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Schooling and the Myth of Objectivity

Stalking the Politics of the Hidden Curriculum

Henry Giroux makes an excellent case for the redefinition of the concept of the hidden curriculum. His paper provides a clear explication and critique of that concept from traditional, liberal, and radical perspectives. The paper, however, goes beyond existing critiques to break new ground in reconceptualizing the notion of the hidden curriculum so that it becomes a useful heuristic tool for understanding how schools function to promote the social and cultural reproduction of society. In order to increase the potency of the concept of hidden curriculum for the theory and practice of education Giroux illustrates how it must ocupy a more central than peripheral place in curriculum theorizing. The discussion of implications for theory and classroom practice is particularly cogent, especially its emphasis on the need to view schools as sites of both domination and contestation.

Within the last few years the character of the discourse on schooling has been considerably transformed. In the face of financial cutbacks, economic recession, and a shrinking job market, progressive and radical critiques of schooling have been reduced to a whisper, being replaced by the rhetoric and concerns of cost-efficiency experts. Administrators and teachers now spend long hours developing curriculum modes based on the rather narrow principles of control, prediction, and measurement. The pedagogy of critical inquiry and ethical understanding has given way to the logic of instrumental reason with its directed focus on the learning of discrete competencies and basic skills; moreover, in the wake of these changes, political issues are translated into technical problems, and the imperatives of critique and negation give way to a mode of thinking in which "basic human dilemmas are transformed into puzzles for which supposedly easy answers can be found." (Apple, 1979, pp.60)

Within this grim predicament, the ideological and material forces that link schools to the dominant industrial order no longer appear to be constrained by the principles of social justice that informed liberal

pedagogy in the 1960's and 1970's. During that period, educational reformers were at least able to speak with some impact in arguing that our youth "ought to be educated not for the present but for a better future condition of the human race, that is for the idea of humanity." (Marcuse, 1972, p.27) Now, important business spokespersons such as William Simon and David Packard urge major corporations to provide financial aid to universities and colleges, not on the basis of their academic reputations, but instead on the basis of whether "schools, departments, institutes or faculties are sympathetic to the free enterprise system." (Vogel, December 15, 1979, p.628) Similarly, the increasing industrialization of schooling is obvious in the recent efforts of major corporations to establish endowed Chairs of Free Enterprise in a number of major universities throughout the United States. The disregard that these efforts display for the conditions that safeguard academic freedom is only matched by the messianic fervour of their intent to spread the beliefs and values of the business community. The conservative and political nature behind the industrialization of schooling reaches dizzying heights in the lament of conservative apologists such as James O'Toole, who argues that schools at all levels of instruction have a deep seated responsibility to train certain students with "blue collar virtues". He writes:

> Because of the American school system's commitment to mobility and equality, there is now a shortage of working class people, individuals socialized for an environment of bureaucratic and hierarchical control and of strict discipline. Employers are correct in their observations that schools are failing to provide enough men and women who are passively compliant, who seek only extrinsic rewards for their labors, and who have the stamina and stoicism to cope with the work technologies and processes developed during the industrial revolution. (O'Toole, 1977, pp.117-118)

The above analysis is not meant to suggest that we should throw up our hands and retreat into passive cynicism. Nor is it meant to suggest that there is a certain inevitability to the course of events in which educators and students currently find themselves. It is instructive to remember that the underlying instrumental logic that infuses educational theory and practice at the present time is not new. It has simply been recycled and repackaged to meet the needs of the existing political and economic crisis. For example, the technological and behaviorist models that have long exercised a powerful influence on the curriculum field were, in part, adapted from the scientific management movement of the 1920's, just as the roots of the competency-based education movement were developed in earlier research work adapted "from the systems engineering procedures of the defense industry". (Franklin, March 1976, pp.304-305)

The issue here is that the current withdrawal of resources from the schools and the redefinition of the curriculum in watered-down pragmatic and instrumental terms cannot be viewed as problems solely due to demographic shifts in the population and short-term recessional tendencies in the economy. Such a position not only abstracts the

current crisis from its historical and political roots, it also uses the existing economic crisis to legitimate conservative modes of pedagogy and to silence potential critics. In fact, the ahistorical character of the current criticism represents a form of ideological shorthand that makes it a part of the very problem it claims to resolve. By divorcing itself from historical and political discourse, such criticism shapes the conditions under which it sustains itself.

I want to argue that a more viable approach for developing a theory of classsroom practice will have to be based on a theoretical foundation that acknowledges the dialectical interplay of social interest, political power, and economic power, on the one hand, and school knowledge and practices on the other. The starting point for such an approach is the tradition of educational critique that emerged around the issue of schooling and the hidden curriculum during the late 1960's and early 1970's. In essence, I want to try to take seriously Walter Benjamin's prophetic warning that "In every era the attempt must be made to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overcome it." (Benjamin, 1973, p.255)

I do not wish to suggest that a new mode of educational theorizing can be developed entirely from earlier debates surrounding the covert and overt role of schooling, but to argue instead that these debates generated only a number of partial insights, which now need to be abstracted from the latter's original frameworks and developed into a more comprehensive analysis of the schooling process. The earlier debates performed at the creditable task of undermining the mainstream assumptions that the school curriculum was socially and politically neutral and reducible to the engineering of discrete behaviours. While these insights led to a variety of markedly different conclusions, the general significance of this mode of analysis was that schools were now seen as agencies of socialization. Moreover, it was generally agreed that education meant more than providing students with instructional goals and objectives, and that schools did more than teach students how "to read, write, compute, and master the content of such subjects as history, social studies, and science." (Mehan, 1980, p.134) Schools came to be seen as social sites with a dual curriculum, one overt and formal and the other hidden and informal. The nature of school pedagogy was to be found not only in the stated purposes of school rationales and teacher-prepared objectives, but also in the myriad of beliefs and values transmitted tacitly through the social relations and routines that characterized day-to-day school experience.

