

- colonialism (Bourdieu, 1962 [1961]: 117, 119–20). But the concepts of tradition and modernity are never called into question, simply redefined.
- 8 Bourdieu (2000) relies on the much misused case of the Kabyle cook – a man who moves from one job to another. There is little evidence that this is a sign of anomie or that he is beholden to some traditional habitus. Instead, the cook shows great entrepreneurial adroitness in adapting to the exigencies of urban life under colonialism.
 - 9 Gramsci seemed to think that the war of position either preceded the war of movement (in the West, where civil society was strong) or followed the war of movement (in the East, with its undeveloped civil society, where socialism would be built after the revolution). Fanon understood the dangers of postponing the struggle for socialism until after independence.
 - 10 Interestingly, Fanon and Bourdieu held opposite views about the working class in advanced capitalism: for Fanon, it was potentially revolutionary; for Bourdieu, it was not. Although there is no sign that Fanon had read Gramsci, he had a very Gramscian view of the West with a developed civil society and a bourgeoisie able to make concessions, all of which was absent in the periphery (Fanon, 1963 [1961]: 38, 108–9, 165, 175).
 - 11 Armoured police vehicles.
 - 12 The word ‘strike’ is used to describe not only industrial action, but forceful community protest.
 - 13 A sjambok is a rawhide whip.
 - 14 In other sites of our research, both the local ANC branch and organisations such as civic associations and CPFs adopted a very different stance, either supporting or turning a blind eye to xenophobic attacks.
 - 15 ‘The law is made to be broken.’
 - 16 The CWP has already been rolled out into some 70 communities nationally with a total of 90,000 people employed, and is sparking a discussion about a national employment guarantee.

CONVERSATION 5

PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED

MICHAEL BURAWOY

Freire Meets Bourdieu

Thus, in a society in which the obtaining of social privileges depends more and more closely on possession of academic credentials, the School does not only have the function of ensuring discreet succession to a bourgeois estate which can no longer be transmitted directly and openly. This privileged instrument of the bourgeois sociodicy which confers on the privileged the supreme privilege of not seeing themselves as privileged manages the more easily to convince the disinherited that they owe their scholastic and social destiny to their lack of gifts or merits, because in matters of culture absolute dispossession excludes awareness of being dispossessed.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977 [1970]: 210)

For Bourdieu, education is symbolic domination par excellence. In a society where the dominant class can no longer invoke rights of blood to pass on their inheritance nor appeal to ascetic virtue as a justification of success, academic certification becomes the vehicle to justify and transmit its domination. Education attests and consecrates the merits and gift of the bourgeoisie, while concealing their distinction as an outgrowth of their privilege – concealing it, that is, not only from themselves, but also from the dominated, who see themselves as undeserving because unmeritorious. *Reproduction*, which brought Bourdieu and Passeron

into the public eye both in France and abroad, offers a deeply pessimistic account of the role of education in reproducing domination through simultaneously privileging and hiding the cultural capital inherited by the dominant. It is designed to dispel illusions that schooling can be a vehicle of social transformation, although that still didn't stop Bourdieu using his place in the education world to advocate change.

Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – the originating, most popular text of critical pedagogy – appeared in 1970, the same year that *Reproduction* was published in France. Neither makes any reference to the other, yet they both embark from a similar criticism of conventional pedagogy and its optimism about formal education's progressive contribution to social change. Freire also sets out from the assumption that the dominated have internalised their oppression, and that this domination is reinforced through a 'banking' system of education in which teachers pour knowledge into the supposedly empty minds of their students. There is, however, an alternative pedagogy, Freire argues, based on dialogue between teacher and student around problems originating with the latter. This requires working with students outside of formal education, i.e. bringing education to their communities, neighbourhoods and villages.

Bourdieu and Passeron may not refer to Freire by name, but they condemn all such 'populist pedagogies' as misguided. Rather than challenging domination, these pedagogies effectively consolidate symbolic domination. Their own solution, to which they refer in the conclusion to their earlier book, *The Inheritors* (1979 [1964]), but all but abandon in *Reproduction*, is 'rational pedagogy' – the attempt to counteract inequalities in the cultural preparation of different classes, not by making concessions to subjugated cultures, but by inculcating dominant culture into disadvantaged groups. They freely admit this to be a utopian project in the context of class domination, but the *attempt* to realise it would have the benefit of unmasking the inequity of cultural preconditioning.

Here, then, are two antithetical approaches to the same problem – i.e. the way in which education reproduces domination. Where Bourdieu can only conceive of a countering of domination by creating universal access to the cultural achievements of bourgeois society, i.e. by extending bourgeois civilisation to all, Freire, on the other hand, sees in this the perfection of domination. He seeks an alternative pedagogy that extricates and cultivates the good sense that remains within the oppressed despite internalised oppression – a pedagogy that starts out from their lived experience.

