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Consciousness and its Reproduction in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze links between our present educational system and the capitalist economic system within a Marxist sociology of knowledge framework in order to discern the applicability of Samuel Bowles' and Herbert Gentis' contention that higher education plays a crucial role in reproducing the class structure by reproducing class consciousness.

In order to accomplish this, the first section of this paper outlines a Marxist sociology of knowledge and ideology. Next, an argument is made that higher education functions in part to reproduce class consciousness. The role of community colleges in reproducing the class structure is emphasized. The concluding section draws contradictions between democratic theory and class reality in education.

This paper concludes that, while Bowles' and Gentis' argument contains several flaws, their work is a major step is expanding Marxist theory. The stability of the capitalist system cannot be explained solely in terms of false consciousness, rather the role of the educational establishment in reproducing appropriate worker consciousness is a necessary function education must perform in our society. We must recognize, however, that the determinate of consciousness remains a person's relationship to the means of production which rests on the generational inheritance of property and the subsequent division of the population into owning and non-owning classes.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS REPRODUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

This paper first took shape in my mind as a liberal critique of the system of higher education in the United States. As I read professional and popular work critical of our educational system, it became increasingly obvious that little systematic work has been done to analyze higher education from a Marxist perspective. Liberal critics focus on particular problems within the system rather than analyzing higher education as a dimension of a totality, of capitalist society. For example, Charles Silberman characterizes the schools by their mindlessness. Like other liberal critics, Silberman locates problems in education with individuals or conditions within the educational system. He fails to look at the educational system as a whole and its links to the capitalist economic system. Thus, Silberman predictably subtitles Crisis In The Classroom as The Remaking of American Education rather than The Remaking of American Society. For Silberman, problems are specific not systemic, therefore his solutions lie with changes in the school system rather than society.

The essential difference between liberal educational theorists and more radical, Marxist educational theorists

is not simply a matter of where each locates a problem or what solutions they find feasible. Although these hint at the real nature of their difference, which is rarely explicitly stated, they do not ordinarily define it. Liberal and radical theorists operate within two separate, incompatible paradigms. They do not share world views. The dominant liberal paradigm creates the base for a world view necessary to perceive the existing social order as legitimate and as one that will continue over time. The radical, Marxist paradigm questions the very legitimacy of the present social order and aims to bring about its collapse in order to create a new society. Thus, the function each sees for education, like their critical theoretical analyses of such function, must necessarily differ. This author proposes the Marxist paradigm is the only paradigm operating in sociology which can explain the essential nature of education in capitalist society.

Two hundred years ago:

> ...the college was an elite cultural community existing on the periphery of the social and economic mainstream.
>
> At Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, and a few others, some--but by no means all--of those who would enter the learned profession were trained and certified. The tradition of classical scholarship was maintained. Even among the economic elite of the day, college attendance was the exception rather than the rule, a cultural luxury more than an

> economic or social necessity. In fact, no part of the formal educational system, not even elementary education, was particularly central to the process by which the economic order was reproduced and extended.
>
> Higher education in the United States has come a long way in two centuries. Half of the relevant age group now attend post-secondary educational institutions. Colleges and universities have come to play a crucial part in the production of labor, in the reproduction of the class structure, and in the perpetuation and emendation of the dominant values and ideologies of the social order (Bowles, 1973:140; Bowles and Gentis, 1976:234-235; Katz, 1973:85-87; Hofstadter, 1973: 87-99; Potts, 1973:100-109).

This paper analyzes links between our present educational system and the capitalist economic system within a Marxist sociology of knowledge framework in order to discern the applicability of Samuel Bowles' and Herbert Gentis' contention that higher education plays a crucial role in reproducing the class structure by reproducing appropriate worker consciousness.

In order to accomplish this, the first section of my paper outlines a Marxist sociology of knowledge and ideology. My purpose in this part is to provide a theoretical background on which to develop an argument that higher education functions, in part, to reproduce class consciousness. In other words, class inequality cannot be explained solely on the basis of unequal access to education. Rather, education must be viewed as an

institution whereby consciousness can be reproduced to conform with the expected position an individual will eventually take in the occupational hierarchy. The work of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gentis will be used extensively. In the third section, a brief history of the evolution of higher education from 1960 to the present will be drawn with an emphasis on the emergence of the comprehensive community college in order to highlight the specific class character of higher education. The concluding section emphasizes contradictions between democratic theory and class reality in education and political and economic life generally.*

It is important to examine Marx's basic assumption that labor is the defining characteristic of the human species. Since my argument rests heavily on the validity of this assumption, the idea merits further consideration. If Bowles and Gentis are correct in their assertion that higher education serves to fit people into jobs which

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*Note: This paper is limited to studying the reproduction of consciousness in higher education. The writer does not examine in detail two important factors in the process of reproducing the social division of labor. These are: the importance of whatever prior educational experience the student receives before entering higher education--especially in the high school. Second, the role the family plays in the development of consciousness. For an elaboration of Bowles' and Gentis' thought concerning the function the family performs in reproducing consciousness, see their article entitled "The Long Shadow of Work: Education, the Family, and the Reproduction of the Social Division of Labor" (1975).

characterize capitalism as a mode of production and that these jobs do not constitute creative and meaningful work, then Marx's notion of 'species being' is of crucial importance because the capitalist system, in general, and the educational system, in specific, would be working to integrate each generation into a social system that does not meet the basic needs of the people. The ultimate collapse of both systems due to internal contradictions would become a problem necessitating a response on the part of the capitalist system to save the existing social order. In order to look at this problem in more detail, Marx's theory of alienation will be reviewed.

Marx displays in his theory of alienation the:

> ...devastating effect of capitalist production on human beings, on their physical and mental states and on the social processes of which they are a part (Ollman, 1971:131).

In the 1844 Manuscripts Marx presents his most general analysis of alienation. Although he abandoned the term in his later works, due to common misrepresentations of the idea, he never stopped discussing alienation and the processes and relations that are the result of alienated labor (Mandel and Novack, 1970:13-30). Thus, we can begin with the theory of alienation and use this as a guide to understand the importance of education in capitalist society in functioning to produce workers willing to work in a system which alienates them from

their species nature.

Marx's conception of man offers an excellent example of the dialectical outlook. For Marx, man is what he is now, he is what he has been, and he is what he can become. In other words, man cannot be understood unless one looks at his past, his present, and his future possibilities. Man remains in a continual process of becoming what he is. For Marx, man becomes what he is in the activities of his daily life:

> The whole character of a species--its species character--is contained in the character of its life activity; and free, conscious activity is man's species character (1964:113).

Thus, one can approach the study of alienation only from a point which acknowledges that another state is possible.

According to Marx, there are four aspects to the alienation of man's life activity that must be considered. Man is alienated from the product of his labor, from the act of production, from his species being, and from other men. Marx finds that "...the worker is related to the product of his labor as to an alien object" (1964:108). In the capitalist mode of production the worker gives up his claim to the product of his work. The object which labor produces "...confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer" (1964:108). No matter how desperate the worker's needs, this does not "...give

him a license to lay hands on what these same hands produced, for all his products are the property of another" (Ollman, 1971:144). The more the worker creates the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates against himself and the:

> ...poorer he becomes--his inner world--becomes, the less belongs to him as his own.... The worker puts his life into the object; but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object (1964:108).

Not only does his labor become an object, it becomes something that exists outside him, as something alien to him, "...it becomes a power on its own confronting him" (1964:108).

It is only by acting on nature that the worker can create. Nature is the material on which the worker's labor is realized. The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object: labor's realization is its objectification (1964:108). Marx finds that inherent in the nature of labor is the fact that the worker deprives himself of the means of life in a double manner (1964:109). First, that nature ceases to be an object belonging to his labor, and secondly, that it ceases to be a means of life for the physical subsistence of the worker (1964:109). In both respects the worker becomes a slave to his object, first, in that he receives work; and secondly, in that he receives a means of subsistence. Therefore, it "...enables

him to exist, first as a worker; and, second as a physical subject" (1964:109). The worker no longer creates his life by acting and working on nature, rather it is only as a worker that he can "...maintain himself as a physical subject, and that it is only as a physical subject that he is a worker" (1964:109).

For Marx, the essential relationship of labor is the relationship of the worker to production. But this is only one aspect of alienation. Estrangement is "...manifested not only in the result but in the act of production, within the producing activity, itself" (1964:110). If the product of labor is alienation, then production itself must be "...active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation" (1964:110).

In capitalist production, labor is external to the worker, it does not belong to his essential being. Labor appears as a means to life; it does not exist as conscious life activity. In his work, therefore, man:

> ...does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labor. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it (1964:110-111).

For the worker, his labor is the loss of his self. As a result, the worker:

> ...only feels himself freely active in his animal functions--eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal (1964:111).

The worker's labor is not his own, it does not belong to him, rather in it he belongs to someone else (1964:111).

We have considered alienation of human life activity in two of its aspects, the relation of the worker to the product of labor, and the relation of labor to the act of production within the labor process (1964:109-111). According to Marx, the third facet of alienated labor can be deduced from these first two. This aspect is the alienation of man from his species being.

Species being is a translation of the German Gattungswesen, a term used by Feuerbach, who takes as the Gattung mankind as a whole, hence the human species (1964: 241). In the Essence of Christianity, Feuerbach distinguishes between man and the brute. Feuerbach finds the essential difference between man and the brute is consciousness:

> Consciousness in the strictest sense is present only in a being to whom his species, his essential nature, is an object of thought...only (such) a being to whom his own species, his own nature, is an object of thought,

> can make the essential nature of other things or beings an object of thought.... The brute has only a simple, man a twofold life; in the brute, the inner life is one with the outer. Man has both an inner and an outer life.... Man is in fact at once I and Thou.... (1964: 241).

Marx uses many of Feuerbach's concepts but he gives them new meanings and new applications. Marx elaborates on Feuerbach's distinction between human and animal. Marx makes the crucial addition of labor or, more generally, the character of man's life activity as the central distinguishing feature of human beings.

For Marx, man is a species being because he adopts, both in theory and in practice, the species as his object and also "...because he treats himself as the actual, living species; because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being" (1964:112). Conscious life activity immediately distinguishes man from animal life activity. It is "...just because of this that he is a species being. Or rather, it is only because he is a species being that he is a conscious being" (1964:113). Because man is a species being his activity is free activity. Estranged labor reverses this relationship "...so that it is just because man is a conscious being that he makes his life activity, his essential being, a mere means to his existence" (1964:113).

