1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Teachers in Australian schools serving communities in poverty continue to experience classroom difficulties. Most of these difficulties centre on how to deal with the issues of low academic achievement among the majority of students, and the frequent classroom and playground discipline problems (see, for example, Nicklin Dent and Hatton, 1996, and Hatton, Munns and Nicklin Dent, 1996). There is considerable research evidence which shows that high correlations between working class background and limited school success persist in Australia, and that there is a link between this and the disaffection and alienation displayed by many students who live in poverty (see, for example, Connell, White and Johnston, 1991, Connell, 1993). In schools where poor students come from cultural backgrounds different from that of the majority Anglo-Australian group, these educational difficulties are frequently heightened.

This research focuses on a school located in a poor inner city area which is characterised by both very low educational outcomes and strong student opposition[1], particularly among its Aboriginal students who constitute 53.9% of the school population. In this setting, being indigenous and living in relative poverty are

[1] *Opposition*, in this thesis, refers to behaviour which thwarts teachers' intentions to teach. For example, opposition is evident when students refuse to do the work teachers require them to do. A discussion on the use of the terms *opposition* and *resistance* in this thesis, appears later in this chapter.

significant community factors which interact with the school. This thesis explores the extent to which the school's curriculum and the teachers' pedagogical practices contribute to the educational advantage or disadvantage of the Aboriginal students. For the purposes of this thesis, I utilise Grundy's (1994: 27-39) conception of the curriculum as a "dynamic relationship between teachers and pupils which reflects the social context in which the curriculum is constructed." An understanding of the nature of students' responses to education draws on Willis's (1977, 1981, 1983) theory of resistance and cultural production. However, unlike much of the work utilising resistance theory, the thesis does not directly explore the standpoint of the students (see, for example, McLaren, 1985 and Jones, 1989, discussed below). Students' perspectives are explored through indirect means. The thesis also considers the position of teachers. Thus, although this study is locatable within an established research tradition of examining and attempting to understand disaffected or resistant school students, this study offers a different perspective in its attempt to highlight school conditions which may encourage certain students to reject education. It will be argued that employing this wider viewpoint offers considerable potential for educational change. The research employs an ethnographic methodology in which data is gathered through participant observation, interviews and investigation of curriculum documents. Analysis of data leads to conclusions which have implications for educators looking to address difficulties associated with overcoming poor educational outcomes and student disaffection in schools serving poor communities. In this chapter I review literature relevant to the issues addressed in this thesis. From this review I propose and discuss a theoretical framework for the research focus.

Introduction

The literature review comprises three sections. First, I explore literature which focuses on culturally produced responses to schooling by students and which suggests that resistant or oppositional behaviour is, under certain conditions, a creative and rational response to locally experienced circumstances as they interplay with structural constraints within the wider society. In reviewing literature about student responses to their schooling, the focus is on the relationship between lack of educational success and anti-school behaviour. Second, I explore literature which shows that classroom practice reflects a dynamic exchange between students and teachers, in which there are responses, negotiations and accommodations on both sides. Third, I provide a discussion of relevant systemic changes in curriculum in Australia which affect classroom practices. The most significant aim of this review is to attempt to overcome some perceived difficulties within the resistance research tradition. Furlong (1991) suggests that there has been a tendency for researchers to focus on students who already have a well developed rationale for rejecting school. This "end of the line" position (Furlong, 1991:306) offers little hope for changing the students, but, more importantly, ignores the conditions in schools which contribute to the rejection. So, as both Furlong (1991) and McFadden (1995:299) argue, if resistance theory is to bring about change for students who continue to reject school, the focus must be on the "individuals whose actions bring about the consequences." Since this study aims to contribute to an understanding of how disaffection among school students may be addressed, there is good reason to consider whether the actions of teachers are implicated in many of the attitudes and responses students have towards education, or

whether the problem lies largely beyond the control of teachers.

Resistance Theory

The starting point for the discussion of students' responses to their schooling is resistance theory. This theory brings together notions of educational inequality, the intersecting effects of class, gender and ethnicity on the education process and student oppositional behaviour. Resistance theory emerged from the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (henceforth CCCS) in the 1970s. Resistance theory combined subcultural and reproduction theories in a dialectic which links the constraints of social structures, denied opportunity for educational success and rejection of school. Subcultural theory seeks to show links between behaviours of individuals and groups, and their conditions of existence. Reproduction theory concerns itself with explaining how class position and division in society are reproduced from one generation to the next, and how schools and education are implicated in this process.

Subcultural Theory

As subcultural theory is applied to education, the students' school behaviour (particularly that which is non-conformist) is seen to be one form of adaptation to chances in future lives, which are determined by the nature of schooling. This position is premised on Durkheim's (1951) view that deviance is "a rational response to a *particular social set of circumstances*" (Furlong, 1985:75, emphasis in original).

Merton's influence (1938) on the development of subcultural theory is also considerable. Merton argues that access to the goals of society which are seen to be important for success in life is not equal. There is a tension between the values of society and the means of many to achieve these. This tension brings pressures, termed *anomie,* which are catalysts for a variety of deviant adaptations.

Sociologists working in this tradition subsequently developed a status deprivation approach which emphasised the social and differential nature of adaptations. A. Cohen (1955) produced a theory of delinquent subcultures which sees schools as sites where achievement is simultaneously promoted and denied. Denied status in these sites, many working class youths seek group solace in achieving kudos through deviant behaviour. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) disagreed with Cohen's emphasis on the importance of the school to delinquent youth, but nevertheless extended his work in their discussion of delinquent solutions to denied opportunity in society. Their theory sees the street and neighbourhood influence as key factors in adaptations to structural limitations which are manifested in various subcultures. Aspects of Merton's theory, and subsequent status deprivation variations, can be seen in the work of D. Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970). They researched British working class students, focussing on alienation brought about by the school.

Hargreaves found that the structural organisation of a secondary modern school determined social relations, producing two distinct, polarised subcultures: academic and delinquescent (1967:159-181). The forms of school organisations implicated in this polarisation were testing, competition and streaming. In the low streams the boys

were deprived of status because they were double failures. They had not gained entry to a grammar school and they found themselves gradually being relegated to lower streams. The lower stream students became increasingly vulnerable to peer and group pressure, and began to support themselves from the values of their own subculture. Hostility between the two streams became apparent, as well as the rejection of the academic standards of the school. Rejecting the student role, the boys from the delinquescent subculture exhibited behaviour which symbolised adult status, like smoking and drinking. Hargreaves (1967:190-192) concludes that the school was generating delinquency in its practices and organisation. Given that he was working within the micro-study tradition of the symbolic interactionists, there was no attempt in Hargreaves' study to link delinquent behaviour with the workings of the wider society.

Lacey's (1970) study is similar in many ways to Hargreaves', but Lacey adds the influence of the home to his discussion. This is an important development. His arguments are comparable to those of Miller (1958), who shows working class values bringing youth into conflict with authority. It is the pursuit of cultural goals (such as being tough and smart and looking for excitement) which Miller sees as a major source of trouble for working class youth. Lacey investigated the school as a social system, showing how sub systems within the school are formed not only by the school's internal organisations, but also by the culture which was being produced in the neighbourhood (1970:125-154). However, as Furlong (1985:155) suggests, Lacey differs from Miller in that he sees working class culture as a means of supporting the anti-school stance, rather than "a prime cause of disaffection in the first place."

Murdock and Phelps (1972), working within a Marxist framework, followed a line later to be utilised by the CCCS, when they examined subcultures in their relationships to class and the dominant culture. They discuss the tradition of relationships between the school and youth culture, and suggest that subcultures are solutions to collectively experienced problems and contradictions. Opposition to the system is a way of solving the problems encountered in school which are related to their class position.