In the conversation that follows, I first examine the argument of Bourdieu and Passeron, and then construct Freire's antithesis, before seeking a synthesis in Gramsci's writings on education and politics. Gramsci, after all, believed in the 'common school' that would induct everyone into the dominant culture, arming potential organic intellectuals with the wherewithal to identify, elaborate and protect the good sense of the working class. In this view, Freire's separatist solution underestimates the power of ideological hegemony – a power that calls for contestation on its terrain as well as the development of an alternative culture.

SCHOOLING AS SYMBOLIC DOMINATION

Bourdieu had a continuing interest in education throughout his life, which is perhaps fitting for a reflexive sociologist whose career was made by excelling in the academic world. This abiding fascination with education was surely triggered by his own life of upward mobility – an anomaly his theory could not explain. His self-portrait – a son of a rural postal worker who made good through education – subscribes to the ideology of 'merit' and 'gift' that his sociological writings systematically discredit. Not surprisingly, he returns again and again to the question of education, which was central to his own life, but also to French society in general.

In 1964, only four years after he had returned from Algeria, Bourdieu joined Jean-Claude Passeron to publish *The Inheritors*, which examined the critical, but hidden role of cultural capital not only in selecting students for university, but also in subjecting them to a pedagogy that privileged the culturally advantaged. They made the argument – provocative at the time – that even if there were equality of opportunity, even if the children of the wage labourer had the same chance of entering university as the children of the senior executive, still the university would reproduce the domination of the latter over the former. Teaching in the university presupposes and reinforces the privileged upbringing of the middle and upper classes.

For those who are looking for origins, *The Inheritors* prefigures so much in Bourdieu's corpus – the relationship of different classes to culture as laid out in *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984 [1979]), the self-delusions of the academic world elaborated as scholastic fallacies, the idea of social structure as a game presented in *Pascalian Meditations* (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]), the battle of the disciplines worked out in *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu, 1988 [1984]) and the strategies through which the dominant class reproduces itself through the *Grandes Écoles* presented in *State*

Nobility (Bourdieu, 1996 [1989]). But most significantly, *The Inheritors* is a prolegomenon to its theoretical deepening and detailed elaboration in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. Written with Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction* is an uncompromising critique of education that brought both fame and infamy to its authors.

Education exemplifies symbolic domination. Schooling *secures* the active participation of students and teachers in the pursuit of credentials that entails the learning of legitimate culture, while *obscuring* the reproduction of class domination that is the effect of such participation. Securing participation is education's technical function (inculcation), while obscuring class domination is its social function (class selection) (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 [1970]: 164–67). Thus, Bourdieu and Passeron criticise economists for emphasising the technical functions of education at the expense of its social functions and critical theorists for focusing on the social at the cost of the technical functions of education. At the heart of symbolic domination is the *combination* of enthusiastic participation and systematic misrecognition. To examine one without the other is to misunderstand the symbolic power of education.

Central to their model of reproduction is the way the relative autonomy of the educational system has the effect of naturalising its two-fold arbitrariness: the imposition of a cultural arbitrary (legitimate culture) through an arbitrary power (class domination). The source of relative autonomy lies with the cadres of teachers, specially trained and recruited as professionals and thus vehement defenders of the autonomy of their practice, but also on the standardisation and routinisation of education; in other words, subjection to its own principles of regulation. Relative autonomy gives the (false) impression of neutrality with respect to class, rendering class bias invisible and all the more profound.

The argument rests on the assumption that primary pedagogical work (PW) in the family produces an enduring and irreversible primary habitus that sets the conditions for subsequent schooling:

Insofar as PW is an irreversible process producing, in the time required for incultation, an irreversible disposition, i.e. a disposition which cannot itself be repressed or transformed except by an irreversible process producing in turn a new irreversible disposition, primary PA [pedagogic action] (the earliest phase of upbringing), which is carried out by PW without any antecedent (primary PW), produces a primary habitus, characteristic of a group or class, which is the basis for the subsequent formation of any other habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 [1970]: 42).

The primary habitus inculcated by the dominant classes bestows cultural advantages on their children. The primary pedagogical work in the family transmits linguistic and cultural dispositions that take advantage of the symbolic mastery – abstract bookish learning – taught at school. The children of the dominated classes, having received a more functional, utilitarian upbringing, face an alien school environment and pedagogy. Although it appears neutral and universal, school learning presupposes the cultural capital of the dominant class and disparages the culture of the dominated. The power of the school system is redoubled by the labour market, which rewards academic success and in turn further consecrates the legitimate capital of the already privileged and denigrates the dominated culture:

The more unified the market on which the value of the products of the different PAs [pedagogic actions] is determined, the more the groups and classes, which have undergone a PA inculcating a dominated cultural arbitrary, are likely to have the valuelessness of their cultural attainment brought home to them both by the anonymous sanctions of the labour market and by the symbolic sanctions of the cultural market (e.g. the matrimonial market), not to mention the academic verdicts, which are always charged with economic and symbolic implications. These calls to order tend to produce in them, if not explicit recognition of the dominant culture as the legitimate culture, then at least an insidious awareness of the cultural unworthiness of their own acquirements (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 [1970]: 28).

