusser did admit 'economic determination in the last instance', he added the qualification that, in overdetermined form, 'its bell never tolled'.

This concept of economic determination is unduly minimalist. As Hatcher has noted, 'it seems to me that we tend to operate with either temporal or spatial metaphors which distort the idea of determination. So, for example, Althusser's 'last instance' can imply that determinism only kicks in during pre-revolutionary crises, and until that rare event autonomy has full play. This is not true- it's pervasive' (Hatcher, 2000b). Althusser's unduly minimalist concept also allows Resnick and Wolff to interpret Althusserian 'overdetermination' as giving *equal weight* (my italics) to political, ideological and economic factors:

*Overdetermination offers a notion of base and superstructure as conditions of each other's existence... It permitted the construction of a theory of society in which no process - economic, political, cultural or natural - and no site of processes - human agency, enterprise, state or household - could be conceived to exist as a cause without being itself caused. All, whether human agent or social structure, became defined - within a web of mutual overdeterminations. (Resnick and Wolff, 1993:68)*

Althusser's concept is analytical and not related to any particular stage of capitalist development. However, the 'bell', of economic determination, that (for Althusser) 'never tolls',

is, at the current juncture of capitalism, now tolling. The theory of 'economic determination in the last instance' is therefore inadequate. Yet it can be extended, by the concept of *economic determination in the last resort* (14). This is a *periodised concept*, applying to particular stages in the development of capitalism (e.g. the early nineteenth-century laissez-faire period in Britain, and the post-1970s). Within such periodisation, it is *a concept referring to the nakedness of the primacy of the capital accumulation process*. It is important to note, particularly with reference to Hatcher's point above, that this is not a millennial or pre-revolutionary statement or stage. It refers to the current stage of capitalism.

There are three ways in which this nakedness is asserted: (i) in the *intentionality* of governmental discourse; (ii) in *media support* for that intentionality, and (iii) in creating *general awareness* of those intentions within the population at large, by conflating the interests of capital with those of society, where capitalism is 'naturalized as the unquestioned backdrop to everyday global life' (McLaren, 1999a: 171). This is recognised, for example in increased visibility and use of the term 'capitalism' itself, by both its supporters (e.g. 'venture capitalists', and by its opponents (e.g. the anti-capitalism demonstrations in Seattle and London in 1999-2000) (Cole, 2000).

In contemporary terms, *intentionality* refers not only to the open recognition by the ruling group of the primary purpose and logic of the capitalist state, a recognition of which it is always aware, but *also* to its willingness to propagate the structural requirements of the current, latest stage of capitalism as a dominant (neo-liberal) ideology, whatever the particular ideological nomenclature (e.g. 'Third Way') in use.

The argument that I am advancing here is concerned with the *extent of the nakedness* of capital accumulation in a particular phase. In both the post-war boom of the late 40s until the early 1970s, and post 1970s neo-liberalism, the capital accumulation process was pursued with just as much ruthless determination. The difference is not only how it is 'presented' in those two periods but in the very different political project of the ruling class, partly as a result of a less competitive economic context in a period of boom, partly, as a result, because of the greater ability of the state to pay for reforms. In both periods the 'economic' was equally determinant, but led to two very different ruling class projects, for explicable reasons relating to capital accumulation. I am not arguing that prior to the current period, state policy was *less* in the economic, political and ideological interests of capital accumulation than today. What I am arguing is, firstly, that such state policy in the current period is more openly stated, and, secondly, that it is more repressive.

With this concept, applying *economic determination in the last resort* to (teacher-) education state apparatuses, suggests that the current logic of capital requires less room for dissent, less room for critique, less room for oppositional school and teacher education curricula, less room for 'teachers as intellectuals' to challenge the hegemonic project of capital (see Giroux, 1988; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993; Hill, 1997a). Recent ideological and repressive changes in the schooling and teacher education state apparatuses can clearly be seen as elements of the economic determination of educational superstructural forms *both in an overdetermined 'last instance' and as determination 'in the last resort'*.

## CONCLUSION

There are a number of implications of this structuralist neo-Marxist analysis. The concept of 'economic determination in the last resort' represents a greater recognition of the role of force and of the repressive aspects and effectiveness of state apparatuses, than that held by the alternative analyses examined here.

In terms of *resistance* to the hegemony of capital, I wish to briefly refer two implications of this analysis. The first is the need for the development of a broad, solidaristic, political *strategy* of alliances and political activity centred on and with the class axiomatically oppressed and exploited by capital, the working class. The second relates to the *role of teachers and teacher educators*, whereby teachers and teacher educators act as public, critical, organic, transformative intellectuals, in activities that encompass and extend beyond the education state apparatuses and are part of a broader egalitarian political and economic programme for economic and social justice. A structuralist neo-Marxist perspective, while recognising its necessity, lays less trust in the efficacy of individual, localised, education sector specific action. It is more cautious about the space for autonomous agency by individuals, groups and apparatuses such as schools or schooling. It is more cautious about the likely effectiveness of such action in changing the capitalist system. It insists that, in order to strengthen this process- and the effectiveness of resistance and agency- an understanding of the relationships between national and global capital(ism), the state, the centrality of social class, and government policy (for example new Labour's 'third way' in education and broader policy) is crucial.