Sennett and Cobb (1972) conducted a study in the USA which shows the effects of class on many aspects of life, and the part played by education as a class determinant. Although Sennett and Cobb found that most people regarded education as a means to increased control over life and greater dignity, the illusionary tools of freedom (certified knowledge) had become sources of indignity (1972:30). Certain ethnic and racial groups were being denied access to the chance for success, their expectations diminished and their anger increased. Consequently these groups rejected the intangible rewards offered in individual competition and drew solace from the solidarity of counter-school culture, where breaking rules cemented them as a group (1972: 83). Power had been legitimised within a hierarchical social framework, with standards set and maintained by the ruling class. This argument supports Gramsci's (1971) seminal work on hegemony, and the cultural reproduction theories of Bourdieu (1977) and Bernstein (1977), discussed below. Moreover, the links between social structure, denied opportunity for educational success and rejection of school, are taken up in the work of Willis (1977, 1981, 1983), and others working within the

Birmingham tradition.

Reproduction Theory

The reproduction approach gained momentum through the 1970s. Theorists adopting this position maintain that schools play a major role in the reproduction of social formations needed to sustain capitalist relations of production. Schools were seen to be important social sites where students from different social classes learned the necessary skills to occupy class-specific locations in the occupational division of labour. Theories of social reproduction are expounded by Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976). Althusser sees the school as a major part of the ideological state apparatus which serves its political function well: providing students with appropriate attitudes for work and citizenship. An important part of this role is in the formation of material and unconscious ideologies. Bowles and Gintis put forward their *correspondence principle*, which suggests that classroom relations inculcate students with attitudes and dispositions necessary to accept the social and economic imperatives of a capitalist economy. Although generally criticised these days for being over deterministic, these theories highlight the workings of a hidden curriculum in schools.

Bourdieu (1977) and Bernstein (1977) produced theories of cultural reproduction. Bourdieu talks about *symbolic violence* as power waged by the ruling class to impose a definition of the social world consistent with its own interests. The school installs an official culture which functions to legitimate dominant tastes, knowledge and

experiences. Inherited language and cultural competencies are given social value by the dominant classes - those people who inherit familiarity with certain sets of skills achieve greater levels of success. Bernstein (1977) discusses cultural transmission through curricula and pedagogy, showing experiences and consciousness being shaped in social sites like schools.

Willis (1981, 1983), and other writers of the Birmingham School, acknowledge the contribution made by reproduction theorists but find fault with the implied simple transmission of class relationships on two grounds: the failure to take account of history, struggle and contestation and the failure to consider those creative, collective processes mediated from locally experienced subordinate positions. Theorists in the Birmingham School argue that a proper dialectical notion of reproduction should have at its starting point a consideration of the cultural milieu of everyday lives - creative, active lives within historical and locational contexts. Central to resistance theory is the concept that every day living in local and historical contexts, a cultural milieu which provided resources for exploring and understanding commonly felt conditions, is at the heart of the reproductive process.

Resistance Theory and the Birmingham School

The Birmingham School's resistance theory had its origins in the work of Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Willis (1977). The theory acknowledged the writings of A. Cohen (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960). As previously indicated, these theorists conceptualise youth culture as a class-based response to limited opportunities for

success in society. However the central arguments are defined by P. Cohen (1972) who links local culture to wider frameworks. Cohen examined the family, community and local economy within an historical context. In the process of post-war redevelopment, rehousing and reconstruction of local economies, Cohen (1972:16) argued there was a loss of the family tradition and a marked polarisation of the labour force. Traditional neighbourhoods were broken up in the wake of new housing estates and gentrification of previously respectable working class areas. The rebelliousness of working class youth, Cohen (1972: 23) argues, was an attempt at an ideological, symbolic resolution of their position.

Hall and Jefferson (1976) developed a theory of resistance in *Resistance Through Rituals* which drew on P. Cohen's work. They brought together a collection of ethnographic papers which probed the various working class subcultures which emerged in post-war Britain. Extending Cohen's arguments, Hall and Jefferson (1976: 33-79) suggest that there was an increasing awareness of deprivation, and a loss of traditional cultural support, historically found in the local neighbourhood. Subcultures became one highly ritualised and symbolic strategy for negotiating collective existences (1976:54). The many forms of adaptations, negotiations and resistances were collective activities located in the hegemonic relationship between local parent cultures and the dominant institutions. Delinquency and disaffiliation are seen as a disturbance in the reproduction of cultural class relations (1976:51).

In the discussion of ethnography in *Resistance Through Rituals*, different writers (Hebdige, Clarke, Willis, Corrigan, Jefferson) examined male youth subcultures

which emerged in post-war Britain (for example, Teds, Mods, Skinheads, Rastas). McRobbie and Garber (1976:209- 222) then pick up and discuss the marginality of girls' roles as part of the cultural reproduction of gender, resulting in subordinate positions in society. Finally Corrigan and Frith (1976:231-239) place deviance within the institutional context of young people confronting bourgeois ideology. They argue that there were creative determined responses used by working class youth to *resist* bourgeois institutions including the school. The key issues centre on how resistances are defined, whether these responses *are* indeed resistances, and the extent to which these resistances are political. Much of the debate about resistance theory concerns these issues.

Resistance Theory and *Learning To Labour*

Willis's *Learning To Labour* (1977) (henceforth LTL) is a much discussed and argued classic of resistance theory, showing school and education to be crucial places where resistance is generated and manifested. Willis takes conflict and struggle as starting points for his arguments. Looking to see the part that schools played in the processes of reproduction, he suggests that school is a costly form of contested social reproduction. Initially Willis (1977:1) asks why the powerless accept their role in society:

> The difficult thing to explain about how middle class kids get middle class jobs is why others let them. The difficult thing to explain about how working class kids get working class jobs is why they let themselves.

Willis's ethnography focuses on 12 non-academic lads, as they were finishing school

and preparing to enter the work force. Willis shows that essential elements of working class culture became manifested in counter-school culture. There was a process of *differentiation* which militated against the concerns of the school:

> *Differentiation* is the process whereby the typical exchanges expected in the formal institutional paradigm are reinterpreted, separated and discriminated with respect to working class interests, feelings and meanings. Its dynamic is opposition to the institution which is taken up and reverberated and given a form of reference to the larger themes and issues of the class culture (Willis, 1977:62).

Working class values and feelings worked against the school and provided concrete materials for differentiation. The lads creatively developed and reworked their culture from a wide range of cultural resources located in the family and community, in a group process of *cultural production.* Willis (1981:59) defines cultural production as: "creative use of discourses, meanings, materials, practices and group processes to explore, understand and creatively occupy particular positions in sets of general material possibilities." This definition is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. During this process the lads became aware of their limited chances for school success. Willis (1977:126) terms this awareness *penetrations* and suggests that school was rejected in the light of these penetrations: "Their culture denies that knowledge is in any sense a meaningful 'equivalent' for the generality of working class kids." According to Willis, in the light of these penetrations the lads denied the value of academic qualifications, assessed the meaningfulness of available work, and finally opted for the reward of group solidarity over the competitive striving for individual educational reward. Counter-school culture contained elements which pointed to the dominant false ideologies of individualism and competitiveness from within the experience of working class educational reality and opportunity. Schools continually

promise in their traditional curriculum that hard work and acquiescence will bring reward if the individual is up to it. The undeniable fact for the educationally disadvantaged is that some individuals do get through, but the majority do not:

> It is in the school with its basic teaching paradigm that those attitudes needed for *individual* success are presented as necessary *in general*. The contradiction is never admitted that not all can succeed, and that there is no point for the unsuccessful in following prescriptions for success - hard work, diligence, conformism, accepting knowledge as an equivalent of real value (Willis, 1977:129).

Thus Willis, through his lads, suggests that the school had not made distinctions between individual and group logic.