To be sure, there are those, like Bourdieu, who manage to overcome their class background, but they only serve to intensify the obsession with achievement while further mystifying the relation between education and class. Such upward mobility also turns attention away from the more pervasive phenomenon characterising education, namely the exclusion of so many from education at different levels, many of whom quietly eliminate themselves rather than go through the humiliation of being eliminated.

ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGIES

The picture painted here is very different from that of Paul Willis (1977), for example, who argues that some working-class children do indeed rebel against the middle-class culture thrust upon them in school, embracing

their own down-to-earth manual practical culture (with all its problematic sexism and racism); and, furthermore, it is this hostility to middle-class school culture that makes them enthusiastic to re-enter the working class. This rebellion exhibits what Willis calls a 'partial penetration' – the lads clearly understood the bias of the school, but ended up reproducing their own subordination. Willis proposes the creation of schools where teachers would validate working-class culture, elaborating it into a full-blown critique of capitalism. Bourdieu and Passeron dismiss any such sociological relativism as a populist illusion:

This could lead students to demand that the parallel cultures of the disadvantaged classes should be given the status of the culture taught by the school system. But it is not sufficient to observe that school culture is a class culture; to proceed as if it were only that, is to help it remain so (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979 [1964]: 72).

The populist illusion recognises the social function of education, but misses the technical function, namely the inescapable importance of acquiring credentials that can be utilised for survival. Increasingly, those working-class jobs will not be available to working classes who do not have basic schooling. Thinking perhaps of himself, Bourdieu mocks the very idea of endorsing working-class culture as paternalistic and insulting to the ambitions and capacities of the dominated.

If *popular* pedagogies that celebrate class cultures of the dominated end up channelling the disadvantaged back to the bottom of society, *soft* pedagogies that focus on alternative ways of teaching ignore and further mystify the importance of class:

... the ideologies of PA [pedagogic action] as non-violent action – whether in Socratic and neo-Socratic myths of non-directive teaching, Rousseauistic myths of natural education, or pseudo-Freudian myths of non-repressive education – reveal in its clearest form the generic function of educational ideologies, in evading, by the gratuitous negation of one of its terms, the contradiction between the objective truth of PA and the necessary (inevitable) representation of this arbitrary action as necessary ('natural') (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 [1970]: 13).

The soft pedagogies become ideologies that do not recognise the role they play in the reproduction of class domination. As we shall see, Freire's problem-based dialogic pedagogy, although not mentioned explicitly, is

clearly one of those ideologies that hide from themselves their own implication in class domination.

So what then is the solution? It is what Bourdieu and Passeron call 'rational pedagogy', which must not only cancel out the inequality of access to education, but also counteract the advantages of the dominant-class habitus by inculcating the relevant aspects of that habitus in all classes:

It may be wondered whether a type of secondary PW [pedagogical work] which, conversely, took into account the distance between the pre-existent habitus and the habitus inculcated, and was systematically organized in accordance with the principles of an explicit pedagogy, would not have the effect of erasing the boundary which traditional PW recognizes and confirms between the legitimate addressees and the rest. Or, to put it another way, whether perfectly rational PW – i.e. PW exerted ab novo in all domains on all the educable, taking nothing for granted at the outset, with the explicit goal of explicitly inculcating in all its pupils the practical principles of the symbolic mastery of practices which are inculcated by primary PA [pedagogic action] only within certain groups or classes, in short a type of PW everywhere substituting for the traditional mode of inculcation the programmed transmission of the legitimate culture – would not correspond to the pedagogic interest of the dominated classes (the hypothesis of the democratization of education through the rationalization of pedagogy). But the Utopian character of an education policy based on this hypothesis becomes apparent as soon as one observes that, quite apart from the built-in inertia of every educational institution, the structure of power relations prohibits a dominant PA from resorting to a type of PW contrary to the interests of the dominant classes who delegate its PAu [pedagogic authority] to it (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977 [1970]: 53–54).

What Bourdieu and Passeron present as the only solution in *The Inheritors* – true democratisation of education – they now dismiss as utopian. Even utopias have their function in alerting us to the true nature of reality, but in *Reproduction*, Bourdieu and Passeron bend the stick in the opposite direction to demonstrate that there cannot be any alternative education so long as the class structure is what it is. This sounds like a call for revolution, but of course there is never a hint of that in their writing – so different from Paulo Freire, for whom education and revolution are intimately connected.

PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED

Paulo Freire began his interest in education through the development of literacy campaigns so that peasants could participate in Brazilian education. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which first appeared in 1970, is a manifesto for Third World revolution that parallels Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. You might say that it is an elaboration of the relation between radical intellectuals and peasantry that we found so unelaborated in Fanon. Like Fanon, Freire had far more faith in the revolutionary potential of the peasantry than the working class, which 'lack revolutionary consciousness and consider themselves privileged' (Freire, 1970: 148). For Freire, critical pedagogy is a necessary part of revolution.