Man proves himself to be a species being through his work upon the objective world (1964:114). Through and because of his work:

> ...nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of labor is, therefore, the objectification of man's species life: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created. In tearing away from man the object of his production, therefore, estranged labor tears from him his species life, his real objectivity as a member of the species and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken away from him (1964:114).

Estranged labor makes man's species life a means to his physical existence (1964:114). Estranged labor turns man's species being into a being alien to him, into a means to his individual existence. It "...estranges from man his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual essence, his <u>human</u> being" (1964:114).

The final aspect of alienation to be discussed is man's alienation from other men. This facet of alienation is an immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labor, from his life activity and from his species being. The proposition that "...man's species nature is estranged from him means that one man is estranged from the other, as each of them is

from man's essential nature" (1964:114). The estrangement of man, and "...in fact every relationship in which man stands to himself, is first realized and expressed in the relationship in which a man stands to other men" (1964:115). Within the relationship of estranged labor each man views the other by the relationship in which he finds himself as a worker (1964:115).

From the concept of estranged, alienated labor, Marx proceeds to analyze its consequences in real life. Since man's activity does not belong to him, it must belong to a being other than the worker. In earlier times, the:

> ...principal production appears to be in the service of the gods, and the product belongs to the gods. However, the gods on their own were never the lords of labor....
>
> The alien being, to whom labor and the product of labor belongs, in whose service labor is done and for whose benefit the product of labor is provided, can only be man himself.
>
> If the product of labor does not belong to the worker, if it confronts him as an alien power, then this can only be because it belongs to some other man than the worker. If the worker's activity is a torment to him, to another it must be delight and his life's joy. Not the gods, not nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over man (1964: 115).

Through alienated work, people produce relationships which put other people in positions of domination. The fundamental point is that the power of the capitalist is in reality the alienated power of the workers and, therefore, it can be

regained by the workers and controlled by the workers.

The United States educational system serves to integrate each new generation into the logic of the present social order. Education does not serve as the practice of freedom where one discovers one's life situation and works to change the conditions of his/her life.

The United States educational system cannot foster patterns of personal development which lie in the capacity to control the conditions of one's life. The United States educational system must reproduce the work force, therefore schools are:

> ...destined to legitimate inequality, limit personal development to forms compatible with submission to arbitrary authority, and aid in the process whereby youth are resigned to their fate (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:265-266).

Education in the United States has lost its cherished image of a scholarly sanctuary away from the pressures and conflicts of the external world (Karabel, 1972:33). The modern university does not exist merely to provide a value added benefit to anyone interested in the discovery of knowledge. Universities are irrevocably committed to the business of conferring rewards (Karabel, 1972:33). The university has become the training ground for an elite and those that cannot enter the educational system must hold the illusion that they could have succeeded if only they had worked harder.

United States education must serve to allocate and legitimate the distribution of rewards in United States society. Education cannot serve as a tool through which people could learn and organize to change their life situation. United States education mirrors the social relations of dominance, subordination, and motivation necessary to different levels in the capitalist mode of production. The importance of reproducing these social relations of production necessitates the correspondence between the social relations of school and work. Given our capitalist economic system, this correspondence must exist. The only real alternative educational system we can have is an alternative economic system. Alternative educational systems can differ only to the degree that they can still survive under an unequal, competitive economic system. The only desirable alternative in education lies with a revolutionary transformation of the United States economy.

A class analysis of education rests on the Marxian assumption that we are alienated from our species character. In the capitalist epoch, Marx believed that this alienation among working class people manifests itself as false consciousness. Working class people do not recognize their real material interests. They do not organize as a class to oppose the capitalist class. Instead they accept the alienated labor they must take in order to live. Marx also

attributes the continued functioning of the capitalist system to ruling class ideology. Through their ideology, the ruling class creates the ruling ideas that guide a society. Ruling ideas provide an integrative motive for society. Bowles and Gentis do not think this provides an adequate integrative explanation for society. They argue that the reproduction of consciousness through the schools is a necessary function of capitalist society in facilitating the transfer of people from school to alienated work conditions. Thus, through corresponding internal structures and relations, the schools reproduce a class specific consciousness necessary for the continuation of the capitalist economic system. Before outlining how consciousness is reproduced in the educational establishment, it is necessary to examine how consciousness develops within Marx's system.

CHAPTER I

A MARXIST SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Marx locates the existential bases of ideas in three principle social areas, mode of production, class and historical situation. In his introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Marx defines the mode of production as the guiding thread of his studies. He writes:

> ...in the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or--this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms--with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development

> of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure (1970:20-1).

The mode of production holds a central causal role in Marx's model. Cause, in this sense, means much more than a unidirectional cause to effect--in this case, economic foundation determining consciousness. Marx interchanges the term mode of production with several others, relations of production, forces of production, economic structure of society, social existence, economic foundation, with some of them appearing to include in their meaning part of the reality which they supposedly determine (Ollman, 1971:7). This does not imply that Marx was indeterminate in his conceptualization of such terms. Marx's model is neither mechanistic nor deterministic. It is not a simple or single causal model of historical analysis. Marx was not an economic or technological determinist. Such reductionism constitutes a simplistic interpretation of Marx's work instead of probing the complexity of Marx's conception of social reality.

In order to understand Marx's work, one must appreciate the nature of his conceptualizations. In the introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Marx defines his meaning of the concept of categories. He writes:

> Just as in general when examining any historical or social science, so also in the case of the development of economic categories is it always necessary to remember that the subject, in this context contemporary bourgeois society, is presupposed both in reality and in the mind, and that therefore categories express forms of existence and conditions of existence--and sometimes merely separate aspects--of this particular society, the subject; thus the category, even from the scientific standpoint, by no means begins at the moment when it is discussed as such (1970:212).

Marx did not give to his categories a power on their own, rather he understood them as manifestations of their own subject. We know reality through our categories. Thus, in studying Marx's categories one must comprehend the quality of his understanding of the interdependence of reality (see Ollman, 1971:12-26). Marx's purpose was to define specific concepts as tools to understand the reality he knew, not in devising a conceptual theoretical system to define reality.

In order to explore the complexity of many terms Marx uses, mode of production will be discussed in more detail. Mode of production encompasses more than the mere production of the material existence of individuals. Marx defines it as a:

> ...definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so

> they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production (1947:42).

Mode of production refers to both factors and relations of production (see Dobb, 1963:7-17; Edwards, Reich and Weisskopf, 1972:50; Marx and Engels, 1947:50). Consciousness develops as people develop their material production and their material intercourse and alters as they change their real existence. Consciousness has no independent existence. Men produce their own consciousness:

> ...real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these.... Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process (1947:47).

In The Poverty of Philosophy, Marx elaborates on the relationship between forces of production and social relations of production. He writes:

> ...M. Proudhon the economist understands very well that men make cloth, linen or silk materials in definite relations of production. But what he has not understood is that these definite social relations are just as much produced by men as linen, flax, etc. Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their

> mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist (1963b:109; see also Braverman, 1974).

Men produce their own consciousness in conformity with their social relations, which are bound with existing productive forces in society. Marx draws no direct causal laws for the development of any phenomenon. Consciousness is always in a state of development and must be viewed as a historical and transitory product of social relations of production (Marx, 1963b:109-10). Marx was not one in search of scientific formulas. He saw history marked by struggle and change. Man creates himself, his consciousness develops and changes not only after a revolution in the forces of production but also during a given historical epoch. Marx was a materialist, he saw that consciousness develops on the basis of an individual's life activity. Consciousness is not a phantom of the human brain, it is dependent on the material life process of an individual, on his labor (1947:47). We do not live in a world beyond our control. Consciousness arises because the human being is a social animal. People's consciousness arises and develops only from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other people. Consciousness "...is therefore from the very beginning a social product, and

remains so as long as men exist at all" (Marx, 1947:51). In consciousness there occurs the reflection of the material world in the life process of the brain, and this reflection is what constitutes consciousness (Cornforth, 1955:34). Consciousness is never anything but a reflection of material existence.

My analysis of the mode of production centers on the capitalist mode of production and the division of labor. Marx details in Capital conditions necessary for the existence of capitalist production. For capitalism to develop certain circumstances must occur that center in this:

> ...that two very different kinds of commodity-possessors must come face to face and into contact; on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to increase the sum of values they possess, by buying other people's labour-power; on the other hand, free labourers, the sellers of their own labour-power, and therefore the sellers of labour. Free labourers, in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, &c., nor do the means of production belong to them...they are, therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. With this polarisation of the market for commodities, the fundamental conditions of capitalist production are given. The capitalist system pre-supposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the

> means by which they can realize their labour. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process... can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage-labourers. The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production (1967a:714).

Marx sees the capitalist mode of production producing the deterioration of human labor power by robbing it of its normal conditions of development and function (1967a:265). The laborer produces, not for himself, but for the capitalist. The production of surplus value, or the extraction of surplus labor, is the specific end and aim of capitalist production, regardless of any apparent alteration in that mode of production. In capitalist production, the laborer no longer employs the means of production; now the means of production employ the laborer. Instead of being consumed by him as material elements of his own labor, they loom over him like an alien object. They consume him and their consumption becomes paramount for it is necessary to their life process which consists only in constantly multiplying the value of capital (Marx, 1967a:310).

Capital springs to life only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence meet in the market with the laborer selling his labor power (Marx, 1967a:170). Labor power appears upon the market as a commodity only when the laborer offers it for sale as a commodity. The laborer must sell his living self, he is not in a position to sell commodities in which his labor is incorporated. Workers must agree to such a sale because social conditions leave them no other way to gain a livelihood. In wage labor, the worker sells his labor power to the capitalist. He cannot sell his labor because it is his inalienable property; his labor is a part of his being. The capitalist purchases the worker's power to labor (see Marx, 1967a:537; Braverman, 1974:54). The capitalist buys the worker's labor power not his labor, thus in wage labor unpaid labor appears to be paid leading to an increase in capitalist absolute and relative surplus value. The capitalist pays the value of labor power and receives in exchange the disposal of the living labor itself. His:

> ...usufruct is spread over two periods. During one the labourer produces a value that is only equal to the value of his labour-power: he produces its equivalent. Thus the capitalist receives in return for his advance of the price of the labour-power, a product of the same price.... During the other period the period of surplus-labour, the usufruct of the labour-power creates a value for the capitalist, that costs him

> no equivalent. This expenditure of labour-power comes to him gratis. In this sense it is that surplus-labour can be called unpaid labour.
>
> All surplus-value, whatever particular form (profit, interest, or rent), it may subsequently crystallize into, is in substance the materialisation of unpaid labour. The secret of the self-expansion of capital revolves itself into having the disposal of a definite quantity of other people's unpaid labour (Marx, 1967a: 534).