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## NOTES

1. Lynch and O'Riordan (1998) analyse the two variants of Culturalist neo-Marxism.
2. Peter McLaren describes his brief 'resistance' postmodern phase, as 'flirtations with 'post-Marxism' in some of my work in the late 1980s' (1999a: 179). His recent work, while acknowledging some strengths of some forms of postmodern analysis, is now unashamedly Marxist. See, in particular, McLaren, 1997, 1998, 1999a, b, 2000; McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1999, 2000; McLaren and Baltodano, 2000. For example, he criticises cultural Marxism as 'deemphasising the determining role of the economy in the production of hegemonic relations of domination and exploitation and fail[ing] to address a revolutionary praxis that included workers as wage-laborers' (1999a: 181)
3. For example, Rikowski's Marxist theory is based on an analysis of 'labour power'. He suggests that, *teachers are the most dangerous of workers because they have a special role in shaping, developing and forcing the single commodity on which the whole capitalist system rests: labour-power. Teachers are dangerous because they are intimately connected with the social production of labour-power, equipping students with skills, competences, abilities, knowledge and the attitudes and personal qualities that can be expressed and expended in the capitalist labour process. The pressure is on teachers and trainers to continually produce students with ever higher quality labour-powers. The State needs to control the process, therefore, for two reasons. First to try to ensure that this occurs. Secondly, to try to ensure that*

*modes of pedagogy that are antithetical to labour-power production do not and cannot exist. In particular, it becomes clear, on this analysis, that the capitalist State will seek to destroy any forms of pedagogy that attempt to educate students regarding their real predicament – to create an awareness of themselves as future labour-powers and to underpin this awareness with critical insight that seeks to undermine the smooth running of the social production of labour (Rikowski, 2000, developing on Rikowski, 1996, 1997, 1999; Fielding and Rikowski, 1997).*

4. Indeed, differentiation, facilitated, spurred on by the publication of test/ SATs/ GCSE results, also occurs *within* these sectors, as noted by Gerwitz, Ball and Bowe, 1995; Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1997; Thrupp, 1997, 1999, 2000; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000. This results in highly differentiated local markets in schools.
5. Despite the increases announced in July 2000 by Chancellor Gordon Brown for extra spending (including an extra £12 billion for education over three years) by 2005 public spending will have risen to only 40.5% of GDP which is still less than in John Major's last year (*The Guardian* 1999c) and 'a smaller share than in most other developed countries' (Coyle 2000), and less than the 49.9% in 1976 (Toynbee 2000). Toynbee also points out that the increase in funding on education under New Labour will be 3.8% over the Parliament till 2002, compared to John Major's 1.6%, but that Gordon Brown's first two years as Chancellor 'saw the lowest public spending in 35 years.'
6. For example, at the same time that I (with my specialism in the politics and sociology of education) was made redundant from West Sussex Institute of Higher Education in 1996, the Centre for Racial Equality was also closed down, its resources dispersed. Staff specialising in Special Educational Needs and 'Race' and Education were partially redeployed (see Hill, 1997c, d). Reid (1993) has commented on the virtual disappearance of Sociology from courses of initial teacher education.
7. See Lawton, 1992, 1995; Hill, 1994a, 1997b, for criticisms and examples of this discourse.
8. See Hill, 1989, 1990, 1994a, 1997a; Reid, 1993; Reid and Parker, 1995; Wilkin, 1996; Whitty, 1997.
9. I have tried to develop some of these arguments concerning post-Fordism and postmodernism in Hill, 1990, and with Mike Cole, in Cole and Hill, *passim*, Cole, Hill and Rikowski, 1997; McLaren, Cole, Hill and Rikowski, 2000.
10. For a critique of state autonomy theory in general (e.g. of Skokpol, 1979 and Ben-Tovim et al., 1981), and, as applied to 'race'- education in initial teacher education (by Gabe, 1991, 1994) see Hill and Cole 1995.
11. Work by Aronowitz and Giroux (1991), Butler (1990, 1998), Giroux (1992; 1994), Hargreaves (1993; 1994), Hartley (1993, 1997) and Kenway et al.(1993) all underplay the state-capital relationship. This theoretical underplay by postmodernism is criticised, by culturalist neo-Marxist theorists such as Apple (1993b); Whitty (1994; 1997) and Apple and Whitty (1999).
12. See Bourne, 1999; Cole and Hill, 1999; Kelly, 1999; Kelly, Cole and Hill, 1999; McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1999, 2000; McLaren, 1999a for a critique.
13. Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses Essay (Althusser, 1971) has been criticised on two main grounds. The first is that it is internally inconsistent. Barrett (1993) has argued the ISA essay is in two halves. The first half functionalist, the second half, (itself internally contradictory), developing the complexity of subjectivity. The second is that it is overly functionalist and overtly anti-humanist (Barrett, 1993; Callinicos, 1993; Giroux, 1983a; 1983b;) denying human agency, and denies class agency, explaining immobilism rather than change, failing to provide a motor for social change, (Sarup, 1984:15-17; 146-147; Larrain, 1979:154-161; Cole, 1988; Callinicos, 1993:41-42; 1993b; Balibar, 1993:11; Benton, 1984:102; Johnson, (1979:229-30).

Althusser's analysis, while structuralist, was not economically reductionist (Benton, 1994; Kaplan and Sprinkler, 1993). It was a reaction against a Stalinist, 'vulgar', version of the economic base determining in a linear fashion the political/ social/ ideological superstructure. Althusser, followed by Poulantzas, did introduce into his post-Stalinist Marxism the notion of relative autonomy, of disjunctions and disarticulations within and between different 'regions' of the superstructure, the juridico-legal and the ideological. However, and this is where Marxist analyses differ essentially from non- Marxist, he did posit/ accept 'economic determination in the last instance'.

14. This was first developed in Hill (1994b) and Cole and Hill (1995) and initially formulated with Cole and Williams, with subsequent reformulation following Hatcher's critique of the temporal metaphor.

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