Ironically in the lads' resistance to the school's paradigm[2] and promises, their place in society was socially reproduced. But the link had been made between agency and dominating social structures - the choice, in the end, had been made by the lads. However, Willis (1977:145-159) argues that the cultural penetrations could not in the end constitute transformative political activity because of their partiality, or *limitations*. There were deep, basic divisions (mentalism *versus* manualism, sexism and racism), which worked against a full understanding of their position and absolute solidarity, consequently lowering the political potential of the penetrations.

Many of the vital elements of Willis's work are keenly contested. In the end, from the point of view of looking for educational change, a key issue was in the creative cultural responses which the lads brought to make sense of their educational

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[2] Willis uses this term to describe common theoretical concepts and practices around which teaching methods are organised. This definition is adopted in this thesis.

experience. At the same time as the lads, in a very real sense, undermined the work of their school, their penetrations challenged the underlying premise of the wider educational process - equality of outcomes for all students who buckle down and accept the schooling paradigm. Questions concerning the degree of consciousness of the insights have been the focus of much of the debate over LTL.

LTL has had a significant influence on the theory of school oppositional behaviour. It has sparked debate within and beyond neo-Marxist traditions, and paved the way for a considerable body of research. Both the criticisms, and the research which follows LTL. can be addressed using Willis's notion of *cultural production*. The criticisms and the research are discussed in turn.

The *Learning To Labour* Debate

Arguments surrounding LTL centre on combinations of methodological aspects and the political nature of the lads' insights into their lives. Methodological criticisms come from A. Hargreaves and Hammersley (1982) who criticise not only Willis, but others of the CCCS school, for over reading the *guerrilla* warfare of working class school students. They doubt (1982:142) whether the students were really displaying the penetrative insights into the oppressive nature of capitalist schooling, contending that CCCS theorists only cite evidence which supports their case. This criticism is reiterated by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 98-99), who speculate about whether Willis's findings are flawed by overrapport with the lads. Because Willis had devoted so much attention to his subjects, Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that he accepts

their views without question. In fact, they say that Willis promotes the lads as spokesmen for the working class, identifying their culture as representative of the group in general. Additionally, they see problems with the link made by Willis between the lads' expressions of opposition to authority and a more general opposition to structural, hegemonic authority. Similarly Walker (1985a: 64) argues that Willis adopts an uncritical, romanticising attitude towards his lads, falling into the trap of overrapport and inadequate triangulation. McRobbie (1980) also sees a problem with this small group of lads being speakers alone for their culture. She argues that Willis does not specify clearly the oppression of girls in the male counter school culture, does not condemn the outright sexism of the lads, and does not look closely enough at the family, the influence of which was significant in cultural production. Later criticisms by McRobbie (1991) continue to highlight Willis's narrow view of resistance as an aggressive male domain. She suggests that resistance theories should include an analysis of the subordinated position of women resisting both social structures and male domination.

A. Hargreaves (1982a) discusses Willis's contribution to a strand of Marxist work that he categorises as fitting with the *Relative Autonomy Model* (1982a:115-119). This model sees the connection between schooling and production as indirect, mediated and complex. In society the relations of production are produced "*outside* production *for* production" (Hall, 1977:37). This concept follows the work of the cultural reproduction theorists (particularly Bernstein) discussed above. Although acknowledging that Willis shows that patterns of interaction generally occur within an educational paradigm, Hargreaves asserts that Willis does not clearly show parallels

between the school and production. Hargreaves maintains that the failure to show a parallel between the educational paradigm and the class model could be in the methodological fault of studying pupils, not teachers. He asks why teachers contributed to this reproductive process. Was it ignorance, a conscious manipulation by the dominant classes or mere chance? He sees the first position already refuted in criticisms of the over-determinism of the social reproduction theorists, the second dismissed by Willis because of the active role of the students through cultural production, and the third insufficient to account for the persistence of these parallels. Hargreaves (1982a:189) believes that a systematic study of teachers using Marxist and interactionist traditions had the potential to shed light on why teachers are "wittingly or unwittingly the active agents of this (reproductive) process."

Connell (1983) criticises the CCCS theorists for a structuralist, homogeneous notion of class which led to over generalisations and "finding hidden meanings in what was immediately apparent" (1983:225) - that is, an overreading of the words and actions of the subjects of their research to suit their own theoretical purposes. He also questions whether culture can simultaneously represent an inherited position in the domination/subordination continuum and also be a creative activity. The penetrations of Willis's lads are also strongly disputed :

> Ideology involves misrecognition, youth cultures involve a distorted, indirect and imperfect (imaginary) handling of real problems. Delinquent working-class kids may be able to "penetrate" some of their conditions of existence, but they don't really understand it, there are all these limitations deflecting the penetrations. The contraceptive theory of youth culture (Connell, 1983:230).

In a similar way Watson (1993) criticises Willis and CCCS researchers for their linking of class and culture. In particular, he points to the dangers in starting from

observations of cultural forms and then applying a class base to these forms. Watson (1993:188) suggests that digging "beneath the cultural norm to unearth the class reality lying beneath" is methodologically flawed because it is simplistic and unidirectional. He argues that to reverse the procedure and start the analysis at a class location presents problems when similar structural locations are seen to bring about a variety of cultural responses.

Walker (1985a) challenges the use of the term *resistance*, saying that it is incorrectly used unless it can be demonstrated that the lads' behaviour had the thrust of intended social change. He doubts whether the counter culture was:

> actually or potentially, consciously or unconsciously, contributing to progressive social change by undermining the reproduction of oppressive social structures and social relations (Walker, 1985a:65).

Giroux (1981, 1982, 1983) is a United States theorist who approached resistance from a more radical viewpoint (see also: Anyon, 1981, 1982; and Apple, 1982). He argues there are several weaknesses of resistance theories. The first is in the conceptualisation of the genesis of conditions promoting a range of oppositional behaviours, perhaps making schools just sites where these actions, as opposed to resistances, are played out. Giroux (1981: 22) also questions the celebrating of resistances as symbolic rather than political and not considering that schools repress and produce subjectivities. Thus he sees an inherent danger of only looking at the rebellious acts. Finally, he criticises resistance theory for paying insufficient attention to the socially constructed personality needs which tie people to larger structures of domination (Giroux, 1981: 22).

Cultural Production

These challenges may be addressed through an examination of the key concepts of *culture, cultural production* and *penetrations.* Criticisms focus on notions of consciousness, rationality and perception. That is, what did the lads really know about the conditions of their existence in a wider political sense, and how valid were their resistant responses brought in the light of this knowledge?

The starting point in discussing social reproduction, according to Willis (1981: 49), has to be in:

> the cultural milieu, material practices and productions, lives in historical context in the every day span of existence and practical consciousness, inherited and suffered through imposition but creative and active.

The creative and active process was termed *cultural production.* It involves drawing on cultural resources in order to make sense of the world. The relationship between the local neighbourhood and wider structures in society is dependent on the social conditions generated through that relationship. In a departure from the deterministic notion of the social reproduction theorists, Willis also conceptualises a dynamic of resistance which caused the hegemonic control constantly to be challenged.

Two definitions are central to Willis's arguments: the definition of culture and the definition of cultural production. His definition of *culture* stresses the relationships between groups in society. Culture is defined as:

> a relatively coherent system of material practices and interlocking symbolic systems which have, according to their region, their own practices and objectives which constitute the ordinary milieu of social life through which, among other things, social agents come to a collective, mediated, lived

> awareness of their condition of existence and *relationship to other classes* (emphasis added) (Willis, 1981: 58).