This relationship between owners of capital and workers who possess nothing but their own labor power has no natural basis, neither is its social basis common to all historical periods (Marx, 1967a:169). This one historical condition, necessary for the existence of capital, the free laborer selling his labor power, announces the appearance of a new epoch in the process of social production. The capitalist epoch announces its arrival when "...labour-power takes in the eyes of the labourer himself the form of a commodity which is his property" to sell as wage labor (Marx, 1967a:170f).

Capitalism necessitates further development of the division of labor. Capitalism must be viewed in two respects: on the one hand as a natural, industrial stage, and on the other as a social stage with a mode of co-operation which itself is a productive force. With increased productivity needs and population, the division of labor

in capitalist society makes its true appearance with the division between material and mental labor. Marx connects the development of abstract ideas with the fundamental process of the division of labor. The formation of abstract ideas presupposes a certain development of men's productive powers and social relations. The development of social intercourse leads to the formation of ideas to which no directly perceptible object corresponds. Thinking becomes the province of mental as distinct from material labor, thus removing thinking from the realm of working life. In capitalist society the search is made to discover "pure" consciousness which exists apart from material conditions.

The subdivision of labor in class society blocks the natural, mutual interdependence of individuals among whom labor is divided. Man's activity is no longer voluntarily divided, rather it turns into an alien power opposed to him, his own activity enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. He no longer has a choice of activity. He must sell his labor power as a commodity. Thus, in capitalist society the worker loses control of his life activity, his work, he cannot sell commodities he creates, rather he must sell himself as a commodity. It is out of this contradiction between individual and communal interests that the form of the State arises as an independent form

of illusory communal interests. Since the State does not represent common, real interests all forms of struggle peculiar to it are illusory forms of real, class struggle already determined by the division of labor (Marx, 1947: 53-4).

Marx relates ideas, consciousness to their objective sociological bases, classes. In the Preface to Volume I of Capital, Marx identified class as the unit of his analysis in studying capitalist production. He writes:

> ...here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests (1967a: 10).

Throughout his work, Marx centers his analysis on class. Social relations are likewise based on class antagonisms. These relations are not "...relations between individual and individual, but between worker and capitalist, between farmer and landlord, etc." (1963b:100). In capitalist society, the laborer does not belong to "...this or to that capitalist, but to the capitalist class; and it is for him to find his man" (1973b:20). The worker must sell himself if he is to survive--he cannot be independent of the whole class of buyers, the capitalist class.

It is a class' relationship to the means of production that determines what relations and interests individuals

within the class objectively hold. The individual may imagine that his/her prejudices, illusions, sympathies, convictions or principles bind him/her to one class or another and these form the real motives for his/her activity. Marx does not deny this, he merely draws the material foundation for the existence of such principles basing them upon different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence. A class forms a superstructure of distinct sentiments, illusions and modes of thought out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations (1963a:47). The single individual derives such views of life through tradition and upbringing with his/her objective class position determining what ideas are transmitted. Capitalist production produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage-laborer (1967a:578)--and their corresponding modes of thought and consciousness.

Marx identifies our society, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, as splitting into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat (1948:9). The whole of the society must eventually fall into these two classes--the property <u>owners</u> and the propertyless <u>workers</u> (1964:106). In the capitalist epoch, the worker becomes divorced from the means of production, he/she owns nothing but his/her living self, his/her labor power which he/she must sell for a wage. He/She has no choice--he/she

sells himself/herself or he/she dies.

Mention has been made above of the objective determination of class, thus implying a subjective criterion which Marx uses in class determination. In the Preface to Volume I of Capital, Marx writes that an individual cannot be held responsible for relations "...whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them" (1967a:10). Objective class position and interests can be determined by relationship to the means of production, yet subjectively an individual may not identify with his/her objective class position. Writing of the coalition between workers and the petty bourgeois to form the social-democratic party, Marx defines the introduction of a subjective criterion for class determination:

> One must not form the narrow-minded notion that the petty bourgeoisie, on principle, wishes to enforce an egoistic class interest. Rather, it believes that the special conditions of its emancipation are the general conditions within the frame of which alone modern society can be saved and the class struggle avoided. Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they

> are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent (1963a:50-1).

Social stability (or chaos) cannot be guaranteed by class. Individuals do not always act according to their true class interests, they may subjectively identify with a class to which they do not belong. A person possesses a false consciousness if he/she does not accept the same problems and solutions which identify the real material interests of the class to which he/she belongs. Marx holds that true consciousness rests with the interests of the proletarian class. Thus, Marx allows for the fact that, in capitalist society:

> ...a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole (1948:19).

Marx makes a theoretical distinction between individual actions and actions of a class. Marx does not concentrate on an individual's subjective determination of his class position. Individual interests change more frequently than class interests which ideally remain the same. Marx

clearly distinguishes between what individuals profess to believe and how they act in practice. He writes:

> And as in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conception of themselves, from their reality (1963a:47).

Marx's perspective is not social-psychological, rather he looks at the whole and finds that individuals are forced to assume certain roles because of the historically given reality they happen to be thrust into, however much they may subjectively raise themselves above it.

In discussing objective and subjective criteria for class determination, it is useful to analyze Marx's distinction between a class-in-itself and a class-for-itself. A class-in-itself does not truly constitute a class because those individuals comprising it are not aware of their common relations and interests and are not engaged in common battle. They have not realized their common enemy, they have not developed any communication, or any form of organization. In analyzing the conditions of the French masses under the Bonapartes, Marx describes, in effect, a class-in-itself. He writes:

> The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live

> in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse.... Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. A small holding, a peasant and his family; alongside them another small holding, another peasant and another family. A few score of these make up a village, and a few score of villages make up a Department. In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented (1963a:123).

The theoreticians of the proletarian class can exist only in so far as the proletariat is not as yet developed to constitute a class. Theoreticians, at this historical

stage, meet the "...wants of oppressed classes, improvise systems and go in search of a regenerating science." But as history moves forward, and the proletarian struggle assumes clear outlines:

> ...they no longer need to seek science in their minds; they have only to take note of what is happening and to become its mouthpiece.... From this moment, science, which is a product of this historical movement...has ceased to be doctrinnaire and has become revolutionary (1963b:125-6).

Theoreticians and other workers, owners form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors (1947:82).

The interests of the owner and the interests of the worker are diametrically opposed to each other; they cannot be brought in harmony. It cannot be argued historically that the growth of capital will benefit the worker. An increase in capital widens the social division between worker and capitalist causing an increase in the power of capital over labor and a greater dependence of labor upon capital. The faster the worker builds the wealth of the capitalist the:

> ...larger will be the crumbs which fall to him, the greater will be the number of workers that can be called into existence, the more can the mass of slaves dependent upon capital be increased.... (1973b:39).

However much it may improve the material life of the worker, it:

> ...does not abolish the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the capitalist.... If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalist has widened.
>
> Finally, to say that 'the most favourable condition for wage-labour is the fastest possible growth of productive capital,' is the same as to say: the quicker the working class multiplies and augments the power inimical to it--the wealth of another which lords it over that class--the more favourable will be the conditions under which it will be permitted to toil anew at the multiplication of bourgeois wealth, at the enlargement of the power of capital, content thus to forge for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train (1973b:40).

The respective social interests of owners and workers cannot be reconciled--they stand in direct confrontation to each other. Capital may grow and workers may receive more money for their work, yet while their chains may be golden they are still alienated from their basic life-process, they cannot create their own life. Capital must be superceded if workers are to regain the ability to define their life.

Both the mode of production and the development of class consciousness are historically specific--a concept central to the whole of Marx's analysis. In the Manifesto of the Communist Party, he clearly defines struggle as specific to historical epoch. He writes:

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.
>
> Free man and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another.... In the earlier epochs of history we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations (1948:9).

Men make their own history, but:

> ...they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past (1963a:15).

The capitalist epoch does not just appear at a random point in history, rather it is an epoch which arises only after certain historical preconditions have been established.

It is only in capitalist production that the means of production assume the nature of capital. They acquire

this "...specific social character only under definite, historically developed conditions" (1967b:35). Likewise, the wage-laborer can only sell himself once he becomes separated from the soil and ceases to be a slave or serf of another. To become:

> ...a free seller of labour-power, who carries his commodity wherever he finds a market, he must further have escaped from the regime of the guilds, their rules for apprentices and journeymen, and the impediments of their labour regulations. Hence, the historical movement which changes the producers into wage-workers, appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these new freedmen became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire (1967a: 715).

In the capitalist epoch, workers exist in a historically specific and distinct position from the position of workers in an earlier epoch. Likewise, their social relations are historically specific as are their corresponding forms of consciousness. Having briefly analyzed a Marxist sociology of knowledge, Marx's conception of ideology will

be outlined now to see how ideology is bound to the three concepts previously discussed--mode of production, class and historical situation.

Ideologies, essentially products of the social development of ideas, take on a class character in stratified society. Different ideologies develop on the basis of different positions occupied by different classes in social production, their different relationships to the means of production, their different roles in the social organization of labor, their different ways of obtaining their share of the social wealth, and their different material interests. Different ideologies develop in the service of different class interests (Cornforth, 1955:68-70). Ideological development is conditioned by the material development of a society--by the development of the mode of production, the social relations of production, classes and the class struggle. Ideologies in capitalist society serve specific class interests.

In The German Ideology, Marx writes that:

> ...the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.... The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of material production are subject to it (1947:64).

Ruling ideas are the ideal expression of dominant material relationships. During any historical epoch, all individuals

must assume the ideas of the ruling class (ruling ideas must be seen as representing common interests, they must appear as the only rational, universally valid ideas an individual could hold); the ideas of the majority are subject to the ruling minority, otherwise there would be constant chaos.

The ideas which characterize a historical epoch will not be the same throughout the period, rather ideas, consciousness change from the beginning to the end of a given historical epoch. The ideas which characterize an epoch at its beginning are not the same as those marking its end. No social order is every destroyed before:

> ...all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society (Marx, 1970:21).