As a whole, such concerns with the hidden curriculum provided a more productive starting point for grappling with the fundamental question of what schools actually do than either earlier mainstream modes of theorizing or, for that matter, many current technocratic educational perspectives. By developing a new attentiveness to the linkages between schools and the social, economic, and political landscape that make up the wider society, the hidden curriculum theorists provided a theoretical impetus for breaking out of the methodological quagmire in which schools were merely viewed as black boxes. (Karabel and Halsey, 1977, p.43) The black box paradigm had

allowed educational researchers to ignore the concrete experiences of both teachers and students in favour of larger structural analyses concerned primarily with school achievement and input-output studies of social distribution. (Mehan, 1979, p.43; Wexler, 1977) A major benefit deriving from the work on the hidden curriculum was that schools were now seen as political institutions, inextricably linked to issues of power and control in the dominant society. Questions about efficiency and smoothness of operation were, in part, supplemented with inquiries about the way in which the schools mediate and legitimate the social and cultural reproduction of class, racial, and gender relations in the dominant society. (Giroux and Penna, Spring 1979, pp.21-41)

While there was and continues to be considerable disagreement over the function of schooling, earlier hidden curriculum theorists generally agreed that schools processed not only knowledge but people as well. Consequently, to extend a previous point, schools were now seen as social sites that not only controlled meanings, but also as cultural sites that contributed to the formation of personality needs. While it may strike some as commonplace to acknowledge that schools mediate between society and the consciousness of individuals, analyses regarding the purpose, nature, and consequence of such socialization are as complex as they are theoretically varied. Underlying these analyses is the fundamental theoretical task of unraveling the distinctions between what has been termed ideologies about schools and ideologies in schools. The first of these refers to particular expressed "versions of what schools are for, of how they work, and of what it is possible for them to achieve". (Whitty, in press, p.28) The second refers to dispositions, structure and modes of knowledge, pedagogic relationships, and the informal culture that make up the daily character of the school itself.

Out of this concern over the inherent ideological tensions that mediate between the discourse about schooling and the reality of school practices, three important insights have emerged that are essential to a more comprehensive understanding of the schooling process. These include the notions that

a) schools cannot be analyzed as institutions removed from the socioeconomic context in which they are situated,

b) schools are political sites involved in the construction and control of discourse, meaning, and subjectivities, and, finally,

c) the commonsense values and beliefs that guide and structure classroom practice are not a priori universals, but social constructions based on specific normative and political assumptions.

I will now look at these insights from a number of theoretical approaches and attempt to illuminate both their shortcomings and strengths, before assessing the implications we can draw from them

regarding classroom practice. The main assumption guiding my own analysis is that the previous work on the hidden curriculum is either too functional or too pessimistic, and that such work needs to be critically engaged and redefined.

Perspectives on the hidden curriculum

Though the concept of the hidden curriculum has received strikingly conflicting definitions and analyses in the last decade (Jackson, 1968; Overly, 1970; Dreeben, 1968, pp.211-237; Keddie, in D.F.M. Young, ed., 1971, pp.133-160; Dale, in Denis Gleeson, ed., 1977, pp.45- ; Anyon, Winter 1980, pp.67-92; Giroux and Purple, eds., 1982), the definitional thread that runs through all of these analyses points to the hidden curriculum as those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom life. Elizabeth Vallance expresses a representative definition when she writes,

> I use the term to refer to those non-academic but educationally significant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education...It refers broadly to the social control function of schooling. (Vallance, February 1973, p.7)

I want to argue that analyses of the hidden curriculum gain some theoretical mileage only when they move from description to critique. That is, rather than concern themselves merely with an investigation of the social meaning "behind schools being schools" (Apple, in Richard H. Weller, ed., 1977, p.49), they owe themselves the task of analyzing how the hidden curriculum functions not simply as a vehicle of socialization but also as an agency of social control, one that functions to provide differential forms of schooling to different classes of students. Unfortunately, descriptions of the hidden curriculum greatly outnumber concrete critical analyses of its mechanisms and consequences. This is not to suggest that the latter distinction can be reduced to merely one of either intellectual style or disagreement. What are at stake in the divergent styles and modes of analyses that make up the literature on the hidden curriculum are deep-seated philosophical and ideological perspectives that clash over the very meaning and nature of social reality. These perspectives represent divergent world views acting as historical and social facts. The usefulness of understanding these perspectives as philosophical systems derives not only from the obvious necessity of identifying them as specific "totalities of ways of thinking, feeling and acting" (Goldman, 1980, p.112), but also as belief systems to be examined critically against the reality they are trying to portray and explain. Consequently, before the concept of the hidden curriculum can be used as a theoretical tool for developing a critical pedagogy, it is important to understand and critique the ideological assumptions embedded in the perspectives under study.