At this point it must be acknowledged that this definition of culture is not unchallenged. Watson (1993) points to problems in defining culture from the primacy of class. He contends that the notion of subordinate groups experiencing themselves within the terms of the dominant culture (that is, White and middle class) is problematic on two grounds. First, the experience of the subordinate groups even within dominant institutions (for example, schools) would be different than the experience of those who were part of the dominant group. Second, Watson recognises the work of Willis in arguing that "there can be no neat fit between the dominant ideology of the institution and the lived experience of its members" (1993:187) because the cultural practices of the dominant and the dominated creatively rework and reform the dominant ideology. Watson had earlier proposed an alternative framework to the theory of dominant culture: the notion of "historically determined cultural productions" (1990:139-141). Here common ground is shared with Willis (1983), who, in revisiting LTL, saw cultural production as a "cultural creativity which is always subject to restraint, but, which, at the same time, is constitutive of those same remaining structures" (Watson, 1993:189). Despite the difficulties with Willis's definition of culture, it does serve a useful function in pointing to features of the everyday milieu which are important for an understanding of cultural production. These are the awareness of social divisions, the relatively rational collective responses to current dilemmas and possibilities and the dynamic incorporation of unconscious and conscious cultural meanings which could direct action and constitute subjectivity.

It is these responses which are integral to the process of *cultural production*. Willis's (1981: 59) definition is repeated here:

> creative use of discourses, meanings, materials, practices and group processes to explore, understand and creatively occupy particular positions in sets of general material possibilities.

In an educational sense it has to be understood that schools apportion educational possibilities in a very discriminatory fashion. Willis claims the strong feelings of the lads had an ideological and a practical basis. Schools deliver very strong messages in their total curriculum. Competition, assessment, reports - the daily business of getting nowhere in a system which promises to be the answer for your future, are real battles which are being lost in many schools. Consequently, when the school system as a representative of a wider system does not feel right culturally, or offer success for the majority of your group, opting for other rewards seems a logical and straight forward choice. Criticisms mentioned above suggest that the lads did not fully understand the wider political implications of their actions. Yet for them (and many in similar educational plights) the local power struggle was the only one that counted, and the educational curriculum of their neighbourhood school, in the end, was not doing anything for them. Their rejection counter balanced the school's rejection of them:

> What is important, Willis argues, is not whether the boys were fully conscious of their implications of their own rejection of school, but that they *were* right. Each year and every year in working class schools ... a significant minority of pupils "discover" the same truths about school. They may use different cultural resources to explore and express their resistance but many pupils reveal the same fundamental truths about themselves - that education, or at least schooling, is not for them (Furlong[3], 1985: 178).

The consciousness of inequalities in the educational system, and through that to

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[3] Furlong (1991) warns, however, against what he sees as a romantic stance by many sociologists when they suggest that rationalism implies all pupils who reject school are perfectly well adjusted.

society, was a strongly felt "them versus us" emotion and the general awareness that things were not fair. In the words of one of the lads talking about the teachers:

> They're bigger than us, they stand for a bigger establishment than we do, like we're just little and they stand for bigger things, and you try to get your own back (Willis, 1977:11).

The resisters use and rework cultural themes to develop a concept of the world which is historically and regionally specific - it is what they do in their cultural context which is right for them. The activities offer the real exposé of the faults of the system:

> These activities - by working on real materials in particular contexts and producing surprising, unexpected or transformed outcomes - also act to expose and cast into doubt the workings of the larger ideologies, institutions and structural relationships of the whole society. This is achieved without any necessary intention or purpose. It happens almost by the way, as if a by-product, in the immediate concerns of the day to day culture (Willis, 1977: 125).

It is at this point where methodological challenges may also be met. Willis's lads, far from being speakers for all of their class, were seen to be one group who were responding to their situation using the resources available to them within their specific context. These responses were at the same time free and creative, and constrained by the circumstances that daily affected their lives. The lads reacted to their real problems because they made sense to them at the time. That they did not beat the system is the inevitable irony of the process, but does not lessen the force or validity of their penetrations. Importantly, the cultural production model allows an examination of how different groups of students, constrained within their context, respond to their situation using their own cultural resources. Certain inherited characteristics place people within structural determinations which affect future possibilities. A summary of research in this tradition is now offered. This discussion illustrates the variety of

students' responses to schooling.

Other Birmingham Theorists

Other Birmingham writers extended Willis's work, whilst researching White working class boys and how their cultural production affected their reactions to school. Robins and Cohen (1978) looked at how young people experienced growing up in a working class city. They found that those students most adept at classroom guerrilla warfare made the easiest transition to working class jobs because:

> their 'bad' school record ensured that they were forced into the kind of unskilled work where 'mucking about', leaning on brooms, and other means of resisting the impositions of boredom and routine, were an integral and accepted part of shop floor culture (Robins and Cohen, 1978: 114).

This research demonstrates the close fit between counter school culture and working class culture, which Willis had also argued.

Corrigan (1979) claims anti-school behaviour (mucking about and truanting) are functions of the boys' culturally specific ways of dealing with authority. He sees school guerrilla warfare as a reaction against the imposition of a foreign culture to the working class boys, becoming a means of gaining individual and group power. In this sense, truancy is a cultural response to the oppression of schooling. Conflict arises out of attempts by those in authority to change the values of working class boys.

McRobbie (1978) sought ways to explore girls' distinctive cultures, which, as has been demonstrated, was ignored in much of the research which concentrated on working class boys. She argues through her research that girls respond differently because they inhabit a structurally different position to that inhabited by boys (Furlong, 1985). Her research foreshadows other studies which examined the ways

girls reacted to their schooling within their own cultural production.

Girls and School Deviance

McRobbie (1978) looked at the lives of teenage girls living in a council estate and concludes that their cultural responses were linked to, and determined by: their material position in society, their social class, their future role in production, their future and present role in domestic production and their economic dependence on their parents. She sees their lives situated in a pre-existent *culture of femininity* (1978:106-108), into which they were born. This culture was transmitted to them over time by female relatives and neighbours. They were differentiated from middle class girls and working class boys by social, sexual and educational constraints. Their spare time was spent on the estate, at school, working at home or at the youth club. Double standards of morality applied to the girls: they could express their sexuality only by "going steady", otherwise they would be branded a "tart" (1978:107). This imposed sexual limitations which did not apply to the boys, for whom sexual activity was accepted and expected. Educationally, the girls were prepared for future domestic work by their curriculum (grooming, housewifery, food and nutrition etc.), and a hidden curriculum (1978:102) which rewarded tidy, conformist work. Since their behaviour was less noticeable than many disruptive, aggressive boys like Willis's lads, it was often claimed that they were not as critical of schooling. Their resistance was easier to ignore and contain within the school situation. School was a social site which was opposed by expressions of their sexuality. They wore make up, they constantly discussed boys, they carved boys' names on desks. Their culture, a response to material limitations because of their gender specific class position, was produced and expressed in opposition to the ideologies which sought to mould them.

Davies (1979, 1982) researched the nature of girls' resistance in a mixed comprehensive school in England. Her initial stance differed from McRobbie's in that

she believed girls, though invariably quieter to start with, became less amenable to discipline when rules had been transgressed. That is, there was a cumulative effect as the girls became more difficult (1979:65) as they interacted with the school's discipline system. Davies did, however, see similar structural positions and expectations and responses determined by those positions. She argues that the resistant girls in her research increasingly closed off avenues in school which would offer educational qualifications. As with Willis's lads, this restricted future career options. When school had become irrelevant for job or marriage prospects, a resistant interaction with the school was used as a temporary source of power (1979:70-71).

Anyon was one of a group of radical American theorists (with Apple, 1982; and Giroux, 1981, 1982, 1983) influenced by Willis. The work of these researchers emphasises a view that educational interventions can make important contributions to social change. This notion will be addressed later in this review. Anyon (1981b) sought an empirical base to understand how schools acted as agents of social reproduction. She maintains that educators could do a great deal to transform cultural expressions of interest into direct political action. She notes (1981b:119-122) reproductive aspects of the working class school which she studied: repetitive, mechanical work; knowledge which was fragmented and without critical understanding; lack of knowledge about the social processes affecting their own class. Active and passive resistances were "successful" in gaining less demanding work.