Likewise, ideas and conscicusness corresponding to such transitions in the material relations of production develop within the framework of the old society's ideas. Revolutionary ideas do not appear at the beginning of a historical epoch, they mature as the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing social relations of production, they presuppose the existence of a revolutionary class. Such a new class must represent its ideas as the common interests of all members of society,

thus the new class appears not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society confronting the one ruling class (Marx, 1947:66). The new class can do this because its interests are more connected with the common interests of non-ruling classes. Thus, one must characterize the society before the revolutionary class appears as a society in the state of progressive deterioration. The old ideas can no longer be held to represent the common interests of all, consciousness conflicts with the old productive forces of society and an era of social revolution begins.

Capitalist society is plainly in a state of progressive disintegration and decay (see Baran and Sweezy, 1966; Bowles and Gentis, 1976; Braverman, 1974; Edwards, Reich and Weisskopf, 1972; Gordon, 1971; Harrington, 1970; Marglin, 1974; Reimer, 1970, Robertson and Steele, 1969). Our society must be seen as progressing through a transitory state. The ruling, capitalist class strives to maintain ideological hegemony, yet revolutionary ideas are emerging. Here enters the importance of education. Education could be used as a means of understanding an individual's life situation, or schooling could be used as a tool of indoctrination, of ideology, on the part of the ruling class to legitimize the capitalist system and reproduce the social division of labor. Education by the State in capitalist society can be nothing but an attempt to reproduce a

consciousness of acceptance and deference to capitalist production and capitalist relations of social existence. In class society, the government cannot work to hinder the "natural" course of the division of labor by allowing the masses to become "educated," to realize their life situation, rather it must promote the school system as a means to legitimize such a division of function and, at the same time, to convince individuals that this is what they deserve. As Richard Shaull writes in the foreward to Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes 'the practice of freedom,' the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (1974:15).

Liberal critics of our educational system miss this crucial point. It is not some quirk on the part of some individual or other that makes our educational system in need of reform, rather it is, as Walter Feinberg and Henry Rosemont conclude "...society that is in need of radical change" (1974:5). Yet society cannot change unless people struggle to change it. In capitalist society, preconditions of socialist society are being established, yet people must act upon them if socialism is to become a reality. Marx,

as Michael Harrington observes:

> ...defined a possibility, not an inevitability.... For him, it was not ordained that history be socialist, but men could now struggle to make it so.... The good society cannot be willed into being by prophets or holy men or philosophers, but requires a certain level of economic development and, above all, the conscious activity of the millions before it can become true (1970: 40).

Before going further, it is important to ask why one needs to study Samuel Bowles' and Herbert Gentis' contributions to the sociology of economics and education. My work outlines how consciousness develops within Marx's system. Bowles and Gentis attempt in their work to fill in the gaps of Marxist theory. Believing the integrative explanation for society cannot be reduced to false consciousness or ideology, they argue that the reproduction of social relations of production depends on the reproduction of consciousness through institutions of reproduction, especially the family and the school (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:3-5; see also Bowles and Gentis, 1976). This section of my paper deals with how their work helps to extend Marxist theory and also where their analysis falls short in providing a complete integrative explanation for society. This section is divided into three parts each corresponding with the first section (mode of production,

class and historical situation): on reproducing consciousness, comprehensive community colleges and on present historical contradictions.

CHAPTER II

ON REPRODUCING CONSCIOUSNESS

The educational system is one of the mechanisms through which the social division of labor is reproduced in the consciousness of its participants. The economic system is stable:

> ...only if the consciousness of the strata and class it engenders remain compatible with the social relations which characterize it as a mode of production. Hence, the social division of labor must be reproduced in the consciousness of its participants. The educational system is one of the several reproduction mechanisms. By providing skills, legitimating inequalities in economic positions, and facilitating certain types of social intercourse among individuals, U.S. education patterns personal development around the requirements of alienated work. The educational system reproduces the capitalist social division of labor in part through a correspondence between its own internal social relations and those of the workplace (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:20).

Consciousness must be reproduced in capitalist society because the unity among the motive force of labor, consciousness, and the labor itself is not inviolable. The:

> ...unity of conception and execution may be dissolved...the idea as conceived by one may be executed by another. The driving force of labor remains human consciousness, but the unity between the two may be broken in the individual and reasserted in the group, the workshop, the community, the society as a whole (Braverman, 1974:51).

The special product of capitalist society is not the division of labor, which characterizes all known societies, rather it is the division of labor in the workshop (Marx, 1967a:359). Marx writes:

> Some crippling of body and mind is inseparable even from division of labour in society as a whole... manufacture carries this social separation of branches of labour much further, and also, by its peculiar division, attacks the individual at the very roots of his life.... (Marx, 1967a:363).

He continues:

> ...within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour-process...they distort the conditions under which he

> works, subject him during the labour-process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time.... (Marx, 1967a:645).

Braverman continues:

> While the social division of labor subdivides society, the detailed division of labor subdivides humans, and while the subdivision of society may enhance the individual and the species, the subdivision of the individual, when carried on without regard to human capabilities and needs, is a crime against the person and against humanity (Braverman, 1974:73).

Marx and Braverman distinguish between the social and the detailed division of labor. The detailed division of labor splits labor and consciousness. In capitalist society, alienated labor is reproduced on the level of personal consciousness (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:6). Workers cannot create their own life; they work and live for another, the capitalist. Since laborers are not working for themselves; they are not defining their life. The educational establishment provides the capitalist class with an institution through which worker consciousness can be molded. Before outlining the corresponding relations of the school and the workplace, it is necessary to look briefly at the composition of the labor force.

Capital accumulation has been the driving force behind the transformation of the U.S. economy (Baran and Sweezy,

1966:42-46; Bowles, 1973:141; Bowles and Gentis, 1976:204, 231; Braverman, 1974:53). The structure of U.S. education evolved in response to political and economic struggles associated with the process of capital accumulation and the extension of the wage-labor system to the vast majority of workers (see Bowles and Gentis, 1976). Capital accumulation, the concentration of the wealth in the hands of the few, is a necessary consequence of capitalist development. As capital accumulation increases, this process will continue to transform more and more of the labor force into wage-laborers.

Braverman does not accept the traditional dogma of delineating various layers of stratification by allowing questionnaire respondents to choose their own class nor does he accept an analysis of income as a sufficient criterion for a definition of class. The word "class" is:

> ...an abstraction. Its purpose is to enable us to identify--classify--the major groupings in society on the basis of their social roles and possibilities. This is founded on the premise that history is made by the masses of people who make up societies, and that therefore, if we are to make an effort to understand the past and influence the future of society, we must understand the social configurations and classes within society. Without social knowledge, we are likely to find ourselves socially powerless (Smith, 1974:174).

Class is not a thing, or an algebraic equation, rather class is a social relation, a relationship-in-process (Gorelick,

1975:14; see also Marcuse, 1941).

In Labor and Monopoly Capital, Braverman argues that the working class is not declining, but growing. Braverman, like Marx, defines the working class as "...that class which, possessing nothing but its power to labor, sells that power to capital in return for its subsistence" (Braverman, 1974: 378). The proletarian condition is:

> ...the lack of access to means of production or means of subsistence which, in a society of generalized commodity production, forces the proletarian to sell his labor power. In exchange for this labor power he receives a wage which then enables him to acquire the means of consumption necessary for satisfying his own needs and those of his family.
>
> This is the structural definition of the wage earner, the proletarian. From it necessarily flows a certain relationship to his work, to the products of his work, and to his overall situation in society.... But there does not follow from this structural definition any necessary conclusions as to the level of his consumption, the price he receives for his labor power, the extent of his needs or the degree to which he can satisfy them. The only basic interrelationship between structural stability of status and conjunctural fluctuations of income and consumption is a very simple one: Does the wage, whether high or low, whether in miserable Calcutta slums or in the much publicized comfortable suburbs of the American megalopolis, enable the proletarian to free himself from the social and economic obligations to sell his labor power? Does it enable him to go into business on his own account?

> Occupational statistics testify that this is no more open to him today than a hundred years ago. Nay, they confirm that the part of the active population in today's United States which is forced to sell its labor power is much higher than it was in Britain when Karl Marx wrote Das Kapital, not to speak of the United States on the eve of the American Civil War (Mandel, 1968).

The working class must be defined as that class which must sell its labor power in order to survive. An analysis of income or consumption is not a valid criterion for defining a class because it does not adequately define key relationships at the base of a society. What fundamental difference lies between a coal miner in West Virginia and a government bureaucrat in Washington, D.C. A major depression or recession would bring both down--and with them the middle class (Smith, 1974:180-181). The condition of wage labor remains the same. Some workers may work in a nice office, others may exercise a degree of creative judgment in their job, however neither exercises decision-making power over the purposes and product of their labor. Thus, while the appearance of the class structure in the United States has changed in the last 100 years, its essence has not (Smith, 1974:182).

The percentage of workers (as a percent of the total labor force) in the United States has risen from 50.7 percent in 1900 to 69.1 percent in 1970 (Braverman, 1974:379). By 1970, only one-tenth of the United States population

was self-employed (Braverman, 1975:53). In the past ten to fifteen years, our economy has transformed the vast majority of workers into wage-laborers (see Braverman, 1974). Our economic system must be seen as a system in transition.

The consciousness of workers--beliefs, values, self-concepts, as well as modes of personal behavior and development--is:

> ...integral to the perpetuation, validation and smooth operation of economic institutions. The reproduction of the social relations of production depends on the reproduction of consciousness (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:5).

The social relations of education replicate the social relations of production through a direct correspondence between school structure and class structure (Bowles, 1973:141-143; Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:5-7). Schooling:

> ...fosters and rewards the development of certain capacities and the expression of certain needs, while thwarting and penalizing others, and by tailoring the self-concepts, aspirations, and social class identifications of individuals to the requirements of the capitalist division of labor (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:7).

The educational system accomplishes this through the structural relations to which students are subjected (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:7).

Schools reflect in their internal structure the social relations of capitalist production. In capitalist production, bosses need workers who have internalized external values of rewards and who operate efficiently and with high motivation in an alienated work environment. The internalization of external rewards by the laborer (pay-status) and the student (grades-promotion) are essential to the stability of the capitalist system (Gentis, 1970: 299-300). Bowles and Gentis argue that this internalization of a false consciousness is the essential role education plays in reproducing capitalist relations of production. Employers have a variety of choice among workers with similar skills, what employers want are workers who exhibit types of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-images, and social class identification which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:7). It is the <u>experience</u> of schooling which is so important in reproducing a docile and alienated labor force (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:4).