I have distinguished three basic approaches that characterize the work dealing directly with the hidden curriculum. (I have purposely excluded the work of Anarchists such as Illich, Spring, ad others because their work has either been incorporated into the more recent work of the new sociology of education or is outdated. For a review of this work see Dale, in Denis Gleeson, ed., 1977, pp.44-54.) These approaches can be roughly construed under the categories a) traditional, b) liberal, and c) radical. These are, of course, ideal-typical categories derived for the sake of clarity. And yet, while each of these approaches contains rather broad theoretical boundaries, their respective distinctiveness rests with what might be called their problematique. The problematique of any theoretical approach refers not only to the questions that govern its mode of social inquiry, but to the questions not asked, and the relationship between them. My guiding assumption is that all of the approaches to be analyzed inevitably fail to provide the theoretical elements essential for a comprehensive critical pedagogy. In order to infuse the concept of hidden curriculum with a more critical spirit, I will interrogate each approach so as to reveal the interests they represent and come to a better understanding of their limitations and of the theoretical and practical insights they offer.

Traditional approach

The traditional perspective on schooling and the hidden curriculum takes as one of its central concerns the question: what makes the existing society possible? The key assumption that governs its problematique is that education plays a fundamental and necessary role in maintaining the existing society. By organizing its approach to issues such as cultural transmission, role socialization, and value acquisition around a preoccupation with the principles of consensus, cohesion, and stability, the traditional approach accepts uncritically the existing relationship between schools and the larger society. In these accounts, the hidden curriculum is explored primarily through the social norms and moral beliefs that are tacitly transmitted through the socialization processes that structure classroom social relationships. Given their primary interest in consensus and stability, these approaches accept the dominant societal values and norms and inquire primarily as to how the latter are actually taught in schools. The transmission and reproduction of dominant values and beliefs via the hidden curriculum is both acknowledged and accepted as a positive function of the schooling process. Nevertheless, while the content of what is actually transmitted through certain classroom practices is analyzed, the political and economic interests such beliefs and values legitimize are taken for granted.

The traditional perspective becomes particularly clear in the work of Talcott Parsons, Robert Dreeben, and Philip Jackson, (Parsons, Fall 1959, pp.297-318) All three theorists offer relatively bland descriptions of how structural processes such as crowds, power, praise, and the homogeneity of classroom tasks reproduce in students the dispositions necessary to cope with achievement, hierarchical work roles, and the

patience and discipline required to function in the existing society. Parsons and Dreeben view schools from a functionalist perspective, with an emphasis on the way students learn values required by the existing society. For both theorists, schools are places where students learn valuable societal norms and skills they could not learn within the confines of the family. Formal schooling, for instance, becomes for Dreeben an important social site that teaches the social norms of independence, achievement, universalism, and specificity. While Jackson appears at times somewhat critical of the docility and patience that students often must endure in classroom settings, he ultimately leaves little doubt about the importance of the hidden curriculum in preparing students for their adult roles in the wider society. For instance, the implicit critical tone in comments such as "people must learn to suffer in silence" (Jackson), or "because the oppressive use of power is antithetical to our democratic ideals it is difficult to discuss its normal occurrence in the classroom without arousing concern" (Jackson), is eventually reduced to a cheery celebration of social conformity. As Jackson later writes,

> Thus, school might be called a preparation for life, but not in the usual sense in which educators employ that slogan. Powers may be abused in school as elsewhere, but its existence is a fact of life to which we must adapt. (Jackson)

In the end, the notions of conflict and ideology disappear from this perspective, and the question of the abuse or neglect of power both within and outside of schools evaporates behind a static and reified view of the larger society. Consequently, students get defined in reductionist behavioural terms, and learning is reduced to the transmission of predefined knowledge. Needless to say, schools, like other institutions, appear to exist in these accounts beyond the somewhat questionable imperatives of capital and its underlying logic of class and gender discrimination.

The conservative nature of this position is summed up by Rachel Sharp in her critique of the work of Jackson and Dreeben. She writes:

> Jackson regards the hidden curriculum as relatively benign as does Dreeben. In their view it provides the necessary preconditions for effective learning in the classroom and is in no sense discontinuous with the norms and values of adult society on which social order ultimately depends...Neither of them discuss the hidden curriculum in terms of its ideological and political significance in sustaining a class society. (Sharp, 1980, pp.126-127)

Liberal approach

Traditionalists provide a theoretical service in illuminating how

certain necessary societal values get tacitly transmitted via the hidden curriculum. But in doing so, they do not question the underlying logic that gives shape to the institutionalized relationship between power, knowledge, and classroom control. On the other hand, the liberal perspective on the hidden curriculum begins from an entirely different assessment of the relationship between power and social order in the classroom. The focus of this more critical perspective is clearly articulated by Michael Young in his claim that there is a

> dialectical relationship between access to power and the opportunity to legitimize certain dominant categories, and the process by which the availability of such categories to some groups enable them to assert power and control over others. (Young, 1971, p.8)

The liberal perspective rejects most top-to-bottom models of pedagogy, with their conservative view of knowledge as something to be learned rather than critically engaged, as well as their equally uncritical notion of socialization, one in which students are viewed simply as passive role-bearers and recipients of knowledge. At the core of the liberal problematique is the question of how meaning gets produced in the classroom. By considering knowledge a social construction, liberal critics have focused their research on the variety of ways by which knowledge gets arbitrarily mediated and negotiated within classroom settings. A fair amount of empirical research has emerged around questions concerning a) the actual and hidden content of schooling, b) the principles that govern the form and content of teacher-student interaction and c) the importance of seeing educational knowledge as commonsense categories and typifications selected from the larger culture and society that teachers, students, and researchers use to give meanings to their actions.