Freire and Bourdieu start out from similar places – domination – although Freire uses a word with a more revolutionary connotation – oppression. Where Bourdieu thematises symbolic violence in France, as opposed to physical violence in the colonies, Freire thematises internal, as opposed to external, oppression. The counterpart to symbolic violence is *internal oppression* – the introjection of the oppressor into the psyche:

The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their idea is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity. This phenomenon derives from the fact that the oppressed, at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of 'adhesion' to the oppressor. Under these circumstances they cannot 'consider' him sufficiently clearly to objectivize him – to discover him 'outside' themselves. This does not necessarily mean that the oppressed are unaware that they are downtrodden. But their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression (Freire, 1970: 45).

Leaving aside the question of masculinising the oppressor and oppressed, at first glance this is no different from Bourdieu's notion of social structure being inscribed on the body or internalised in the habitus. Yet, of course, whereas Bourdieu does not see how education could ever liberate the dominated, for Freire this is exactly the purpose of critical pedagogy.

Still, they agree that formal education only reproduces domination/oppression. But here they begin to diverge, since for Bourdieu, class domination is socially invisible, being the product of 'formally neutral education, whereas for Freire it lies in the pedagogy itself – the so-called banking model, in which knowledge is deposited in student

as object, and in which teacher is teacher and student is student, and what unites them is a relation of unidirectional authority that inhibits creativity, promotes adaptation, isolates consciousness, suppresses context, nurtures fatalism, and mythologises and naturalises domination. Students are subject to a cultural invasion by professionals so that 'the invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders' (Freire, 1970: 153). For Bourdieu's socio-analysis, Freire substitutes a heavy dose of psychoanalysis.

But Freire is much more optimistic than Bourdieu, for he sees within the psyche two selves, the humanistic individual and the oppressor; the true self and the false self:

The oppressed suffer from the duality which has established itself in their innermost being ... They are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized. The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves and being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within and not ejecting them; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed which their education must take into account (Freire, 1970: 48).

For Freire, then, critical pedagogy must eject the oppressor within, which can only be accomplished through a problem-centred dialogue between teacher and student, in which each learns from the other – for the educator too must be educated. When placed in their own context, tackling their own problems, the oppressed can develop critical faculties through collaboration with others. The interrogation of the folk theory (or thematic universe) of the oppressed leads from problems (or generative themes) to a decoding that focuses on context and thus the historical totality. At the heart of such a pedagogy is the dialogue not only between intellectual and oppressed, but between action and reflection. To veer in one direction or another – activism or verbalism – is to threaten the critical process. Liberation comes through acts of solidarity and collective attempts at social transformation guided by an emergent understanding of historical constraints and possibilities. As in Marx and Fanon, ultimately it is struggle that dissolves inner oppression.

All too little is said about the teacher, who must forge a pedagogy *with* and not *for* the oppressed. Freire does acknowledge the danger that,

coming from the oppressor class, teachers bring with them prejudices about the oppressed:

... certain members of the oppressor class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation, thus moving from one pole of the contradiction to the other. Theirs is a fundamental role, and has been so throughout the history of this struggle. It happens, however, that as they cease to be exploiters or indifferent spectators or simply the heirs of exploitation and move to the side of the exploited, they must always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations, which include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know. Accordingly these adherents to the people's cause constantly run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as malefic as that of the oppressors ... [They] truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change (Freire, 1970: 60).

Through Bourdieu's eyes, 'the pedagogy of the oppressed' is a dangerous fantasy of intellectuals who think they can overcome, firstly, their own habitus as intellectuals (a dominated fraction of the dominant class) and, secondly, and even more difficult, foster the transformation of the habitus of the dominated. Critical pedagogy is an intellectualist illusion that privileges 'conscientisation' (consciousness raising). It misunderstands the depth of oppression, for it conspires to do what educational ideologies generally do, i.e. focus on the pedagogic relation and thereby obscure its class underpinnings. Freire might retort that Bourdieu is focused on the transmission of the dominant culture and cannot see beyond a banking model of education. When education is taken to the dominated, conducted on their terrain, and working from their problems and issues – rather than enrolling the dominated into the alien schools of the oppressor class – then emancipatory action is possible. Is there a resolution between these mutually opposed positions? I am going to seek one in an unlikely place – the writings of Antonio Gramsci.

GRAMSCI'S COMMON SCHOOL AND THE WAR OF POSITION

If one had to place Gramsci within this conversation between Freire and Bourdieu, it would most likely be on Freire's side. Like Freire, Gramsci's

optimism lies in the postulated good sense of the dominated qua working class that springs from its place in production. Cultural invasion there is, but never to the extent of blotting out that good sense at the core of common sense – a good sense that needs elaboration by organic intellectuals engaged in dialogue with the working class, i.e. dialogue not in formal schooling, but in the workplace, in the community. Despite manifest differences in their views about the revolutionary potential of peasantry and proletariat, the centrality of the political party, civil society, and much more, largely due to Gramsci's far richer contextualisation of struggle, nonetheless Gramsci and Freire do share a faith in the capacity of the dominated to see through their domination and engage in struggle to oppose that domination. This shared revolutionary optimism contrasts with Bourdieu's critical pessimism, especially in *Reproduction*.