In subsequent research Anyon (1982) examined accommodation and resistance among young working class girls. She found that in high school many girls suffered academically because they were counselled out of demanding courses, or they rejected them because they thought they were too hard, or they avoided them, for fear of appearing overly smart and unattractive to boys. From her observations she lists (1982: 30-33) behaviours which show different frequencies of accommodation and resistance depending on the girls' social positions. Anyon suggests that the

accommodations and resistances of the working class girls were not aimed at transforming patriarchal or social structures, but at gaining a measure of protection within these.

Anyon has been criticised for her indiscriminate use of the term *resistance*, applying it to any behaviour in the classroom which seems oppositional (Hargreaves, 1982b). Research conducted by Ramsay (1983) also criticises the objectivity of Anyon's work. He found greater diversity in New Zealand schools than Anyon allowed for in her American schools, and suggests that her narrow frame (1983:315) of only looking at social class had failed to examine variables closely enough. However, her work moved beyond romanticising working class resistance. It was also significant in stressing that resistances to schooling are likely to be determined by the effects of race and gender as well as by class. This can also be seen in much of the British and Australian work on disaffected students, discussed below.

Fuller's (1980, 1982) study focussed on West Indian girls in a London comprehensive school. She argues that the girls' structural position (female and Black[4]) resulted in a specific culturally produced reaction to school. While to their school and teachers they appeared to be disaffected, in fact the girls were anti-school but pro-education (1980:57-62). They were aware of racial discrimination which would bring them restricted job opportunities, and were determined to seek educational qualifications which would give them a degree of control over their lives. The achievement of these qualifications would deliver a public statement that they were capable, intelligent and the equal of the West Indian boys. In classes, West Indian girls did not court a good

[4] In this thesis the terms "Black" and "White" are used throughout. However, the term "Black" is differently applied by context. In the United Kingdom "Black" refers to people of Afro-Caribbean backgrounds. In Australia "Black" refers to Aborigines. "White" in both cases refers to the dominant Anglo group. The terms are commonly used in the literature. See, for example, Cashmore's and Troyna's (1982) and Furlong's (1984) use of the term "Black". Australian Aborigines encourage the use of the term "Black".

reputation, not wanting to be seen as too serious. There was no real conflict between them and their teachers although their behaviour was exasperating to teachers. Three themes (1980:60-62) underlaid their classroom actions. If they appeared too good they would lose acceptance by the boys and be ridiculed for being ambitious. Second, to be seen as too good would go against their self images as girls who were capable of having fun. Finally, because attainment of qualifications relied on passing public examinations, they saw a need for quality work rather than quality of relationships with their teachers. In coming to a sense of their own worth as Black and female, they had learnt to rely on their own, rather than other people's opinions of them. As Fuller (1980:64) puts it:

> As a strategy for present and future survival the girls had adopted a programme of "going it alone" in which those aspects of schooling to do with acquiring qualifications had an important part. No more tolerant of the "irrelevant" aspects of schooling (eg. the daily routines) than their Black male peers, the girls were in some ways a good deal more independent of adult authority than any other groups of pupils (male or female) in the school.

Fuller (1983) expresses concern with many researchers' attitudes to girls' deviance. She argues that since many girls studied were not as overtly antagonistic as boys, it was often deduced by researchers that girls were less critical of their schooling. However, she suggests that their criticism and resistance "is integrally related to and shaped by their having been successfully engendered as feminine" (1983:189). She calls for research which does not solely concentrate on opposition to schooling, but rather looks at other aspects of life which may have a higher priority for their resistance (1983:189-190).

Samuel (1983) believes that Willis's arguments give an inadequate account of failure at school so far as the Anglo-Australian working class girls she studied were concerned. Believing that Willis and the reproduction theorists treated classes (structurally defined groups) as constituted prior to the process of schooling, she calls for research to follow the approach of Connell *et al.* (1982) in studying *practices* which bring about reproduction of class positions. Samuel found in her study that the

girls did not embrace the "culture of femininity" in the way described by McRobbie. Rather they "publicly refused to accept the passive, subordinate, marginal role accorded them in this patriarchal class structure" (1983:368). The girls were highly disruptive in class, but constantly and consistently showed interest in the curriculum and what it had to offer. Their problems were contained in their attempts to find identity within intersecting factors of class and patriarchy, and the clash this often caused with the teaching staff. In attempting to decide for themselves their future adult female identities, they experimented with a number of actions which appeared to bring about unwanted, unanticipated and disastrous consequences for their school career.

This theme is further explored by Moran (1984), also studying Anglo-Australian working class girls. Moran draws on the CCCS approach in analysing the cultural production of working class girls in a secondary school, but offers a different theoretical framework to overcome her dissatisfaction with Marxist and feminist arguments. She uses the notion of *materialist pragmatism*, as a problem solving process available to people in different social positions. Moran argues that different cultures are developed in the process of responses to various relations of domination and oppression. The girls being studied shared the primary interest of pursuing boys, and regarded marriage, children and domestic labour as their main future roles. They rejected school believing that achievement was not really an option for them. At school their main aim was to spend time on their own interests, and only resisted when this brought them into conflict with the school authority. Moran's conclusion is that the girls were not resisting school *per se*, but working out solutions to their future problems. In the choice between boys and school, they believed pursuing boys the only real option, and this decision was reinforced "by their failure at school when achievement at school ceases to function as an option at all" (1984:10).

Gaskell (1985) examined gender segregation among American working class females

at high school. She argues that class, ethnicity, gender and race affected course enrolment, and this differentiation process set students on different paths, thereby facilitating social reproduction. The choices available to students were influenced, shaped and limited by school staffs, as were the ways students saw themselves and their options. Following Willis's work, Gaskell emphasises the students' belief that they "chose" their options, while "embedding their orientations in a specific institutional context" (1985:50). The cultural production of the girls delivered a consciousness which accepted the responsibility of course choice, a creative endeavour which aimed to solve the dilemmas which arose from the structure of schooling, femininity and work. Gaskell believes that the girls did question the school's ideological rationale, but instead of directly challenging it, found personal solutions by opting for "easier" or less academic subjects. While they rejected the school's values and its link between academic performance and merit and "deserved power", they nevertheless "accepted the school's power to create links between academic performance and success in the labour market" (1985:54).

Deviance and Black Pupils

Research subsequent to Willis expanded the cultural production model to look at responses which were determined by different structural locations within the intersections of gender, ethnicity and class. Black students at school became an important area of research. Though a diverse group, as shown in studies both in England and Australia, they generally shared constraints found at the lowest ends of the continuum of oppression. (See also Fuller, 1980, 1982, discussed above, who studied Black girls.)

Cashmore and Troyna (1982a) discuss the crisis of Black youth in Britain. They argue that Blacks rather than being thrown out of mainstream society "developed and

refined their own attitudes, orientations and postures in relation to the rest of society" (1982a:17). Conceding that they faced serious pressures, Cashmore and Troyna nonetheless see that the youths created their own problems in the construction of their own cultures: "They *were* arrogant, rumbustious and contemptuous. And perhaps with good reason" (1982a:18). In this body of work there is a persistence of the themes of the rationality of responses and cultural creative processes determining future structural positions.

Rex (1982) concerned himself with the position of Blacks born into British society, and becoming bound in intergenerational and class conflicts which they would share with other youth at the same time as they were divided from them. He examined the range of cultural options available to Black youth in education, leisure and the future market place. Rex argues that Rastifarian styles of dress, music and language are direct cultural responses to the conditions of their lives and become part of their interaction with their school, invariably used as an expression of opposition.