In using this problematique to study schools, liberal theorists have provided a two-fold theoretical service. On the one hand, they have furnished new critical tools by illuminating how technocratic or postivistic models of pedagogy either hide or distort the normatively grounded categories and patterns of interaction that underlie the structure of daily school experience. Put another way, the liberal critique both exposes and rejects those aspects of the hidden curriculum in which the truth claims of particular forms of knowledge and social practices are based on appeals to external forms of authority that parade under the guize of objectivity. (Whitty, in Michael Flude and John Ahier, eds., 1974)

On the other hand, liberal theorists have attempted to develop pedagogical models that consider the importance of intentionality, consciousness, and interpersonal relations in the construction of meaning and classroom experience, as well as revealing to teachers the socially constructed nature of the classroom categorizations and labels that they utilize. (Giroux, 1981) The concrete nature of these concerns becomes obvious when they are situated within specific conceptual and classroom studies.

For example, in Nell Keddie's work, one finds a classic example of the type of approach that reveals how the typifications and categories that teachers use function not only to define student success, but more importantly, to guarantee, in some cases, student failure. In this case, a number of high school teachers used their categorization of the concept of ability to teach the same course material differently to groups of students from divergent socio-economic backgrounds. These teachers believed that middle-class students approached classroom knowledge with expectations and interests different from those used by working class students. What resulted were dissimilar modes of pedagogy for different groups of students. Working class students were taught how to follow rules, which usually meant learning how not to ask questions or raise issues that challenged teacher-based assumptions. On the other hand, the middle-class students were offered more complex treatments of the class material, and their personal involvement in the class was endorsed rather than discouraged. Ironically, what constituted success for these students appeared less as a result of their superior intellectual skills than of their willingness, as Keddie puts it

> to take over the teacher's definition of the situation....appropriate pupil behavior....is not necessarily a question of the ability to move from higher levels of generalization and abstraction so much as an ability to move into an alternative system of thought from that of his everyday knowledge. In practical terms this means being able to work within the framework which the teacher constructs. (Keddie, p.150)

In addition to studies that focus on the use of teacher categories, the liberal perspective has generated classroom studies that analyze the question of what "students need to know in order to operate effectively in class." (Mehan, p.136) The central concern of these studies is the way teachers and students influence each other through their mutual production of meanings and interactions. Rejecting the notion that the hidden curriculum is uniformly repressive, these critics attempt to provide a theoretical antidote to the assumption that classroom socialization flows only from the socially constructed world of the teacher. Instead, a number of liberal critics have developed conceptual frameworks and empirical analyses that go to great lengths to demonstrate how teachers and students set limits on each others' actions. (Mehan; Vallance; Merelman, June 1980, pp.319-341)

In one such study Mehan sums up the theoretical essence of most of this work with the "insight" that "a teacher teaches a child, while the child teaches the teacher", or "...children structure and modify their environment just as they are structured and modified by it." (Mehan, p.148)

Elizabeth Vallance's work on the hidden curriculum is in the same tradition. That is, Vallance uses the term to connote a number of definitions, and in the end it appears as a curiously empty concept,

signifying no political commitment or critical perspective. For instance, in a paper in which she traces the history of the hidden curriculum, Vallance acknowledges that the notion of the hidden curriculum may be linked to unduly authoritarian and class-based forms of social control, but separates herself from the latter position by providing a definition of the concept that is as apolitical as it is theoretically underdeveloped. In Vallance's words

> I use the term to refer to those non-academic but educationally siqnificant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level of the public rationales for education. (Vallance, p.7)

In a more recent statement on the issue, Vallance acknowledges that the hidden curriculum is a vague but valuable tool for educational inquiry, but how it might be useful becomes questionable because of her confusion over the difference between systematic theoretical inquiry and what she calls "arrogance." Carrying her anti-theoretical posture to its logical end, Vallance ultimately lapses into a non-committal stance that reduces the notion of the hidden curriculum to a concept that has little explanatory power, except to inform us that there is always more going on in the schools than we realize. Vallance writes

> But the real value of the hidden curriculum concept as a tool for educational dialogue is not that it allows us to acknowledge our current ignorance, but that it allows us to acknowledge that much of schooling may be too subtle to ever fully capture. It allows us to accept this degree of mystery and encourages us to find intelligent ways of working around it without needing to fully control it. (Vallance, Winter 1980, p.150)

Another theoretical twist in the liberal problematique can be found in the work of critics such as Richard M. Merelman. (1980) This group argues aggressively against more radical definitions of the hidden curriculum, especially those that claim, on the one hand, that the hidden curriculum promotes docility and conformity in all social classes of students, and, on the other, that the hidden curriculum has a direct effect on student attitudes towards the wider political system. After "discovering" that schools are social sites marked by both conflict and conformity, Merelman decides that the hidden curriculum is, in essence, a product of the school's contradictory allegiance to teaching democratic values and its demand for social control. It is this division within the school that allegedly justifies certain forms of testing and age-grading, and particular forms of teacher authority and control over almost all aspects of student behaviour. Curiously, Merelman does not seem bothered by the notion that the division to which he refers may have its roots in the dominant society. That is, the notion that such a division may be inherent in the very nature of capitalist society, with its restriction of democracy to the political realm and its concomitant support for inequality in the economic realm is not considered by Merelman. What Merelman ignores is well

put by Clark and Gintis.