Therefore, one may be astonished to discover Bourdieu and Passeron's ideas prefigured in Gramsci's notes on education that were written in the context of the fascist regime's call, on the one hand, for vocational education and, on the other, for an active pedagogy that downplays conventional instruction. Gramsci reasserts the importance of instruction, calling for the introduction of the 'common school', which would bestow classical education (Bourdieu's legitimate culture) on all to close the cultural gap between classes. Anticipating Bourdieu and Passeron, Gramsci writes:

In a whole series of families, especially in the intellectual strata, the children find in their family life a preparation, a prolongation and a completion of school life; they 'breathe in', as the expression goes, a whole quantity of notions and attitudes which facilitate the educational process properly speaking. They already know and develop their knowledge of the literary language, i.e. the means of expression and of knowledge, which is technically superior to the means possessed by the average member of the school population between the ages of six and twelve. Thus, city children by the very fact of living in a city, have already absorbed by the age of six a quantity of notions and attitudes which make their school careers easier, more profitable, and more rapid (Gramsci, 1971: 31).

Gramsci goes even further down Bourdieu and Passeron's road in calling attention to the bodily hexis that gives the intellectual classes advantage in the school:

Undoubtedly the child of a traditionally intellectual family acquires this psycho-physical adaptation more easily. Before he ever enters the class-room

he has numerous advantages over his comrades, and is already in possession of attitudes learnt from his family environment; he concentrates more easily, since he is used to 'sitting still', etc. (Gramsci, 1971: 42).

Being a hunchback from a poor rural family, Gramsci is perhaps even more aware than Bourdieu of the inherited disadvantages of class – not just the economic, but the cultural disadvantages that he emphasises here. Perhaps Gramsci was thinking of himself and the enormous discipline it took to write the *Prison Notebooks* – so meticulously presented and worked out – when he wrote about the importance of bodily training early on in life:

In education one is dealing with children in whom one has to inculcate certain habits of diligence, precision, poise (even physical poise), ability to concentrate on specific subjects, which cannot be acquired without mechanical repetition of disciplined and methodical acts. Would the scholar at the age of forty be able to sit for sixteen hours on end at his worktable if he had not, as a child, compulsorily, through mechanical coercion, acquired the appropriate psycho-physical habits? (Gramsci, 1971: 37).

Gramsci may have prefigured the argument of *Reproduction*, but his response was very different. Where Bourdieu and Passeron pose the idea of a 'rational pedagogy', only to dismiss it as utopian, Gramsci builds the idea into a concrete conception of the 'common school', whose *raison d'être* is to equalise cultural capital across classes:

In the basic organization of the common school, at least the essentials of these conditions [of the families of intellectuals] must be created – not to speak of the fact, which goes without saying that parallel to the common school a network of kindergartens and other institutions would develop, in which even before the school age, children would be habituated to a certain collective discipline and acquire pre-scholastic notions and attitudes. In fact, the common school should be organized like a college, with a collective life by day and by night, freed from the present forms of hypocritical and mechanical discipline; studies should be carried on collectively, with the assistance of teachers and the best pupils, even during periods of so-called individual study, etc. (Gramsci, 1971: 31).

We note here a Freirean flavour with the emphasis on collective discipline and collaborative studies, which is not without significance for the future society Gramsci is imagining. Not surprisingly, and again anticipating the

arguments of Bourdieu and Passeron, Gramsci points to the centrality of the teacher – the pivotal conveyor of the dominant culture to the children of the dominated classes:

In the school, the nexus between instruction and education can only be realised by the living work of the teacher. For he must be aware of the contrast between the type of culture and society which he represents and the type of culture and society represented by his pupils, and conscious of his obligation to accelerate and regulate the child's formation in conformity with the former and in conflict with the latter (Gramsci, 1971: 35–36).

We see that the idea of the common school is not as far-fetched as Bourdieu and Passeron claim. Indeed, examples of such schooling could begin with the notorious boarding school, normally the privilege of the dominant classes, one of which Bourdieu himself attended. He may have hated it – who said remedial education would be fun? – but it seemed to have worked, bringing him from culturally deprived Béarn to the pinnacle of French higher education. Why does he not reflect sociologically on his own schooling as a flawed expression, but an expression nonetheless of rational pedagogy, instead of bemoaning the humiliations he suffered? After all, Bourdieu himself writes that changing habitus requires a comprehensive process of counter-training involving repeated exercises (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 172). This can't be much fun.