Since most jobs require a class specific consciousness the task of the school is not a small one. The teacher cannot escape the conditions of alienated work any more than the laborer, the doctor or the technician. The teacher may imagine that he/she is relatively free from the demands of the labor market. The professor has at

least some control over his/her work:

> Given a sufficiently vivid imagination, he or she may even entertain illusions of social usefulness. However, the teacher's job has undergone subtle change. The educational efficiency binge of the 1920s led to the application of business management methods.... The concentration of decision-making power in the hands of administrators and the quest for economic rationalization had the same disastrous consequences for teachers that bureaucracy and rationalization of production had on most other workers. In the interests of scientific management, control of curriculum, evaluation, counseling, selection of texts, and methods of teaching was placed in the hands of experts. A host of specialists arose to deal with minute fragments of the teaching job. The tasks of thinking, making decisions, and understanding the goals of education were placed in the hands of high-level administrators. Ostensibly to facilitate administrative efficiency, schools became larger and more impersonal. The possibility of intimate or complicated classroom relationships gave way to the social relations of the production line (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:204-205).

Teachers reflect their alienation in their teaching methods (Cummings, 1975:48). Lectures, tests and grading reflect an elite-subordinate relationship between teacher and student. The classroom is not a place where one goes to interact and learn with other individuals, rather it is

a place where "...they tell you to do things and where they try to make your life unpleasant if you don't do them or don't do them right" (Holt, 1964:47).

Alienated labor is also reflected in the student's lack of control over his/her education. Such lack of control prepares the student for his/her eventual divorce from control over his/her labor. Thus school patterns its structure of social relations to reproduce capitalist relations of production (see Bowles, 1972, 1973, and 1974; Bowles and Gentis, 1975; Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975; Bramhall, 1975; Cummings, 1975; Freire, 1974; Gentis, 1970 and 1971b). Students are trained to accept the existing political, economic and social system. Alternative social systems are discussed critically. They are rarely seriously evaluated in an effort to raise group consciousness or to act to bring about a different social order.

The key to understanding the relationship between schooling and economic life in the United States is to define the essential structural similarity between their respective social relations. The classroom is structured to ensure punctuality, discipline, submission to authority, individual accountability for one's own work, and little student participation--personality traits thought essential to the continuation of the capitalist system.* Classes

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*Note: As Illich (1970) and Reimer (1970) note, and this author accepts, schools in centralized, bureaucratic state socialist societies carry out substantially the same functions in substantially the same ways. This point will not be repeated but should be kept in mind (see Bramhall, 1975).

start at an appointed hour and end at a specified time. The instructor maintains order in the classroom so that he/she can transmit whatever information he/she chooses. He/she can do this because he/she is in a position of authority; he/she has the potential to affect the course of his/her student's life. He/she has the grade--an "objective" measure of his/her determination of his/her student's ability. Grading is based on a psychology of fear (Robertson and Steele, 1969:18-60; Holt, 1964).

The grading system is built on basic elitist assumptions. One, that there are qualified experts who possess a body of knowledge which necessarily implies that learning is a passive process. Second, that teachers know what should be learned and are responsible for arranging it. Such a system cannot produce creative human beings. The:

> ...predatory, competitive, and personally destructive way in which intellectual achievement is rewarded in U.S. schools and colleges is a monument not to creative rationality, but to the need of a privileged class to justify an irrational, exploitative, and undemocratic system (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:108).

Treating the student as an inferior merely produces "pathetic wrecks" (Robertson and Steele, 1969:12).

As conditions exist in the educational establishment, so do they manifest themselves in the workplace. The

worker's job begins and ends at a set time. There is order at work, hierarchy reigns. The worker is subject to the demands of his/her superior. If he/she does not perform adequately, he/she faces the probability of being fired (see Robertson and Steele, 1969; Weaver and Weaver, 1969).

Given this correspondence principle between social relations of education and social relations of the work-place, one can analyze how different levels of education shape workers into different levels within the structure of production (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:8). The lowest levels in the hierarchy of production emphasize rule-following, middle levels encourage dependability and the capacity to operate without direct and continuous supervision, and the higher levels emphasize the internalization of norms and sensitivity to interpersonal relations within the organization (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:8). Similarily, lower levels of education, for example high school, tend to severely limit student activities. Students in community colleges enjoy more independence and less over-all supervision than students in high school, with four-year colleges exhibiting social relations similar to higher levels in the production process (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:8-9; Bowles and Gentis, 1976).

Even within a school, the social relations of different tracks conform to different behavioral norms (Bowles,

Gentis, Meyer, 1975:9). In community colleges, a separation is drawn between those in vocational programs and those in transfer curriculums. Vocational tracks emphasize rule-following and close supervision, while the college transfer track tends toward a more open atmosphere emphasizing the internalization of norms. As students master one type of:

> ...behavioral regulation, they are either allowed to progress to the next, or (they) tend to be channeled into the corresponding level in the hierarchy of production (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:8-9).

With increasing pressures for admission and tighter budgets in some four-year colleges, there is growing evidence that different tracks are in effect at this level (see Bowles, 1973). In fact, the National Board on Graduate Education has:

> ...issued a call for increased experimentation with 'nontraditional' programs serving 'new clienteles' and for the encouragement of greater diversity among graduate schools (Chronic of Higher Education, 1976:1).

The Carnegie Commission also supports the division of graduate education into a Doctor of Arts degree and the Ph.D. (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:208). Class stratification within higher education serves to keep the masses out of elite institutions and to fragment the cultural unity of the college community (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:208).

These differences in the social relations among and within schools reflect both the social backgrounds of the student body and their future economic positions (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:9). Thus:

> ...blacks and other minorities tend to concentrate in schools with the most repressive, arbitrary, and coercive authority structures, and which offer the most minimal possibilities for advancement--in all respects mirroring the characteristics of secondary job structures. Similarly, predominantly working class schools tend to emphasize behavioral control and rule-following, while schools in well-to-do suburbs utilize relatively open systems involving greater student participation, less direct supervision, more student electives, and in general a value system stressing internalized standards of control (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:9; Pincus, 1974:23-28).

Much of this description is familiar and has been documented many times (Edwards, 1970; Goodman, 1956 and 1962; Herndon, 1971; Holt, 1964; Kozol, 1967; Reimer, 1970; Silberman, 1970). Only recently has there been an attempt at statistical verification at the college level. Jeanne Binstock investigated the different patterns of social relations of higher education by analyzing college handbooks covering rules, regulations and norms (see Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975).

Table 1, drawn from Binstock, supports Bowles' and Gentis' argument. At all levels, two-year institutions

TABLE 1

THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
EMPHASIS BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

Ideological Domain		Academic Goals	
Broad:	private secular colleges and state universities junior colleges	Abstract:	private secular colleges and state universities teachers colleges
Narrow:	teachers colleges	Concrete:	junior colleges
Social Goals		Mode of Control	
Leader:	private secular colleges and state universities	Motivational:	private secular colleges state universities junior colleges
Follower:	junior colleges and teachers colleges	Behavioral:	teachers colleges

NOTE: The types of colleges are listed in each category in the order in which they appear in the spectrum delineated by the polar characterizations to the left of each list. For example, private secular colleges and state universities have the broadest ideological domains and teachers colleges have the narrowest, while junior colleges lie somewhere in between, according to Binstock.
SOURCE: Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975.

emphasize behavioral patterns associated with secondary job structures. Students at two-year colleges learn to follow rules, the most important personality factor at the lowest level of the hierarchy of production (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:12). This correspondence between the social relations of school and work is not accidental. Bowles and Gentis argue that this is a necessary extension of the nature of capitalist development. They write:

> At crucial turning points in the history of U.S. education, changes in the social relations of schooling have been structured in the interests of a more harmonious reproduction of the labor force, and usually through the direct intervention of elites most highly benefited by these changes. But in the day-to-day operation of the schools, the consciousness of social classes, derived from their cultural milieu and work experience, is crucial to the maintenance of the correspondences we have described (Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975:10; Bowles and Gentis, 1976).

Table 2 clearly demonstrates that two-year institutions emphasize rule-following while more elite four-year colleges and universities emphasize independence and self-motivation. The use of frequent quizzes is disproportionately higher in two-year colleges (84.7 percent) than in four-year colleges (68.4 percent) or universities (48.6 percent). There is closer teacher supervision at two-year colleges, and a heavy reliance on machine-aided instruction. Class

TABLE 2

ACADEMIC ACTIVITY OF AMERICAN COLLEGE FACULTY: 1969
(percentage distribution)

	2-year colleges	4-year colleges	Universities
Teaching methods in most/some courses			
Term papers	56.0	63.9	45.2
Frequent quizzes	84.7	68.4	48.6
Teaching assistants	2.2	12.2	30.5
Closed-circuit t.v.	7.7	8.4	6.0
Machine-aided instruction	27.2	15.3	11.3
Number class hours per week			
None	3.5	4.4	11.5
1-4	7.2	10.8	21.0
5-8	8.8	20.6	32.6
9-12	17.6	42.1	22.8
13 or more	62.7	22.2	12.1
Total students in classes			
None (incl. no answer)	3.4	3.8	8.8
Under 25	12.7	15.8	24.0
25-49	16.7	23.1	22.5
50-99	29.5	33.7	24.6
100-249	33.3	21.6	16.5
250 or more	4.4	2.0	3.5

SOURCE: Halstead, 1974.

hours per week average much higher at two-year colleges than at four-year colleges or universities. Finally, the number of students in classes at two-year colleges is consistently higher than the number of students in classes at four-year colleges or universities. The academic activity reflected in these statistics supports Bowles' and Gentis' argument. In the internal social relations of schools, education serves to reproduce an alienated class-specific consciousness necessary to meet the needs of capitalist employers.

Although Bowles' and Gentis' work is a significant step forward in expanding Marxist theory, it has some problems. Two will be examined here. First, their contention that schools are adequate in explaining the development of consciousness through a correspondence between the social relations of education and work. Second, their implication that the generational transition of the labor force rests on the basis of educational level rather than class position.

Schools do provide an excellent institution whereby worker consciousness can be reproduced to conform with expected roles individuals will take on the labor market. Are the schools sufficient, though, in explaining the development of consciousness through reproduction? Our economic system is in a state of transition. The labor market cannot be viewed as a constant. Workers cannot

be guaranteed a position to conform with their educational level. Although schools change their patterns of social relations to conform with the changing needs of the capitalist system, they can never perform this function to ensure a perfect correspondence. However, there is no mass institutional breakdown due to an incongruence between educational level and market position. The reproduction of consciousness through the schools does not meet Marx's determination that the development of consciousness depends on a person's life-activity, on his/her labor. The student cannot be defined as a worker because he/she is not engaged in the process of buying and selling labor. Rather, the student is merely being prepared to meet his/her market situation--where he/she will have to sell himself/herself to live. Consciousness is determined by a worker's relationship to the means of production regardless of what educational experience he/she encountered in his/her past.