> For democracy requires that the historical evolution of society be responsive to the popular will; while capitalism, as an essential determinant of social evolution, rests on fundamental inequalities in wealth, power, and participation. (Clark and Gintis, Summer 1978, p.305)

Since Merelman refuses to trace the political and economic determinants of the hidden curriculum, he ends up largely blaming teachers for its existence and influence. We are told, for example, that future teachers have grade point averages far below the average of their academic peers, that most social studies teachers are intellectual mediocrities, and that most of the elementary schools are filled with our least gifted minds. (Merelman, pp.327-328) Under such circumstances, Merelman can only conclude that the hidden curriculum functions through the ignorance and political ineptitude of the very people who are in a position to alter its effects.

There is a certain logic in Merelman's remarks that characterize the liberal perspective in general. In other words, there seems to be little or no understanding of how the social, political, and economic conditions of society create either directly or indirectly some of the oppressive features of schooling. More specifically, there is little or no concern with the ways in which powerful institutions and groups influence the knowledge, social relations, and modes of evaluation that characterize the ideological texture of school life. The lack of such an understanding appears to result in either a relativistic posture or a blaming-the-victim stance. (Holly, in Michael Young and Geoff Whitty, eds., 1977, pp.172-191) Questions regarding false consciousness or structural determinations fade away in such accounts. For example, the one-sided emphasis on consciousness and the production of classroom meanings in the liberal approach exist at the expense of developing criteria by which to judge the adequacy of contradictory knowledge claims. Moreover, the orientation towards description in some of these accounts provides no criteria for critically evaluating the competing interpretations of social and political reality. There seems to be an indifference in these accounts to "how and why reality comes to be constructed in particular ways and how and why particular constructions of reality seem to have the power to resist submission." (Whitty, p.125)

Related to the failure of the liberal approach, and characteristic of critics like Merelman, is the theoretical disregard for the way in which ideological and structural constraints in the larger society are reproduced in the schools so as to mediate against the possibility of critical thinking or constructive dialogue. Thus, the notion that teachers and pupils may face ideological and structural constraints over which they have little control is ignored. In this view, powerlessness is confused with passivity and pedagogical failings are reduced to questions of mindlessness, ignorance or individual failings. (Silberman, 1970) As can be expected, the hierarchical and often authoritarian relationships of school management, the conservative

nature of school ideology, the material conditions of the classroom, the structural isolation teachers often face, and the fiscal and ideological constraints imposed by school boards on faculty appear to vanish as structural constraints in many liberal accounts of the workings of the hidden curriculum.

Radical approach

In the traditional approach to the study of the hidden curriculum, the focus is on how the system of schooling serves to reproduce stability and cohesion in the wider society. In the liberal approach the study of social structures is put aside for analyses of how people produce and negotiate classroom meanings. In the radical approach, the traditional emphasis on consensus is replaced by a radical focus on conflict, and the liberal concern with the way teachers and students create meanings is replaced by a focus on social structures and the constriction of meaning. The question at the core of the radical problematique on the hidden curriculum is how does the process of schooling function to reproduce and sustain the relations of dominance, exploitation, and inequality between classes. (Early representative examples of this position can be found in Bowels and Gintis, 1976; Carnoy and Levin, 1976; Benet and Daniels, Eds., 1980.)

Radical perspectives on the hidden curriculum provide a number of valuable insights into the schooling process. First, they help to explain the political function of schooling in terms of the important concepts of class and domination. Second, they point to the existence of structural factors outside of the immediate environment of the classroom as important forces in influencing both the day-to-day experiences and the outcomes of the schooling process.

In both the theoretical and empirical work that characterizes this approach the focus is on the political economy of schooling. The central thesis is that the social relations that characterize the production process represent the determining force in the shaping of the school environment. For example, Bowles and Gintis in their celebrated Schooling in Capitalist America establish a theoretical basis for this position and argue that the form of socialization, rather than the content of the formal curriculum, provides the chief vehicle for inculcating in different classes of students the dispositions and skills they will need to take their corresponding places in the work force. (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) At the heart of these accounts is what is called the "correspondence principle." In essence, the correspondence principle argues that the social relations of the school and classroom roughly mirror the social relations of the workplace, the final outcome being the reproduction of the social and class divisions needed for the production and legitimation of capital and its institutions. (See my extensive critique of the correspondence principle in Giroux, 1980.) A further elaboration of this principle can be found in the work of Mickelson, who uses it to develop her own empirical research on the hidden curriculum. This is worth quoting at length.

> The social relations of production reflect the social division of labor. The social relations of different tracks in school tend to conform to different behavioral norms. Thus vocational and general tracks, where most working-class adolescents are channeled, emphasize rule-following and close supervision, whereas college-bound tracks, where most upper- and middle-class children, are channeled, tend toward a more open atmosphere emphasizing internalization of norms and standards of control.
>
> The relations of dominance and subordination in education differ by level of school and by class of the community. The role orientation of the high school reflects the close supervision of low-level workers. The internalization of norms, and freedom from continued supervision in middle-class, suburban high schools and in colleges reflects the social relationships of upper-level white-collar work. It can easily be seen that the close correspondence between the social relations that govern personal interactions in the workplace and the social relations of authority between teachers and students and their work replicate the hierarchical division of labor in the workplace. Students in vocational and general tracks have a low level of control over their curriculum and daily activities in school which is in turn comparable to that of industrial or service workers over the content of their jobs. (Mickelson, Fall 1980, pp.84-85)