Moving farther afield, one might recall the not unsuccessful attempts to reverse class differences in the Soviet Union, or the more thorough-going kibbutzim. The passage above with its reference to a network of 'kindergartens and other institutions' and the collective life of learning anticipates such modern-day experiments as the Harlem Children's Zone, which cordons off an urban area and provides children and their families with extensive social services to counteract cultural disadvantage. Better to examine the attempts to realise a rational pedagogy and the obstacles it confronts as demonstration of the limits of possibility – and the truth of one's theory – than to dismiss it as a worthless utopia!

Their insights into education are very similar, but the projects of Gramsci and Bourdieu are very different. Bourdieu and Passeron are contemptuous of those who harbour the illusion that schooling can be a 'mechanism of change' capable of 'creating discontinuities' and 'building a new world' (1977 [1970]: 65). Yet this is precisely what Gramsci has in mind, which is why he wants to subject everyone – not just the children of intellectuals and the dominant classes – to classical education.

He wants everyone to learn Latin as a way of developing objectivity and disinterestedness, as an appreciation of logic, but also of a sense of history, so we can recognise who we are. Schools can play a progressive role in countering folk beliefs and 'localistic' ties inherited from a feudal world that refuses to disappear, thus preparing citizens for their role in the modern world of politics and civil society:

Scientific ideas were intended to insert the child into the *societas rerum*, the world of things, while lessons in rights and duties were intended to insert him into the State and into civil society. The scientific ideas the children learnt conflicted with the magical conception of the world and nature which they absorbed from an environment steeped in folklore; while the idea of civic rights and duties conflicted with tendencies towards individualistic and localistic barbarism – another dimension of folklore (Gramsci, 1971: 33–34).

Gramsci envisions the common school as a school for democracy, 'forming [the child] during this time as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling – or controlling those who rule' (Gramsci, 1971: 40).

Gramsci was not only concerned to bring children into the modern world, but also to advance the project of social transformation, which brings him into direct engagement with Freire. In the field of education, we might say that Freire represents a war of movement that seeks revolutionary opposition to oppression, which is appropriate where civil society is less developed. The advance of a war of position in worlds with a strong civil society requires an extended battle on the terrain of bourgeois hegemony, and for that one needs the weapons of a classical education. The struggle for the common school, therefore, is part of such a war of position. It would be the crucible of the organic intellectuals of the future – intellectuals who would not only elaborate the good sense of the working class, but contest the bourgeois ideologies that they had imbibed at school.

CONCLUSION

Bourdieu and Passeron make every effort to debunk any notion that the school can be a vehicle of social transformation. Their critique of Freire would focus on his failure to see the broader importance of class domination within which schooling takes place and how the pedagogy of the oppressed leaves that domination unchanged. Moreover, Bourdieu and

Passeron would be very sceptical that members of the dominant class could ever leave their habitus behind when they turn to the peasantry or that the habitus of the peasantry could be transformed.

Recognising Bourdieu and Passeron's critique of the 'pedagogy of the oppressed', namely the penetration of capitalist culture, Gramsci would call for the common school as part of a war of position in civil society, forging intellectuals who are equally at home with legitimate culture and the culture of the dominated class. Gramsci himself, even when in prison, never lost touch with his rural family and his working-class associates. But that did not prevent him from being steeped in the dominant Italian culture, so that much of the *Prison Notebooks* can be seen as a dialogue with Croce, Gentile, Pirandello, Machiavelli and others. This idea of deploying dominant culture against the dominant classes is a familiar aspect of South African history. African nationalist leaders such as Mandela and Tambo were in no way deceived by their missionary education, but used it as a sort of 'common school' that armed them for the struggle against apartheid. Interestingly, Robben Island became known as a 'university of struggle', a school to so many of the leaders of the anti-apartheid movement.

Gramsci also understood that you cannot extricate schooling from broader historical processes. The fight for the common school was part of a fight for the broader transformation of society. Again, this is not a strange idea in South Africa, where schools and universities have been at the forefront of the transformation of society. The Soweto rebellion was organised against the dominant culture and became a catalyst in the struggles to overthrow apartheid. Even if Bourdieu and Passeron would make colonial societies an exception, we only have to turn to May 1968 to see the ways in which French students could be a force for social change and challenge the existing order. It is fascinating to note that neither in *Reproduction*, which appeared in 1970, nor in the epilogue to *The Inheritors*, written in 1979, do Bourdieu and Passeron refer to May 1968. For all the talk of the devaluation of credentials and the bamboozling of a generation in the original text of 1964, this epilogue seeks to show how student frustration was accommodated and class reproduction secured. Only in *Homo Academicus*, written in 1984, does Bourdieu address the student revolt, relying on the same framework of the devaluation of credentials, and the mismatch of objective chances and subjective expectations, opportunities and aspirations, while downplaying the self-understanding of the participants and the ideologies that galvanised the rebellion. Still, finally, there is an attempt at studying the place of education in what was the unfolding crisis of French society.