The correspondence between the social relations of education and the social relations of work is important to the extent that it does, in part, make the transition from school to work easily accomplished. Such a correspondence guarantees social stability if school experience and market position match. Contradictions emerge when students cannot be transferred to an appropriate job situation.

The consciousness the student developed does not correspond with the new social relations of production. Consciousness, therefore, continues to develop. Consciousness, being a transitory product of the social relations of production, assumes a new character as the student encounters new social relations of production in his/her new role as a worker. This crucial distinction between the development of worker consciousness and the development of student consciousness must be more clearly defined.

A major theoretical problem in Bowles' and Gentis' work centers on their substitution of hierarchy for class (Gorelick, 1975; see also Bowles, 1971, 1974; Bowles, Gentis, Meyer, 1975). By concentrating on hierarchy and personality factors instead of class and wage labor, their analysis implies that the transition of the labor force from one generation to the next rests on the basis of an individual's educational level and personality traits learned rather than on the basis of one's property relation to the means of production. Although they recognize that the probability of a high school graduate attending college is just as dependent on parental socioeconomic status as it was thirty years ago and that economic mobility has not changed measurably since World War I (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:8), they concentrate their analysis not on the class basis of higher education but on the reproduction

of appropriate worker consciousness for those who are in the schools. They do not emphasize the fact that everyone does not have an equal opportunity to end up in a four-year institution or a community college. They concentrate on the changing structure of schools and the social relations of the schools as they exist, not on their class roots. By focusing on how people are being silently placed into slots in a hierarchical social order, they weaken the argument on the class nature of education. The reproduction of the labor force in capitalist society does not rest on educational level, it rests on a person's class relationship to the means of production. The ruling class does not learn the appropriate personality factors to assume its class position, rather it inherits its power on the basis of property (and this, as C. Wright Mills notes, does not occur in state socialist societies).

Given these criticisms, Bowles' and Gentis' work must still be seen as a major step in expanding Marxist theory. Their analysis of the evolution of the social relations of higher education in response to the development of capitalism is important in understanding the complex nature of schooling in a capitalist society. Therefore, it is important to take as an example and detail the specific class character of community colleges to see how their social relations replicate the social relations of production for which these colleges prepare their

students. Community colleges did not arise to provide opportunities and extend the gift of democracy to the masses; rather they expanded, like elementary and secondary education, to meet the needs of industry and were imposed on the working class as a means of control. Community colleges are not one more step in the ladder to success through schooling. They form one more component in the educational system. The extension of the community college system resulted from growing contradiction within the capitalist system. They reflect the latest response of capitalism to growing contradictions within the system. It is for this reason the community college system is a good example in support of the above argument.

CHAPTER III

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGES-- PEOPLE'S COLLEGES OR CLASS EDUCATION

America's educational past has traditionally been viewed as a morality tale linking the evolution of American democracy to the triumph of public education (Lazerson, 1963:269). In an advanced capitalist state, education becomes a critical link in legitimizing the existing political and economic system by providing an ideology of equal opportunity in the face of an admittedly unequal market system. The emergence of comprehensive community colleges can be viewed in this light as grass root community education for the masses, termed by some as people's colleges. I will argue that this view of the evolution of higher education from the 1960's to the present is a sham. The development of community colleges must be seen as a response to the changing structure of the United States economy. The ideology of community education is one that has been imposed on the people by the state in an effort to alleviate contradiction inherent in the capitalist system, specifically the democratic ideology of self-achievement and mobility through the schools and the reality of limited opportunity.

TABLE 3

MEDIAN INCOME OF FAMILIES OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN AT DIFFERENT TYPES OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, OF FAMILIES OF ALL COLLEGE FRESHMEN, AND OF ALL U.S. FAMILIES WITH HEADS 35-44 YEARS OF AGE, 1966-1972

	Year						
Type of Family	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Freshmen at Public 2-Year Colleges	8,600	8,760	8,900	9,520	9,900	11,000	11,000
Freshmen at Public 4-Year Colleges	8,140	9,000	9,320	10,200	11,180	11,530	12,180
Freshmen at Public Universities	9,860	12,900	11,350	12,250	13,080	13,330	14,450
All College Freshmen	9,580	9,990	10,150	10,950	11,770	12,200	12,580
All U.S. Families with heads, 35-44 years of age*	8,590	9,000	9,830	10,730	11,410	11,880	13,119

NOTE: This is an estimate of families with freshmen-aged children.

SOURCE: Pincus, 1974.

Four-year colleges have not opened their doors to the masses (see Table 3 for an analysis of what kind of institution students attend according to family income). Instead comprehensive community colleges have been introduced to meet the demands of students who would not otherwise receive a college education. Community colleges are not just academic institutions. They encourage the development of occupational programs to meet the needs of government and industry (Pincus, 1974:19; see also Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), 1974-1975 Catalog:12). Responding to the changing structure of the United States economy, community colleges were developed to fill the need for trained technicians in the capitalist system. Between 1950 and 1970, the proportion of technical workers in the labor force rose from 7.1 percent to 14.5 percent (Karabel, 1975:117-118). Paraprofessional and technical workers comprise the fastest growing sector of the United States economy. Without this change in the composition of the labor force, it is unlikely that community colleges would have expanded as much as they have.

Since 1960, community colleges have grown rapidly. Over half of all freshmen in public institutions of higher learning are currently enrolled in community colleges and some predict this figure will rise to 70 percent by 1980 (Pincus, 1974:19). Karabel suggests that the genius of

community colleges lies in the illusion that they fulfill the democratic ideology of equal opportunity through achievement (1974:119). Proponents of community colleges stress their role in democratizing higher education and in providing equal opportunity. Opponents of the community college system argue that the common curriculum denies equality of opportunity by restricting educational achievement to a single mode which will inevitably lead to some form of hierarchy (Karabel, 1974:137). Thus, equality must be redefined.

The ideology of community colleges embraces the old separate but equal philosophy. All education does not have to be the same, colleges can be different and equal too. Yet as Fred Pincus argues, community colleges hold the "chance to try" concept of equality; they are not so concerned about the "chance to succeed" (1974:18). Thus, minorities and other working class people, at best, have an:

> ...equal opportunity to obtain an education that will fit them into their appropriate position in the class structure. More often than not, those of lower class origins will, under the new definition of equality of educational opportunity, find themselves in schools or curricula which train them for positions roughly commensurate with their social origins (Karabel, 1974: 137-138).

Karabel argues that the current movement to vocationalize community colleges is a logical outgrowth of the capitalist system. Higher education:

> ...forced to respond to the pressure for access arising from mobility aspirations endemic in an affluent society which stresses individual success and the democratic character of its opportunity structure (1974:138).

has allowed entrance to community colleges and then tracked people into occupational programs. This vocationalization of higher education has been pushed by a national planning elite whose world view is reflective of the interests of the ruling class of our society (Karabel, 1974:138). Notably absent among those pressuring for more vocational programs are the students themselves.

Leaders of the vocationalized education movement recognize the lack of student enthusiasm for occupational programs (Karabel, 1974:134; see also Gleazer, 1968). Students have internalized the idea of the value of having a four-year degree. They recognize that who is given access to the university is nothing less than the distribution of privilege in contemporary America (Karabel, 1972:32). The majority of students do not want to go into vocational work, rather they want to enter a profession (see Karabel, 1974:134-138). This struggle, waged on the part of students against the community college system, reflects a submerged class conflict between the promoters

of vocational education, who represent the more privileged sectors of society, and community college students themselves, usually from working class families (Karabel, 1974:135-136). Although racial discrimination is more discernible in the community college system, because it is easily recognizable, class remains the common denominator of students going into vocational programs (see Bowles and Gentis, 1976; Karabel, 1974; Pincus, 1974).

The conflict between the promoters of vocational education and community college students occasionally becomes overt. Karabel writes:

> At Seattle Community College in 1968-1969, the Black Student Union vigorously opposed a recommendation to concentrate trade and technical programs in the central (Black) campus while the 'higher' semiprofessional programs were allocated to the northern and southern (white) campuses (Cohen, 1971a:142). Rutgers (Newark) was the scene in 1969 of extensive demonstrations to gain open admissions to a branch of the state university. The import of the case of Rutgers (Newark) was that the protests took place in a city where students already had access to an open-door community college (Essex) and a mildly selective state college (Newark State). What the students were resisting here was not being tracked within the community college, but rather being channeled into the community college itself. The well-known struggle for open admissions at CUNY in the spring of 1969 was not primarily for access per se, but for access to the more prestigious four-year

> institutions: City, Brooklyn, Queens, and Hunter (1974:136).

Universities are committed to the business of conferring rewards and, once this fact is recognized, their exclusionary stance becomes less defensible (Karabel, 1972:33). Open admissions is nothing new for the rich. What is at issue for those people unable to pay the price is the problem of an oversupply of trained manpower and the fact that our economy is not geared to accommodate highly skilled workers (Karabel, 1972:39). Thus, our stratified educational system perpetuates existing differences between rich and poor. As long as open admissions applies only to a few institutions, with elite universities continuing to apply selective criterion for admission, it poses no threat to the meritocracy or the existing class structure. However, the crisis at CUNY, from 1969 to the present, gives support to the contention that assaults against the multitiered educational system, pressures for open admissions, and demands for access to prestigious institutions will continue to mount (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:214; Karabel, 1974:135-136).

Community colleges transform structurally induced failure into individual failure (Karabel, 1974:139). Of the two-thirds of community college freshmen who want to transfer to four-year schools only one-third actually

do transfer (Pincus, 1974:21). Karabel argues that for the modal student entering a community college the likelihood of his/her persisting in higher education is negatively influenced by attending a community college (1974:138). Only 15-30 percent of community college entrants eventually graduate from a four-year college--whereas 60-70 percent of students at large state universities do graduate (Karabel, 1972;38, 41).

Community colleges function as a vital component of the class-based tracking system. They help maintain educational inequality thereby reinforcing the class system that exists in the United States. This function can be better understood if one looks at the non-public goals of community colleges. Non-public goals, those that are not discussed in public relations material but that are discussed in work written by educators and social scientists (Pincus, 1974:19), generally fall in three categories. They are--1) training a paraprofessional labor force, 2) screening and 3) cooling out.