Accounts, such as Mickelson's, while important, end up providing a one-sided and theoretically underveloped perspective on the role of the hidden curriculum. One problem is that they misconstrue the relationship between schools and the economic order. That is, even though it may be difficult to contest that schools exist in a particular relationship to the industrial order, the latter insight is not quite the same as assuming that the relationship is simply one of correspondence or cause and effect. Furthermore, in many of these accounts, not only is there little understanding of the contradictions and social spaces that promote oppositional tendencies and behavior in schools, there is also a one-dimensional view of socialization. Students and teachers do not simply comply with the oppressive features of schooling as radical critics suggest; in some cases both groups resist, in some cases they modify school practices, and in other cases they conform to school policies and practices, but in no sense do teachers and students uniformly function in schools as simply the passive reflex of the logic of capital. In other words, radical accounts fail to understand that while schools serve the interests of capitalism, they also serve other interests as well, some of which are in opposition to the economic order and the needs of the dominant society. (For a good critiqe of this position see Hogan, November 1979, pp.387-413; Popkewitz, forthcoming.) At the same time, active agents disappear in these accounts, except as passive role bearers and products of wider social processes. The notion that there is no steadfast correlation between a predefined institutional role and how people both interpret

and respond to that role goes unexamined in the radical perspective. Teachers and students do not simply receive information, they also produce and mediate it. By forgetting the latter, many supporters of the radical perspective fail to acknowledge or develop an adequate view of either consciousness, resistance, or culture. Also, this perspective has consistently ignored the existence of forms of domination other than those of class oppression (McRobbie, Spring 1980, pp.37-49; MacDonald, in Rosemary Deem, ed., 1980, pp.13-25.) Missing from these accounts are detailed studies of either racial oppression or gender discrimination. Finally, these perspectives are deeply pessimistic. By providing an 'air-tight' notion of domination and an equally reductionist notion of socialization, radical accounts provide little hope for either social change or the promise of oppositional teaching within the schools. Consequently, in the end they help to provide a blue-print for cynicism and despair, one that serves to reproduce the very mode of domination they claim to be resisting.

In summary, while many of these analyses of the hidden curriculum provide valuable insights into its day-to-day mechanisms and consequences, they ultimately present perspectives that are far too undialectical to contribute significantly either to a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between schooling and capitalism or to provide the theoretical elements necessary to develop a more critical mode of pedagogy. I would like to conclude by briefly pointing to some of the theoretical elements needed as a foundation for such a task.

The hidden curriculum: a redefinition

If the notion of the hidden curriculum is to be rescued from its own intellectual heritage and used as an important theoretical element in the development of a critical pedagogy, it will have to be both redefined and resituated as a pedagogical concern. With regard to the latter, the concept will have to occupy a central rather than marginal place in the development of curriculum theory. In other words, curriculum theory and practice will have to integrate a notion of critique into its problematique that is capable of questioning the normative assumptions underlying its logic and discourse. Secondly, if the notion of hidden curriculum is to become meaningful it will have to be used not only to analyze the social relations of the classroom and school, but also the structural "silences" and ideological messages that shape the form and content of school knowledge. Finally, a redefinition of the hidden curriculum necessitates that it be seen as something more than an interpretative tool buttressed with good intentions. While it is important to use the concept of the hidden curriculum as a heuristic tool to uncover the assumptions and interests that go unexamined in the discourse and materials that shape school experience, such a position does not go far enough. It is crucial that the notion of the hidden curriculum also be linked to a notion of liberation, grounded in the values of personal dignity and social justice. As such, the essence of the hidden curriculum would be established in

the development of a theory of schooling concerned with both reproduction and transformation; at the core of such a theory would be the imperative to link approaches to human consciousness and action to forms of structural analysis that explore how the latter interpenetrate each other rather than appear as separate pedagogical concerns.

Implications for classroom practice

Outline of a Theoretical Model

One of the major shortcomings of the existing literature on schooling and the hidden curriculum is that it has failed to develop a dialectical conceptual framework for grasping education as a societal process. (Apple, p.49) Caught between a watered-down functionalism and an unbounded focus on subjectivity, such literature has portrayed the modalities of structure and human agency as opposing forces rather than forces that, while somewhat distinct, affect each other. Amidst this dualism of action and structure, the contextuality of meaning often appears in either a historical or a structural vacuum. From the opposite perspective, structuralist literature on the hidden curriculum suggests not only a mistrust of consciousness, but a refusal to acknowledge human agents in both the production and transformation of meaning and history. (Giroux) What is needed is a theoretical model in which schools as institutions are viewed and evaluated, both in historical and contemporary terms, as social sites in which human actors are both constrained and mobilized. In other words, schooling must be analyzed as a societal process, one in which different social groups both accept and reject the complex mediations of culture, knowledge, and power that give form and meaning to the process of schooling.

In addition to viewing schooling as a social process in which the elements of structure and agency come together as social practices that take place within ever-changing constraints, it is crucial that schools also be viewed within a theory of totality. That is, school as both an institution and a set of social practices must be seen in its integral connections with the realities of other socio-economic and political institutions that control the production, distribution, and legitimation of economic and cultural capital in the dominant society. But a relational analysis of schools becomes meaningful only if it is accompanied by an understanding of how power and knowledge link schools to the inequalities produced in the larger social order.

Equally important is the necessity for teachers and other educators to reject those educational theories that either reduce schooling to the domain of learning theory or to forms of technocratic rationality that ignore the central concerns of social change, power relations, and conflicts both within and outside of schools. The hidden curriculum concept is important in this instance because it rejects the notion of immediacy that runs through both the theoretical discourse and the focus in the latter theoretical positions.