Once we adopt a broader theoretical canvas and forsake dry statistics for historical process, we quickly grasp the ways in which education becomes a terrain of struggle that fosters both social change and social reproduction. Despite himself, Bourdieu must have believed this, as he was so deeply committed to the advance and teaching of sociology as a progressive form of education, whether in school, university, the pages of *Le Monde* or his own widely read books. Once again, Bourdieu's practice was at odds with his theory.

KARL VON HOLDT

Discipline

My own involvement in the struggle for democracy started in the early 1980s in the adult literacy movement inspired by the work of Paulo Freire. We worked in the huge informal settlement of Crossroads outside Cape Town, where thousands of Africans from the poverty-stricken hinterlands of the Eastern Cape had settled, breaking the pass laws and under constant threat of mass eviction by the police. Every evening we taught to the hiss of gas lamps – there was no electricity – in the classrooms of the local school.

Our practices were participatory and democratic, using pictures and stories to elicit dialogue through which, we hoped, the structural violence of apartheid and capitalism would be exposed. Instead of rows of pupils with the teacher standing in front, we sat in a circle, with the 'coordinator' – as we called the teacher – sitting in the circle with the learners. The learners entered gamely into this process, but at times they were frustrated and perplexed by the endless litany of questions they were asked about the blindingly obvious hardships they faced.

One evening, one of our learners, a strong and intelligent woman who had spent five or six years in formal schooling, came in bearing a stick.

When the session started, she rose and came to the front with the stick, turned and faced the circle of learners, and said, 'This is how we want you to teach', wielding the stick fiercely in the direction of the rest of the class.

We were crestfallen. 'The old ways die hard', we told ourselves. But the incident did make us wonder whether we were serious enough about teaching the rules and structures of language, and whether our approach was too loose and open-ended. How astute she was about the significance of discipline and authority in education, I think now, after reading Michael's dialogue between Paulo Freire and Pierre Bourdieu (and Antonio Gramsci).

After some time, we concluded that Freire did not work – at least as he had envisaged. We could not transcend the authority of the teacher, especially (but not only) when the teacher was white, and the exchange of views and knowledge was not equal. Perhaps Freirean pedagogy might work in the case of intellectuals living among and working with the peasantry they taught, but not in our case, where the relationship was built around pedagogy alone. We concluded that consciousness could not be raised in any meaningful sense in this way, where the learners were scattered individuals and not part of any collective, and that the solution was to work with those who were already involved in popular organisation. From then on we concentrated on working with the members of trade unions.

It strikes me that Freire's strategy may have failed to work in Brazil as well. In the end, it was not the peasantry that provided the main force in the struggle against dictatorship, but the working class organised in trade unions and communities, just as it was in South Africa.

So, in some ways, our experience seems to endorse Bourdieu rather than Freire in this debate. Bourdieu recognises the bodily training and mental discipline required by education. Yet his advocacy of schools that systematically make the legitimate culture available to the children of the subaltern classes and inculcate it in them seems insufficiently critical. Discipline necessarily entails subordination, and the question then becomes, subordination to what? In schools organised according to the logic of the legitimate culture, this must mean subordination to constituted authority – the teachers, the school authorities and the many layers of dominant authority beyond that – as well as to the sanctified texts of the dominant culture. Here we come back to our learner with the stick. This was exactly what she was invoking – the authority of the teacher, the discipline of learning, and the necessity of rules and punishment. Force is integral to education, she was saying.

How, then, could being steeped in the dominant culture be in any sense liberating or empowering, as it turned out to be for Bourdieu (and Gramsci), and how could it provide any basis for critical thought, as it did for Bourdieu (and Gramsci)? In order to account for this, we need to think about education as a contradictory process – and not only in terms of a contradiction between technical and social dimensions, but also within these dimensions. Thus, discipline entails subordination to material and textual authority, but it also provides the tools for self-discipline and rigorous critical thought. Disciplining the self may enable the critical self to emerge. Learning the dominant culture involves submission to its rules and the symbolic order it sanctifies – but dominant culture itself is sufficiently polyvocal and contradictory to provide subversive insights and the possibility of rebellion, at least to those disposed to respond to such insights. On the bookshelves of the libraries, the curious student will find Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Simone de Beauvoir and Frantz Fanon.

This brings us back to Freire and the difference between his concept of a contradictory self and Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Freire's critical pedagogy allows us to think through the contradictions of legitimate culture and pedagogical practices, and think therefore about the formation of critical thought. If we bring Freire, Bourdieu and Gramsci together, we might think about critical pedagogy not as something that can only take place in an alternative informal educational context, but as a constant potentiality within the schools and universities of the official educational system.

It was precisely this recognition of the subversive potentiality of 'legitimate culture' that led the apartheid regime to ban books and destroy independent missionary education – through which many of the greatest leaders of the liberation movement gained access to 'legitimate culture' and forged habits of mental and physical discipline – and bring all black schools under its control, creating a special 'Bantu education' that would not permit blacks to foster false ideas about their prospects; as was famously said by one of the regime's ideologues, blacks were destined to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' in white South Africa. Despite this, the massive expansion of black secondary schooling in the townships provided the seedbeds of the youth revolts in 1976 and the 1980s; schools were unsuccessful in inculcating black subservience to apartheid or suppressing the idea of what a 'good education' might look like.