Carrington (1983) studied West Indian culturally based responses to their schooling and shows how this resulted in widespread curriculum adjustments by schools and teachers. He considered the upsurge of Black involvement in sport and characterised West Indian youth as "gladiators" for White British society (1983:40). Although West Indians showed greater interest in sport, Carrington believes this to be neither a biologistic nor naturalistic phenomenon. Since the Blacks had basically occupied the same structural position since the initial phase of immigration, characterised by high unemployment and discrimination in the job market, Carrington says sport was one of

the few arenas where they might be able to achieve real success. The screening processes of education had facilitated academic failure, thereby legitimating their exclusion to all but the most menial jobs and ensuring social reproduction. West Indian children had become a resistant group - disruptive, aggressive, not willing to concentrate, poorly motivated and with apparent low academic potential. In the light of this behaviour, teachers had promoted the stereotype of their superior prowess in physical activities. Sport was used as a social control mechanism which sponsored academic failure. Black youth tended to differ from their oppositional White counterparts, in that they seemed to cooperate in this channelling (1983:61) process by keenly participating in sporting events. For Carrington this represents cultural dissimilarities between the groups. The Blacks had appeared to colonise this aspect of their school life, perhaps to some extent internalising the stereotyped images of physical superiority, and certainly identifying strongly with the achievements of prominent Black athletes.

Fisher (1983) conducted a study which focussed on the political nature of language among West Indian youth in Britain. After looking at the situation of Black people within their own communities and in wider society, he perceives their increasingly militant postures as the result of external hostile social and institutional structures, and their attempt within these structures to regain cultural pride and human dignity. Language was a key factor in their cultural resistance to racism, discrimination and social deprivation. In this way, comparisons can be drawn with the groups described in the early work by CCCS (Hall and Jefferson, 1976), where language was a crucial component of the symbolic negotiation of collective existences in opposition to

mainstream society.

Researching Black resistance in a comprehensive school, Furlong (1984) concludes that although the Blacks seemed to be consistently alienated, they had not so much rejected their school as taken up a contradictory stance to it. In fact, he shows that the trouble makers were completely committed to education. Like Willis's lads, the writer finds in the boys' actions a selective drawing on local, popular and parent cultures in order to create their own unique cultural resistance. Since they were failing in the school situation, this resistant culture enabled them to maintain aspirations for academic achievement, while giving them a defence mechanism for their eventual failure. The liberal policies of the school and their parents' inexperience of the school system helped them sustain this position. Their resistance was embedded in desire for reputation (style, dialogue, music, Rasta, higher status work), and depended on strong, school based social support. School was their territory, a site to be exploited for their own purpose, and this redefinition of school time brought them into conflict with the teachers. Despite their low academic achievement, they were shielded from the full impact of academic stratification until the last moment because of the non academic curricular options they had chosen. Although they realised they were failing, they concealed this perception in their culture of resistance in order to maintain the myth of the possibility of success. Furlong explains (1984:233) the difference between their resistance stance to that of White disaffected youth as a culturally produced position. That is, the Black students did not celebrate manual work like the resisters Willis (1977) had researched. Rather they were concerned with enhancing and maintaining their reputation and style through music, clothes and relationships with girls. Thus

they rejected manual work even though that was most probably to be their future lot. When they left the protective and concealing environment of their school, they learned the realities of the job market - something Willis's lads had also known.

Folds (1985) also used the idea of cultural production in describing the classroom behaviour of Australian Aborigines in a primary school. He argues (1985:33) that Aboriginal school behaviour could be best characterised as resistance which was very similar to the forms of resistance seen in working class schools. Empirical data produced in Folds' research suggests either a resistance hypothesis, or the more theoretically conventional position of cultural dissonance. Folds believes that the active forms of student responses to their schooling certainly supported the view that they were resisting school. However, Folds (1985:35-36) uses the term resistance to describe a variety of student behaviours (for example, silence and ridicule of teachers), without making explicit links between these classroom actions and wider structural conditions affecting this behaviour. Indiscriminate use of the term "resistance" is another persistent theme in the literature.

Malin (1990) also probed classroom experiences of Aborigines, in this case urban infants children. The research centred on Aboriginal students in a Kindergarten class in primary school. Before the Aboriginal students entered school Malin observed that the children were bright, confident, assertive and socially competent. However, after their first year they were classified as troublemakers, were assessed as being below average achievers and had largely been ostracised by their peers. It was found that the teacher's resources (time, affection, encouragement, achievement expectation) had

been inequitably distributed as a result of culturally based misunderstandings and incompatibilities. Home socialisation characteristics (1990:314-318), such as those which encourage autonomy, social equality, independence, self regulation and resilience, produced culturally based classroom responses which hid their talents and caused them to be seen as disrespectful, defiant and unwilling to accept the teacher's role (1990:321-325). The study is valuable because it considers young children, who are often overlooked. It was also based on extensive home and school observations. The main theme is the cultural clash brought about by the teacher's inability to appreciate the students' responses to their classrooms. Malin does not specifically show that resistant behaviour had origins in the local culture in relationship to wider society, though she shows that Aboriginal parents encouraged resilience in their children so they could face future hardships. Resistance of the children, in this study, is seen to be a product of the classroom conditions brought about primarily by an unsympathetic and culturally ignorant teacher. Nevertheless the study does pave the way for future research which studies the tensions between the pedagogy and classroom practices of teachers with more apparently sympathetic attitudes, and the school success of Aboriginal students. This is a primary purpose of this thesis.

Resistance, Cultural Production and Educational Change

All of the studies reviewed above show that oppositional behaviour is the result of an active social process as students respond to their particular set of circumstances. From a practical educational viewpoint there are two important reasons for recognising that cultural production is a local response to structural determinations. The first is the

acknowledgment and understanding of the contestation of dominant cultural forms, and the second is the forcing of educational institutions (local and bureaucratic) to respond. The nature of these responses decides whether there will be resultant changes which potentially, or in reality, challenge the reproductive function of schools and education. To turn from analyses of why certain students oppose school (the nature of the problem) to search for points at which resistance offers possibilities to bring about change (solutions to the problem) is also fundamental to this thesis. This development within resistance theory is integral to the work of Giroux (1981, 1982, 1983), McLaren (1985), McFadden (1995) and Jones (1989).

Giroux (1981, 1982, 1983) acknowledges a great debt to the Birmingham theorists (Willis, 1977; Corrigan, 1979). He uses the weaknesses identified above, particularly the CCCS notion that resistance is symbolic, as starting points for a critical theory of schooling. His theories are also strongly influenced by Gramsci (1971) and Freire (1973). Giroux's theory of resistance is situated in a perspective which takes the notion of *emancipation* as the main catalyst. That is, Giroux claims that resistance should have a revealing, critical and radical function, resisters being social agents who possess the ability to transcend the historical locus of inherited culture. In the terms of Freire, the oppressed could become "producers not products of history". Educators were to explore the tensions and spaces within school sites which provided students with the possibilities of resistance, search for pedagogy which could unravel ideological interests, and use resistance as a theoretical basis for a radical pedagogy which would take human agency seriously. Critical educators had to pay close attention to the process of resistance in laying the groundwork for educational reform.

McLaren (1985) analysed student resistance and proposed that it consisted of dynamic cultural forms. His theory suggests that classroom instruction was a ritual system which includes rituals of resistance. Rituals are seen as political actions which enable "actors to frame, negotiate, and articulate their phenomenological existence as social, cultural, moral, and political beings" (1985:85). In this sense, rituals are linked with the individual's historical, biographical and social situation. Rituals of resistance are attempts to disturb the distribution of the school's dominant (hegemonic) cultural capital. Oppositional behaviour is embodied in responses to oppressive classroom conditions, and also as a reaction to the tensions between informal street culture and the formal approach of mainstream instruction. By refashioning and attacking the teaching paradigm, resisters forced teachers to abandon their normal pedagogical role in order to survive in the school. Teachers, in attempting to police the resistant students, adopted strategies which eventually moved the teachers past their tolerance level. Thus "student resistance was a resolve not to be dissimulated in the face of internalised oppression" (1985:89). Acts of resistance invariably involve the enlisting of street-corner symbols into the classroom situation, upsetting the intention of the lesson. McLaren theorises that looking at resistance as a ritual process is a valuable way of understanding the workings of hegemony - negotiations between symbolic meanings which are continuously mediated by external conditions and power relationships. That is, hegemony is produced "'between' the contradictory axes of structural domination and the self-production of subordinate and oppositional groups" (1985:92).