Rather than celebrating objectivity and consensus, teachers must place the notions of critique and conflict at the centre of their pedagogical models. Within such a perspective, greater possibilities exist for developing an understanding of the role which power plays in defining and distributing the knowledge and social relationships that mediate the school and classroom experience. Critique must become a vital pedagogical tool not only because it breaks through the mystifications and distortions that "silently" work behind the labels and routines of school practice, but also because it demonstrates a form of resistance and oppositional pedagogy.

Finally, one of the most important theoretical elements missing from the hidden curriculum literature is a view of the schools as sites of both domination and contestation. The incorporation of the latter perspective is crucial because it redefines the nature of domination as well as the notion of power. In other words, domination is never total in this perspective, nor is it simply imposed on people. Such an insight demands that teachers examine not only the mechanisms of domination as they exist in the schools, but also how such mechanisms are reproduced and resisted by students via their own lived experiences (Willis, 1977) Similarly, power must be seen as a force that works both on people and through them. As Foucault continually reminds us, power is not a static phenomenon, it is a process that is always in play. (Foucault, 1980) Put another way, power must be viewed, in part, as a form of production inscribed in the discourse and capabilities that people use to make sense out of the world. Otherwise, the notion of power is subsumed under the category of domination and the issue of human agency gets relegated to either a marginal or insignificant place in educational theorizing.

Elements of Classroom Practice

While it is crucial to see schools as social sites that roughly reproduce the class, gender, and racial relationships that characterize the dominant society, it is equally important to make such an analysis function in the interest of developing alternative pedagogical practices. The first step in developing such practices would focus around the relationship between school culture and the overt and covert dimensions of the curriculum on the one hand, and the contradictory, lived experiences that teachers and students bring to the school on the other. It is in the relationship between school culture and contradictory lived experiences that teachers and students register the imprints and texture of domination and resistance. In particular, it is in the latter relationship that culture is divided into dominant and repressive forms, into categories that "silently" delineate the essential from the inessential, the legitimate from the illegitimate. It is around these categories (practices) that conformity, tension, and resistance develop in the schools. Culture as contradictory, lived experience represents the shared principles that emerge among specific groups and classes under concrete socio-historical conditions. It is both the critical and unexamined world of everyday practices that guide and constrain individual and social action. While school cultures may take complex and heterogeneous forms, the principle that remains constant

is that they are situated within a network of power relations from which they cannot escape.

The practical implications of the above suggest that since the mechanisms of reproduction and transformation are located, in part, within the dominant school culture, teachers should criticaly consider the question of where such a culture comes from, whose culture is being implemented, whose interests it serves, and how it gets inscribed and sustained in school discourse and social practices. Moreover, understanding both the political nature of academic culture and its relationship to the categories and processes that different classes of students bring to the school, demands that teachers take seriously not only the beliefs and routines of the school, but also the underlying meanings and experiences that characterize students from different socio-economic groups, and which exist in various degrees of compatibility and resistance to the dominant school culture. What is needed to unravel the source, mechanisms, and elements that constitute the fabric of school culture is a theory of ideology.

Ideology as used here refers to the beliefs, values, and feelings carried in consciousness and embedded in the personality structures of individuals. It also refers to the inscribed codes and messages that characterize all routines and cultural representations. Ideology both distorts and illuminates the nature of social reality. As a distortion it becomes hegemonic, as an illumination it contains elements of reflexivity and the grounds for social action. It is the positive moment in the dialectic of ideology that has been ignored by educational critics. My attempt to reintroduce the positive dimension of ideology into the discourse of educational theorizing takes its cue from Gramsci and Aronowitz. Both point out that ideologies mobilize human subjects as well as create the "terrain on which men move and acquire consciousness of their position." (Aronowitz, 1980, p.92; Gramsci, 1971) One important clarification to the latter definition is that, as a form of reflexivity, ideology is not synonymous with liberation, particularly since it is exercised within economic and political conditions that ultimately determine its influence or effect.

The notion of ideology becomes a critical pedagogical tool when it is used to interrogate the relationship between the dominant school culture and the contradictory, lived experiences that mediate the texture of school life. I want to argue that three important distinctions provide the foundation for developing a theory of ideology and classroom practice. First, a distinction must be made between theoretical and practical ideologies. (Sharp, pp.126-127; Whitty, in press, p.28) Theoretical ideologies refer to the beliefs and values embedded in the categories that teachers and students use to shape and interpret the pedagogical process. On the other hand, practical ideologies refer to the messages and norms embedded in classroom social relations and practices. Second, a distinction must be made between discourse and lived experience as instances of ideology on the one hand, and the material grounding of ideologies as they are embodied in school "texts," films, and other cultural artifacts that make up visual and aural media, on the other. Third, these ideological

elements gain part of their significance only as they are viewed in their articulation with the broader relations of society.

One implication for classroom practice to be drawn from a theory of ideology is that it presents teachers with a heuristic tool to examine critically how their own views about knowledge, human nature, values, and society are mediated through the commonsense assumptions they use to structure classroom experiences. In other words, the concept of ideology provides a starting point for raising questions about the social and political interests that underlie many of the pedagogical assumptions that are taken for granted by teachers. Assumptions about learning, achievement, teacher-student relations, objectivity, school authority, and so on, all need to be evaluated critically by educators. As Michael Apple points out, such an approach demands a critical style.