Nonetheless, Bantu education has left a terrible legacy for post-apartheid South Africa in the form of numerous poorly trained teachers – teachers who not only lack technical skills, but also the habits of self-discipline and commitment to pedagogy that are so important for teaching.

While the purpose of Bantu education was to discipline the body and mind for menial work and domination by whites, preventing access to the canonical texts of the dominant culture, post-apartheid education in many schools in poor black communities is unable to install physical or mental discipline. Neither does it provide access to any canonical culture, whether Western or African, since recent educational reforms deny the relevance of 'canon' in favour of 'outcomes'.

As a consequence, in many of the worst-performing schools, the new generations of schoolchildren growing up in a free and democratic South Africa come through ten or 12 years of schooling without the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy, and lacking as well the social skills of self-discipline and learning. What kind of habitus do children and teenagers emerge with from such a blighted education, with what kind of dispositions towards society, solidarity, work and family? What kind of symbolic violence does this experience constitute? Are the young adults that emerge from this system capable of understanding what our learner tried to teach us – that knowledge and mastery of the world requires discipline and a degree of force?

Another question strikes one forcibly when reading Bourdieu in Johannesburg. What do we make of his argument that access to 'legitimate culture' provides the resources to enter the world of reason located in the values of truth and emancipation – in a word, Enlightenment – and its correlates, democracy and human rights? This formation of reason in the fields of modern education and social and natural science provides the basis for Bourdieu's conception of liberatory politics shaped by intellectuals – 'the Realpolitik of reason' (2000 [1997]: 70–72).

In the colonies and post-colonies, legitimate culture mostly means Western culture, the culture of the colonising nations, or now, after colonialism, the nations that currently dominate the world order, and this is a culture that negates the world of the native as something non-modern and 'backward'. As Bourdieu notes, the 'imperialism of reason' generally serves 'to justify the established order, the prevailing distribution of powers and privileges – the domination of the bourgeois, white, Euro-American heterosexual male', thus imposing the dominant values of the dominant nations on the rest of the world. Bourdieu condemns the 'abstract universalism' through which the non-Western world is found lacking and is therefore denigrated, and argues for mobilisation and struggle through which those who are denied access to the universal can claim and realise such access (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 71–73, 77–78).

What might this mean for education in a country such as ours? Is the 'universal' something that can be separated from the dominant culture in which it is embedded? Modernity was constituted in South Africa through violence: colonial conquest, dispossession, slavery, forced labour, the restriction of citizenship to whites, and the application of violent bureaucratic routines to the marshalling, distribution and domination of the black population. Knowledge, reason, rationality, science and the state were racially constituted structures of violence. Is it possible to separate reason from the domination of the West and its implication in colonisation?

There are those who argue that Western culture is intrinsically racist and hostile to the rest of the world – that it is inherently a form of symbolic violence that can only be oppressive. Would the teaching of Latin and French and Voltaire and Shakespeare in South African schools be a way of making the world culture of reason available to all and therefore an emancipatory endeavour, or would it perpetuate oppression? Should it instead be a priority to teach Sesotho or isiXhosa (the teaching of which is still rather rudimentary) and construct a new canon drawing on Steve Biko and Ngugi wa Thiong'o as part of a project to value indigenous culture, knowledge and resistance, and draw from them in constituting a new post-apartheid democratic culture, as against a project of Eurocentric universalism?

Put differently, could it be that some of the self-limiting perspectives of the national liberation movement that make it susceptible to the prevailing orthodoxies of global capitalism have been derived from the influence of the very missionary education that made so important a contribution to the formation of generations of its leadership?

NOTES

- 1 Gramsci's use of the male pronoun throughout jars with contemporary sensibilities and leads him to miss the gender side of education, which is as important as the class dimension. Bourdieu and Passeron are more sensitive to contemporary usage, but they too are primarily focused on the significance of class.

CONVERSATION 6

THE ANTINOMIES OF FEMINISM

MICHAEL BURAWOY

Beauvoir Meets Bourdieu

If the scholarly principle of her literary 'vocation', of her emotional 'choices' and even of her relation to her own status as a woman offered to us by Toril Moi have but little chance of appearing as Simone de Beauvoir, this is because she is separated from this by the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre to whom she delegated, in a way, her capacity to do philosophy There is not a better example of the symbolic violence that constitutes the traditional (patriarchal) relationship between the sexes than the fact that she will fail to apply her own analysis on relations between the sexes to her relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre.

She loves this destiny [aggrégation in philosophy] like she loves he who embodies the realisation of what she would long to be: Normalien, instituted by the rite of the concours in a superman socially authorised to despise the inferior castes ... a philosopher who is sure of being one – sure to the point of destroying, for the sole pleasure of shining or of seducing, which are the same thing, this is the project of Simone de Beauvoir.

Bourdieu (1995: viii)