This notion of hegemony being both sustained and contested through the way people culturally view their world directly relates to Willis's theory of cultural production. However, McLaren agrees with Giroux that theoretical developments have to be made to resistance theory in order to approach the theme of emancipation. These

developments need to include a consideration of the convergence of insiders' (resisters') and outsiders' points of view, followed by analyses of subjectivities, as opposed to concrete actions, to ascertain whether acts are in fact resistances. Moreover, he argues that it is important to see if resistance promotes changes in consciousness, and, if so, to what extent are these shared by other oppressed groups. McLaren advocates that classroom reform should be a fight for equality in the light of a new symbolic sphere which is forged at the level of students' cultural literacy. In other words, the point of resistance should be the point of change.

McFadden (1995) also acknowledges the potential of resistance theory to bring about changes in social structures, but points to tensions over questions of structure and agency. He questions whether free action is possible within social structures "which impinge on individual and group consciousness and action" (McFadden, 1995:295-296). McFadden proposes a pedagogical framework through which individual consciousness may be changed by individuals themselves. In recognising "social relations and social conditions as a context of agency rather than having agents the effects of structures," McFadden (1995:305) argues that change is possible as discursive boundaries are challenged.

In many ways, Jones (1989) synthesises the concerns of writers discussed in this review, and foreshadows this research's commitment to educational change which challenges its reproductive nature. She calls researchers to seek emancipatory practice, echoing Giroux (1981, 1982, 1983) and McLaren (1985). Jones researched student practice as structurally-located cultural production, looking at not only how schools are involved in reproduction but also how they may bring about transformation. Anyon's (1981a & b) research was used as a starting point by Jones. Although acknowledging that Anyon attempted to investigate empirically the reproductive processes of schooling, and was one of the few to do this, Jones finds flaws in her work because of her limited analysis of student practice. Rather than seeing the

creative nature of human action, Anyon is criticised for looking at reproduction and potential social change as being institutionally dominated, with pupils being controlled, for better or worse, by their teachers:

> The possibility that the forms of interaction in the classroom might be meaningfully produced by all the participants as "acting subjects" is overlooked in favour of a view of classroom practice as simply formed by teachers acting either unwittingly on behalf of the dominant mode of production, or on behalf of progressive change (Jones, 1989:22).

Jones (1989:22) argues, citing Willis (1983), that the classroom and its significance for social change cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of the "structured, collective cultural interpretations of the pupils."

In her study of two groups of adolescent girls in New Zealand, Jones found the girls' experiences of school work was similar to Anyon's American students: working class Polynesian girls spent a lot of time copying and doing routine, mechanical work while the middle class Pakeha[5] girls actively worked on projects, essays or problems. The work of the Pakeha girls gave them an educational advantage. She poses the following questions in attempting a deeper analysis of the classroom situation. How do these girls "make sense" of, and respond to school? How does this shape classroom pedagogy? How was this significant for social reproduction ?

It was seen that the teachers and the students actively constructed what went on in lessons. Whereas the teachers had control of content, the pupils could decide what work they wanted to do and at what pace. In so doing, they were using their own definition of the pedagogical situation, relying on their own perceptions of what counted as teaching.

Jones follows Willis in seeing the cultural production of classroom practice as a response to inherited structural and material conditions. She differs in what she saw as

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[5] "Pakeha" is a term for New Zealanders of European descent.

his suggestion of an unidirectional relationship. Cultural resources, she claims, are not simply brought to personal conditions, but rather are products of "the structural, material and ideological conditions of the girls' lives" (1989:27). The working class girls did not react to their situation, as had Willis' lads, in a celebration of macho manual work. Instead they had seen the drudgery of the work of their mothers and sisters, and attempted to escape this fate by working hard in their culturally specific mode of learning. This ironically reproduced their social position in society because their idea of effective classroom work was not rewarded with high assessment marks. It seemed that they had penetrated the conditions of their future (expected) work, but did not, as Willis saw in his lads, penetrate the promise of school to change their social position. The cultural production of middle class girls in the study was able to be transformed into educational credentials and economic advantage. Classroom practices were implicated in social reproduction for both groups of girls.

Jones concludes that because teachers do not solely control the classroom, change can not be found purely in modifications to their paradigm. Furthermore, attempts at politicising working class students with radical pedagogy and curricula, may well be resisted if it is seen to be providing no future value for their lives. She suggests an alternative: a joint endeavour in the process of schooling which examines curricula and pedagogy in the light of their relationship to the political outcome of providing students with credentials which empower them in their world:

> The possibilities for general student resistance to radical pedagogy are high: nevertheless, if post-structuralist discourse in education means ultimately that researchers, students and teachers perceive and analyse social practice as structured cultural production, and thus themselves as participants in the on-going production and reproduction of existing power relations, then it contains the germs of possibilities for social transformation which in the past has faded from much radical academic debate in education (Jones, 1989:29).

The development which Jones brings to the theory of cultural production is in the explicit recognition that classroom curriculum is a joint construction between teachers

and pupils. Whereas previous research in its concentration on the cultural responses of the students presents a picture of classroom life in which resistant students battle an unyielding educational paradigm, Jones shows that classroom practice is constructed as a dynamic exchange between students and teachers. Within this exchange there are responses, adjustments and accommodations on both sides. In schools where resistance is a factor, the curriculum is under extreme pressure. The opposition is stronger, pervasive and persistent and the teachers are less able to teach in the way that they want to, or the way they are expected to according to official guidelines. Crucially, changes in classroom approaches may not necessarily bring about a lessening of the resistance, despite the integrity of the school's or teachers' intentions. At this point Jones and Willis agree:

> "The lads'" rejection of school and opposition to teachers can be seen in the light of a penetration of the teaching paradigm. It "sees through" the tautologous and manipulative modifications of the basic paradigm - whether dignified with "relevant" / "progressive" theories or not (Willis, 1977: 126).

The next section of this chapter moves to the other side of the educational paradigm, to look at teachers' work. Some research into influences which shape their practices is reviewed, as are some major theoretical movements affecting curricular change in the equity area.

Influences on Teachers' Work

Researchers have identified a number of factors which shape the way teachers approach classroom practice. Amongst these, daily experiences in the classroom are considered significant. Teaching is a dynamic relationship which changes according to

responses to circumstances within its context.

Pollard (1982) synthesises the work of Woods (1977, 1980) and A. Hargreaves (1978, 1979), linking micro-macro factors determining classroom practices. Woods (1977) argues from an interactionist perspective that teachers, under pressure, sacrifice instructional goals for survival strategies. He suggests that teachers' ideals and commitment are continually challenged by work-place difficulties, causing teachers to adopt processes of accommodation to solve this problem and maintain professional survival. A. Hargreaves (1978) widens this perspective by listing societal constraints, that is, the structural context which affects institutional practice at school and classroom level. Sharp and Green (1975) had earlier pointed to the interplay of micro and macro factors: student academic differentiation brought about in socially structured classrooms by teachers who were constrained by wider societal structures. Pollard (1982) proposes a model which shows three layers: social structure and hegemony, institutional bias and classroom micro-social structure. It is claimed that these influence teacher and pupil behaviour in an interplay with material, biographical, role and classroom interaction factors. Coping strategies for both teachers and pupils reflect movements in classroom relationships as they both attempt to negotiate mutually satisfying roles. The resultant classroom practice is culturally mediated, structurally and historically influenced, resulting in tactics adopted by both sides in the daily flow of classroom life.