Students entering paraprofessional tracks do not fully realize that this decision will eventually place them in a subordinate, middle-level position in a stratified labor market (see Pincus, 1974). Although such training is publicly offered, community colleges do not emphasize the fact that vocational training leads to dead end jobs. Vocational education does not prepare students to

enter four-year institutions, rather the majority of community college graduates are destined to enter lower paying jobs with less prestige, less job satisfaction and fewer chances for mobility than graduates of a four-year institution (Pincus, 1974:21).

The second non-public goal, screening, refers to the community colleges' job of differentiating between those that will go on to a four-year institution and those who will complete only two years of college. Almost half of all high school graduates attend college, and many do not have the "skills" necessary to complete their education. More and more these non-traditional students are entering community colleges (Pincus, 1974:21). It is the job of community colleges to encourage the bright students to enter transfer programs, and to encourage other students to enter a terminal program. Thus, community colleges serve "...as a safety valve, diverting students clamoring for access to college away from the more selective institutions" (Karabel, 1974:113; see also Jencks and Riesman, 1968).

The counseling program at the community college serves as the major instrument for encouraging community college students to enter vocational programs (Pincus, 1974:22). Upon entering a community college a student begins a series of tests to determine if he/she can be placed in a regular class or if he/she needs remedial work.

Thus begins an accumulation of objective records of academic ability and performance which will become increasingly important to the community college student (Clark, 1961:516; see also NVCC, 1974-1975 Catalog:12-13, 32; NVCC, 1975-1976 Catalog:25-26). Once tested, the student must arrange an interview with a counselor. At the interview the counselor assists the student in choosing the proper courses in light of his/her objective, his/her test scores, his/her high school record and test records from previous schools. At first the process is gentle, but if met with resistance from the student, the counselor must gradually lay out the facts of life (see Clark, 1961:517).

Another important aspect of the counseling process is a course entitled "Orientation to College" which is mandatory for all entering community college students (Clark, 1961:517; see also NVCC, 1975-1976 Catalog:25-26). The course taught by counselor/teachers, provides an important mechanism for bringing aspirations in line with abilities. Tests and papers are discussed in class and used in counseling interviews to confront the student with more evidence of his/her lack of ability. The counselor constantly looks out for unrealistic ambitions and goals in order to make the student accept his/her eventual fate on the labor market (Clark, 1961:516-520).

Burton Clark describes cooling out as a process in which students who want to transfer to a four-year college but who would probably fail in such efforts are subtly persuaded to abandon their aspirations (1960). For example, a student might want to be a doctor yet he cannot pass the necessary science courses. Community colleges convince such students that they cannot succeed in a transfer program, but they could complete an appropriate technical education such as an X-ray technician (Pincus, 1975:21). This process must be kept from the public (see Clark 1961:520-521).

Cooling out destroys the democratic ideology of achievement through education. Everyone cannot pursue a higher education. Barriers are put up throughout the educational system to prevent the masses from demanding entrance to elite institutions. Community colleges serve as one important barrier, along with grades, graded curriculums and college entrance requirements to name but a few. This interlocking process must not be easily understood by the public or their faith in individual mobility through education might be destroyed.

Class background is not as important in predicting where one goes to college as measured academic ability (Karabel, 1974:124). Yet the higher a student's social class the more likely it is he/she will have a high grade point average in high school and a high score on a standardized

test of academic ability. Thus, merit appears to determine success rather than social class (see Bowles and Gentis, 1976:102-124). This transformation of a class reality into an individual problem is one of the key processes in legitimizing the capitalist system.

The rise of upper class use of education was caused by "...the fact that they had already made their money; the problem was now to secure it politically and embellish it culturally" (Gorelick, 1975:46). Higher education provided an excellent institution whereby class power and information could be legitimately passed from generation to generation. Merit, not class, legitimizes the success and power of the capitalist class. Thus, higher education in the United States justifies the class structure. The fact that:

> ...inequalities in educational credentials 'fairly' gained have been added on to inequalities of class background has served to hide the importance of class itself in getting ahead (Bowles, 1973:145).

The ideology of equal opportunity, and the rise of the meritocracy lends credibility to the idea that success is deserved. Yet success for the ruling class is not, in fact, determined by their accomplishments in higher education. Their education is primarily a matter of socialization, not their subjection to the labor market (see Gorelick, 1975). Thus, the ruling class should be

seen as not so much employed, but selected. They are not in the labor market in any meaningful sense. They do not labor. Their class position is not at the top of the occupational hierarchy, because their class position rests on the ownership and inheritance of physical and human capital. Class is not fundamentally a matter of inequality--of income, power or even work control:

> ...it is fundamentally a qualitative distinction between ownership of wealth and non-ownership, from which follows the fact that the non-owners must 'bring their hides' to the labor market (Gorelick, 1975:48).

The community college system provides an excellent example in support of Bowles' and Gentis' argument. The internal social relations of the community college mirror the social relations, at the middle and lower levels, of capitalist production. Students learn the appropriate behavioral patterns necessary to function in lower level jobs in the hierarchy of production. Such jobs emphasize rule-following, the most important personality factor at the lowest levels in the production process. By internalizing these personality traits, Bowles and Gentis argue that students and workers possess more than just a false consciousness. Their consciousness is one they have learned and internalized and is very real to them. Thus, one must not simplify the existence of false

consciousness, rather we must recognize the reproduction of consciousness on a class basis in the school system is a very real process and cannot be reduced to the mere existence of false consciousness (Gentis, 1976).

CHAPTER IV

PRESENT HISTORICAL CONTRADICTIONS

> (Capitalism) progresses through the development of the contradictions inherent in it.... Capitalist society is a union of contradictions. It gets freedom from exploitation, wealth through impoverishment, advance in production through restriction of consumption. The very structure of capitalism is a dialectical one: every form and institution of the economic process begets its determinate negation, and the crisis is the extreme form in which the contradictions are expressed.
>
> ....The highest development of the productive forces coincides with oppression and misery in full flood. The real possibility of general happiness is negated by the social relationships posited by man himself. The negation of this society and its transformation become the single outlook for liberation (Marcuse, 1960:311-312).

A Marxist approach to educational history necessarily looks for dialectical, rather than linear developments. United States educational history must be written as the history of two separate classes. The ruling class acts on and in response to the working class which they seek to dominate. The working class acts in terms of their given material circumstances; they act more or less in

terms of their specific class composition (Gorelick, 1975:16, 50). A class theory of education must make clear the:

> ...derivative character of the labor markets, the fact that the labor markets are secondary to a class structure based on ownership of the means of production, the fact that the nature of the occupational structure is determined by the accumulation process, and the fact that both the nature, types and inequalities of education on the one hand, and the education/labor market nexus on the other, reflect the division of U.S. capitalism into owning and non-owning classes (Gorelick, 1975:50).

Both the educational and labor markets reflect the class division apparent in U.S. society. The educational system mirrors the type and degree of economic inequality present in a society. U.S. education tries to produce individuals who accept the existing society and who are resigned to their role in it. This section of my paper deals with contradictions Bowles and Gentis find in capitalist society in order to highlight contradictions apparent in our present historical situation.

To maintain economic stability, the capitalist economy must continually expand. This process leads to the concentration of capital and the associated extension of the wage-labor system. Bowles and Gentis refer to this tension between growth and stability as the contradiction between the accumulation of capital and the reproduction

of the capitalist relations of production (1976:232). Contradictions of the capitalist growth process center on capital accumulation and class conflict. Two contradictions apparent in higher education will be emphasized. First, the contradiction between the need of the capitalist system for skilled workers and the necessity of keeping consciousness class specific. Second, the contradiction between the ideology of equal opportunity and the reality of limited opportunity in economic and social life generally.

The two primary functions of higher education under capitalism are the transmission of high-level skills and the reproduction of a class specific consciousness (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:129-130; Gentis, 1970:299; Lazerson, 1973:270; Spring, 1972:126-166). The capitalist system needs higher education, but it must structure such education to ensure the reproduction of a class specific consciousness. Thus, higher education in the United States has developed into a multitiered system dominated by Ivy League institutions and great state universities, followed by less prestigious state universities, state colleges, and ending with community colleges (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:209). Elite universities produce professional people requiring high level skills. Since everyone cannot escape manual labor, the society must create a legitimating ideology. For U.S. society, this often

rests on the assumption of differential native ability, the validity of meritocracy and the existence of a class culture. Having discussed the sham of the meritocracy and believing an emphasis on IQ serves to legitimate IQ as an indicator of economic success when social class differences in IQ are nearly irrelevant to the process of intergenerational status transmission (Bowles and Gentis, 1972; Bowles and Gentis, 1976:103-124), the existence of a class specific consciousness will be examined here by analyzing the concept of class culture.

The existence of a class specific consciousness has been argued by many writers. Perhaps the most eloquent writer has been Edward Banfield. In The Unheavenly City, Banfield argues that lower class people cannot be "given" training because they will not accept it (1968:139). These people live from moment to moment, they enjoy the thrills, the excitement of being poor and would not leave their miserable situation even if they had the opportunity to do so (1968:62-66, 210-237). Lower class people, Banfield continues, suffer from feelings of self-contempt. They resent all authority. They are violent, pathological, and almost exclusively black (1968:53-54, 67-87). This absorption of class culture and consciousness, he argues, occurs long before the lower class child enters the school. The schools main purpose is to socialize the person more fully and to "...make him more aware of the

differences that separate him and his kind from others" (Banfield, 1968:141).

Working class people become responsible for their own failure. They are condemned because they do not possess a "future-time orientation"--an ability to sacrifice goods today for more returns tomorrow. To the outside observer, this behavior reflects a "present-time orientation"--an inability to defer gratification. But from the inside looking out:

> ...what appears as a 'present-time' orientation to the outside observer is, to the man experiencing it, as much a future orientation as that of his middle-class counterpart. The difference between the two men lies not so much in their different orientations to time as in their different orientations to future time or, more specifically, to their different futures.
>
> The future orientation of the middle-class person presumes, among other things, a surplus of resources to be invested in the future and a belief that the future will be sufficiently stable both to justify his investment and to permit the consumption of his investment at a time, place and manner of his own choosing and to his greater satisfaction. But the streetcorner man lives in a sea of want. He does not, as a rule, have a surplus of resources, either economic or psychological. Gratification of hunger and the desire for simple creature comforts cannot be long deferred. Neither can support for one's flagging self-esteem. Living on the edge of both economic and psychological subsistence, the streetcorner man is obliged to expend

> all his resources on maintaining himself from moment to moment (Liebow, 1967:64).