> The curriculum field has been much too accepting of forms of thought that do not do justice to the complexity of inquiry and thus it has not really changed its basic perspective for decades. (Apple, 1979, p.60)

Needless to say, ideology as critique must also be used to examine classroom social relations that serve to "freeze" the spirit of critical inquiry among students. These pedagogical practices must also be decoded and measured against their potential to foster rather than hamper intellectual growth and social inquiry. This becomes particularly important for those students who experience daily the pain of humiliation and powerlessness because their own lived experiences and sedimented histories are at odds with the dominant school culture. These students need to be placed in classroom social relationships that affirm their own histories and cultures while at the same time providing them with the critical discourse they need to develop a self-managed existence. Relevance here means that teachers must structure classroom experiences that give students the opportunities not only to affirm their own experiences but also to examine critically the ways in which they have become part of the system of social reproduction. Thus, if teachers are to move beyond the role of being agents of cultural reproduction to agents of cultural mobilization, they will have to engage critically the nature of their own self-formation and participation in the dominant society, including their role as intellectuals and mediators of the dominant culture. (Greene, 1978; Wexler, in press)

The production of self-awareness is also linked to understanding how curriculum materials and other cultural artifacts produce meanings. That is, teachers must learn how to decode the messages inscribed in both the form and content of such artifacts and materials. This becomes all the more imperative in the light both of recent studies about teacher attitudes toward classroom materials and of a number of content analysis studies that focus on the messages embedded in school curriculum materials. For example, a major National Science Foundation study on social studies teaching concluded that the "dominant instructional mode is the conventional

textbook...the knowing expected of students is largely information oriented...(and) teachers tend not only to rely on, but to believe in the textbook as the source of knowledge." (Shaver, Davis, Helburn, February 1979, p.151, and 1978, 25pp) Recent content analysis studies of current social studies books used in the public schools paint the same bleak picture. For instance, Jean Anyon's extensive studies conclude that such books are dominated by themes such as

> a) an over-valuing of social harmony, social compromise and political consensus with very little said about social struggle or class conflict;
>
> b) an intense nationalism and chauvinism;
>
> c) an almost total exclusion of labour history from these texts;
>
> d) a number of myths regarding the nature of political, economic, and social life. (Anyon, August 1979, pp.361-386; Spring 1980, pp.67-92; Vol.11, No.1, in press)

Similarly, Popkewitz found in his study of the discipline-centered curriculum in the social studies that they express a conservative bias toward social-political institutions. (Popkewitz, April 1977, pp.41-60)

The production of self-awareness must also take as its objective the ability to decode and critique the ideologies inscribed in the form or structuring principles behind the presentation of images in curriculum materials. It is the significant "silences" of a "text" that also have to be uncovered. For instance, teachers must learn to identify the ideological messages implicit in "texts" that focus on individuals to the exclusion of collective action, that juxtapose high quality art next to descriptions of poverty and exploitation, or use forms of discourse that do not promote critical engagement by students. Recently, a number of curricular theorists have pointed to the production of curriculum packages that promote what has been called teacher de-skilling. (Apple, in L. Barton, R. Meighan, S. Walker, Eds., forthcoming; Buswell, 1980, pp.293-306) That is, rather than promote conceptual understanding on the part of the classroom teacher, these curriculum 'kits' separate conception from execution. In other words, objectives, knowledge skills, pedagogical practices, and modes of evaluation are built into and predefined by the curriculum program itself. The teacher's role is reduced to merely following the rules. Assembly line control, in this case, parades as the newest insight in curriculum development.

Finally, I think that if teachers are going to make the concept of the hidden curriculum a central part of their educational theorizing and practice, they will have to turn their attention to the labour process of schooling. More specifically, teachers must collectively challenge the often hidden message of powerlessness that characterizes the division of labour in most schools. The separation of content, pedagogy, and evaluation to different groups of specialists not only

limits teacher autonomy, it also promotes the division between mental and manual labour, albeit at a higher level of the labour process. But regardless of the form it takes, the message that emerges from such a division is generally the same: "Don't think, simply follow the rules." Consequently, there are political elements within the labour process itself that work both ideologically and structurally against teachers, and on a more visible level against students as well. As Apple and Feinberg point out,

> The removal of the teacher from participating in the complex issues surrounding the process of producing instructional material can reinforce an image in which the teacher is viewed as only a conduit between the homogenized curriculum and the child. And this image reinforces the impression that teachers need only to know about the techniques of management. In the process, our ability to make reasoned choices and to explain these to the public is diminished. (Apple and Feinbert, forthcoming, p.1)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I have argued that the notion of the hidden curriculum as it currently exists in the literature fails to provide the theoretical elements necessary to develop a critical pedagogy based on a concern with cultural struggles in the schools. Most of the approaches that characterize the latter literature ultimately dissolve the notion of politics in, among other things, a false celebration of subjectivity or an equally false treatment of students and teachers as social props passively carrying out the requirements of larger social structures. What is needed to move beyond these positions is a view of the hidden curriculum that encompasses all the ideological instances of the schooling process that "silently" structure and reproduce hegemonic assumptions and practices. Such a focus is important because it shifts the emphasis away from a one-sided preoccupation with cultural reproduction to a primary concern with cultural intervention and social action. While such an approach in and of itself will not change the larger society, it will provide the foundation for using the schools as important sites to wage counter-hegemonic practices. Whitty sums this position up as well as anyone.

> Just as hegemonic ideological practice has a particular and crucial role in social reproduction, so can oppositional ideological practice, if appropriately organized, play a significant role in social transformation. (Whitty, in press, p.91)

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