The class specific consciousness the working class exhibits reflects the way they have learned to act in order to survive in the world in which they find themselves. Working class people internalize how they need to act to fit into the social relations of their workplace. Bowles' and Gentis' analysis rests too heavily on an authoritarian/paternalistic relationship between the ruling class and the working class. Although they do recognize the contradictory nature of U.S. education (1976:12), they emphasize its role in producing docile workers at the cost of analyzing in more detail its simultaneous production of rebels. Students and workers are not completely duped by the analogous structures and relations of their schooling and their job. They are not unquestioning robots. They act within a given social structure in order to survive. Schools create aware slaves to the capitalist order (Cohen, 1968). "Democracy," as Cohen notes, works much better in a society of aware slaves to the nonexistence of a true democracy but not geared to social change, than in an overtly totalitarian state. Thus, while the process of college study undermines much of the legitimacy of the capitalist system, the discontent that has been generated among students by the

contradiction between the ideology of equality and the expansion of capital has not produced a revolutionary consciousness except among a minority of students. Others never escape their material situation, they cannot conceive of a social state where their life situation would be different, therefore they do not act (see Sartre, 1966:560-562).

Poor people tend to blame themselves rather than the system for their "failure." Given the illusion of equal educational opportunity the successful see themselves--and are seen--as the deserving. The result of this internalization process, according to Bowles, is that the:

> ...successful completion of higher education has come to confer a modern form of 'right to rule' at least as persuasive and politically involnerable as any of its divine, aristocratic, or plutocratic predecessors (Karabel, 1972).

The universities role as an educational and cultural community is lost. The university becomes the training ground for the production of an elite. The only people who can get into the system of higher education are those who have already proved themselves. The educational system does not exist to serve students who want to go to school for a value added benefit (Karabel, 1972:33).

This internalization process legitimizes the social system. Instead of demanding that the system provide

high skill level jobs to meet the needs of an educated mass population, the individual pressures for equal access to educational opportunity. People do not question the legitimacy of keeping minority and poor people, who have not succeeded in the meritocracy, out of higher education. We, like they, place responsibility on the individual for his/her own failure rather than looking at the fact that our economic system could not support a high skill level population (see Karabel, 1972:39).

The second contradiction analyzed here is the inconsistency between the ideology of equality and the reality of limited opportunity. Burton Clark writes:

> Democracy asks individuals to act as if social mobility were universally possible; status is to be won by individual effort, and rewards are to accrue to those who try. But democratic societies also need selective training institutions, and hierarchical work organizations permit increasingly fewer persons to succeed at ascending levels. Situations of opportunity are also situations of denial and failure. Thus democratic societies need not only to motivate achievement but also to mollify those denied it in order to sustain motivation in the face of disappointment and to deflect resentment. In the modern mass democracy, with its large-scale organization, elaborated ideologies of equal access and participation, and minimal commitment to social origin as basis for status, the task becomes critical (Clark, 1961: 513).

Schools have consistently responded to the changing requirements of the capitalist system in order to legitimate it. The development of the urban high school, industrial education, manual training, vocational guidance and training, the enactment of compulsory education legislation are all historical developments directly traceable to the new forms of production American society adopted.

The creation of a system of mass education followed the shift from:

> ...handicraft to mass production and the adoption of production-line techniques. Before the turn of the century, the common school was sufficient to maintain what Mann considered the necessary 'balance within the social machinery.' After the turn of the century, there was an extensive consolidation of capital and a tremendous growth of mass production industries. These events in turn stimulated urbanization, the importation of cheap labor from southern Europe, and the growth of urban ghettos. It was apparent that a new 'balance' within the social machinery was needed, one that could provide a systematic and rationalized control of the labor force. Child labor legislation went hand in hand with increased determination to enforce compulsory education laws, many of which were revised upward (Karier, 1973:16; see also Cohen, 1968).

Public education was not a victory for the working class. The expansion of public education was not democratic

or humanitarian, rather it was imposed on the working class by wealthy businessmen and the middle class (see Katz, 1968). Michael Katz exposed the fact that the great legitimizing ideologies, democratic ethos, elite beneficience, and the historic equalizing role of the schools were mere ideologies, guilding the self-interested, even coercive purposes of a dominant class (Gorelick, 1975:18).

The basic idea is that the supply of degrees will outrun the demand for highly trained manpower. Therefore, by structuring failure, the system reproduces a work force that will accept their position within a hierarchical system. Not only do people internalize their own failure, but the educational system provides a mechanism through which positions of privilege can be legitimately passed from one generation to the next. The entrance of some minority and poor people into higher education further legitimates the economic order. Their entrance into the educational system does not, however, change the essential class character of higher education in the United States. The essential function of the hierarchical, higher education system in the United States is to legitimate inequality in the United States economic system and to reproduce a labor force willing to work in a class society.

CONCLUSION

The crucial aspect of U.S. capitalism is that a few people control (own) the means of production (Lundberg, 1968; Domhoff, 1967). The ethos of individualism binds us to an anachronistic economic order. It prevents us from organizing to regain control over our social life. The educational system:

> ...neither adds to nor subtracts from the degree of inequality and repression originating in the economic sphere. Rather, it reproduces and legitimates a preexisting pattern in the process of training and stratifying the work force. How does this occur? The heart of the process is to be found... (in) the social relations of the educational encounter. These correspond closely to the social relations of dominance, subordination, and motivation in the economic sphere. Through the educational encounter, individuals are induced to accept the degree of powerlessness with which they will be faced as mature workers.
>
> The central prerequisite for personal development--be it physical, emotional, aesthetic, cognitive, or spiritual--lies in the capacity to control the conditions of one's life. Thus a society can foster personal development roughly to the extent that it allows and requires personal interaction

> along the lines of equal, unified, participatory, and democratic cooperation and struggle. Needless to say, these very conditions are those most conducive to social and economic equality. The U.S. educational system, in the present nexus of economic power relationships, cannot foster such patterns of personal development and social equality. To reproduce the labor force, the schools are destined to legitimate inequality, limit personal development to forms compatible with submission to arbitrary authority, and aid in the process whereby youth are resigned to their fate (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:265-266).

Educational theorists must accept the responsibility for political implications of their actions. By supporting reform of the school or advocating a structural revolution, they must accept responsibility for either supporting the present economic and social system or struggling to build a new society. Educational reformers, in effect, defend the status quo. Radicals must recognize that their paradigm and world view is ultimately incompatible with that of conservative and liberal educational theorists. The conflict in the scientific development of their respective paradigms reflects a sense of malfunction.

Our society is dividing into competing camps, one seeking to defend the old order, the other seeking to institute a new one. Once this polarization occurs:

> ...political recourse fails. Because they differ about the institutional

matrix within which political change is to be achieved and evaluated, because they acknowledge no supra-institutional framework for the adjudication of revolutionary difference, the parties to a revolutionary conflict must finally resort to the techniques of mass persuasion, often including force. Though revolutions have had a vital role in the evolution of political institutions, that role depends upon their being partially extrapolitical or extrainstitutional events....

...the historical study of paradigm change reveals very similar characteristics in the evolution of the sciences. Like the choice between competing political institutions, that between competing paradigms proves to be a choice between incompatible models of community life. Because it has that character, the choice is not and cannot be determined merely by the evaluative procedures characteristic of normal science, for these depend in part upon a particular paradigm, and that paradigm is at issue. When paradigms enter, as they must, into a debate about paradigm choice, their role is necessarily circular. Each group uses its own paradigm to argue in that paradigm's defense.

The resulting circularity does not, of course, make the arguments wrong or even ineffectual. The man who premises a paradigm when arguing in its defense can nonetheless provide a clear exhibit of what scientific practice will be like for those who adopt the new view of nature. That exhibit can be immensely persuasive, often compellingly so. Yet, whatever its force, the status of the circular argument is only that of persuasion. It cannot be made logically or even probabilistically

> compelling for those who refuse to step into the circle. The premises and values shared by the two parties to a debate over paradigms are not sufficiently extensive for that. As in political revolutions, so in paradigm choice--there is no standard higher than the assent of the relevant community.... (Kuhn 1962:93-94).

This paper analyzes the reproduction of consciousness through a Marxist sociology of knowledge framework. Having accepted a Marxist paradigm, the author assumes certain causal links common to a Marxist approach to history. These links are not always explicit in this paper. Although many causal links are documented, the validity and acceptance of these rests with the readers' own value orientation. A person who does not reject America's economic order or see certain institutional problems as manifestations of this order will not find certain explanations found in this paper adequate in explaining the nature and function of the system of higher education in the United States.

Those who do accept a Marxist paradigm or enter into the question of a paradigm change must not accept reform as an appropriate tactic in changing the present educational system and the existing political and economic order. Neither should we expect change to result from changes in one institution. The school, being a lagging social institution, can only reflect and reproduce the

degree of inequality apparent in the economic system. We must attack the system as a whole, we cannot accept band-aid remedies of liberal educational reform. Bowles and Gentis observe that:

> The people of the United States do not need a doctor for the moribund capitalist order; we need an undertaker. Nor can the political challenge facing us be met through the spontaneous efforts of individuals or groups working in isolation. The development and articulation of the vision of a socialist alternative, as much as the ability to meet today's concrete human needs requires a mass based party able to aid in the daily struggles of working people throughout the United States and committed to a revolutionary transformation of the U.S. economy (Bowles and Gentis, 1976:288).

A Marxian analysis of higher education in the United States provides a contrast and a balance with more traditional approaches for understanding the nature of our educational system. Modern critics of U.S. education tend toward liberal critiques, aiming their analyses at "excesses" of the capitalist system, rather than looking at root problems intrinsic in the nature of capitalism. It is for this reason that recent Marxist analyses of U.S. education are so helpful because, even for those people who cannot accept a Marxist analysis of U.S. society, Marxist critiques of U.S. education offer substantial evidence for liberal and radical to look

further into the influence of elites in determining the direction our educational system takes and in providing a class analysis of U.S. education. Such a class analysis of education partially excludes an analysis of education in industrial society--regardless of societal economic organization. Unfortunately, such an analysis would go beyond the scope of this paper, however, this author looks to this area to provide a base for her future investigations into education.

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