Hatton (1994a) discusses social and cultural influences on teachers' practices, suggesting that teachers should have an awareness of these in order to develop a

socially just pedagogy. (See Connell *et al.*, 1991 and Connell, 1993, below, for a discussion of the notion of social justice.) She suggests that teachers' work is shaped by values, experiences and attitudes in society as well as in their own schooling. The pedagogy which training and developing teachers developed relied on replication of existing practices or 'on the spot' adaptations. Both of these were divorced from theoretical analyses. The result was a common orientation to conservative teaching practice. Hatton further argues that a predominantly middle class female Anglo teaching force would be likely to unwittingly perpetrate an educational system which was socially reproductive because of their likely limited understandings of cultural diversity and concomitant acceptance of hegemonic processes. Hatton also suggests that the work situation of teachers also strongly contributes to conservative teaching. Hatton draws on Denscombe's (1982) conception of a *hidden pedagogy*, a concern for classroom control as a measure of teaching competence which is influenced by common classroom constraints. Denscombe believes there are similarities in teachers' classroom experiences despite dissimilar situations. Significant among these experiences are pressures to conform to what is believed to be appropriate teacher behaviour and the isolated nature of much of a teacher's classroom work. The hidden pedagogy forces many teachers to teach in ways which colleagues would recognise as competent. Invariably "competence" is equated with a teacher's ability to control students without assistance from others. Denscombe argues that this encourages conservative teaching and places strong constraints on innovation. Hatton (1994a) also cites the research of Arfwedson (1979) who links the nature of the local context to the experiences and socialisation of the teachers. Arfwedson suggests that differences in the school status, which is dependent on socioeconomic factors, produce different

work situations, different pressures and different orientations to teaching. From the point of view of this research, the key element of Hatton's discussion is in the understanding that teachers respond to their school and classroom experiences and these responses are significant in evolving pedagogies. This may be directly linked with Jones' (1989) claims about the cultural production of classroom practice, with responses on both sides of the teaching exchange.

Haberman (1991) relates these themes to inner urban schools in his description and discussion of the *pedagogy of poverty*. He argues that enduring ways of teaching students in urban schools (authoritarian, conservative and reproductive) are produced in classroom relationships. Although it seems that the teachers control the classroom situation, Haberman suggests that the students shape teacher behaviour by variously complying with or resisting different aspects of the teachers' curriculum. This was seen in the classrooms observed by Jones (1989) where the poorer students forced their teachers into a different curriculum (and one with the qualities of the pedagogy of poverty) than that produced with the girls from more advantaged backgrounds. However, Haberman's assertion that students maintain the pedagogy of poverty because it absolves them from the responsibility of learning, does not take into consideration the range and variety of cultural responses generated from the local milieu. Thus, this abdication of responsibility collapses into a deficit idea that all students living in poverty turn away from wanting to be in control of their own learning. Haberman believes that alternatives to the pedagogy of poverty can only be wrought from patient and persistent changes at a whole school and community level, and this reflects theoretical movements within Australia consistent with emerging theory about the relationship between poverty and education. The next section of this chapter is a brief review of this theory.

Systemic Curriculum Responses

It has been shown in this chapter that schools serving poor communities share common features with regard to relationships between students, classrooms and teachers, and curricula produced as cultural exchanges when both students and teachers respond to their situation. However, educational responses are not confined to the ebb and flow of classroom life. Schools and educational systems have long contended with the issue of what to do about educationally disadvantaged students. Since the 1960s when inequality became a political and educational issue in Australia, there have been a number of major systemic responses aimed at addressing the problem of certain social groups not gaining equal access to educational success. The most significant for students in poverty has been the Disadvantaged Schools Program and, for Aboriginal students, the introduction and development of Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal Education[6]. Both of these initiatives illustrate evolving theory about how schools may better cater for educationally disadvantaged students, and the effect of that evolution on curriculum decision making and classroom practice.

Connell *et al.* (1991) and Connell (1993) describe developments in theory about the relationship between poverty and education leading into the current phase of the Disadvantaged Schools Program (henceforth DSP). In what follows there is a summary of these evolutionary stages. The inequality debate emerged in Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Roper's (1970), *The Myth of Equality*, and the Karmel

[6] These have had a significant influence on curriculum development in the research site. This development is discussed in Chapter 3.

Report (1973) place the issue of social disadvantage perpetrated through education into the Australian context[7]. Before this, educational equity was seen to be about meeting the demand for places in a compulsory education system: a universal standard service. Once guaranteed a place, success or failure was thought to be determined by an individual's educational merit (intelligence and application) (Connell *et al.*, 1991: 22). This position was challenged by evidence showing that certain groups (Aborigines, the poor, girls, migrants, rurally isolated) were being denied opportunity and not benefiting from education in comparison to others in society (Roper, 1970; Karmel, 1973).

Early practical initiatives aimed at addressing this problem were underpinned by general attitudes held in society about the poor. That is, the poor were seen to be different: "a *minority* who for some reason had failed to participate in the affluence of the majority" (Connell *et al.*, 1991:27). These feelings were reinforced with a theoretical concept of cultural differences between the poor and the majority (Bernstein, 1977; Bourdieu, 1977[8]) and a deficit notion of educational disadvantage developed which saw the poor compensated for the supposed deficiencies in their environment. Responses (early DSP funded projects, among others) equated difference with lack and were essentially compensatory programs, aimed at positive discrimination to bring the poor up to the standard of the others.

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[7] These followed the *Coleman Report* (1966) in the USA and the *Plowden Report* (1967) in Britain.

[8] In fact this is considered to be a misreading of these theories: Bernstein criticised compensatory education (Connell *et al.*, 1991:27).

Eventually, however, the idea of the poor as a distinct cultural minority came under challenge. As Connell *et al.* (1991:30) maintain, "poverty is a *social and economic situation* and not an attribute of a person or a subculture." The focus shifted in the light of this challenge to the system as a whole. Connell *et al.* (1991:24) argue that there is a continuum of disadvantage and advantage in the interplay of class relations and the educational system. It was theoretical understanding of this kind that underpinned shifts in DSP philosophy to a greater emphasis on the school curriculum: "The mainstream curriculum was criticised as too academic, too abstract, too middle-class or too 'Anglo' for the needs of the children" (Connell *et al.*, 1991:31).

DSP schools responded by looking to produce curricula which was relevant and meaningful to students in poverty. However as Connell *et al.* (1991:31) suggest, this cycle in DSP practice ran the risk of producing "separate and unequal curriculum which confirmed educational exclusion" and "did not necessarily move beyond 'deficit' concepts". Subsequently the DSP moved from the concept of relevant, meaningful curriculum to that of empowering curriculum with its underlying principles of social justice. Connell *et al.* (1991: 31-32) point to this transition and explain the interdependence:

> What is implicit here is that the starting-point of curricular analysis is the social and economic interests of the disadvantaged, rather than those social interests already embedded in the mainstream curriculum. A central place is given to learnings necessary for the disadvantaged to increase their social and political power and 'do something about it' themselves. Such a curriculum will include much of the knowledge contained in the conventional curriculum but will organise it in different ways.

Such a transition accomplished a completely new way of looking at the issue in a theoretical and practical sense:

> In a compensatory program, the framework of educational institutions is taken to be sound, and the idea is to enable deprived children to participate in it more fully. With whole-school change the boot is on the other foot. Something

> *about the institution* is presumed to be in need of reform to make it serve a *particular* group of children better (Connell *et al.*, 1991: 31, emphasis added).

There was a conceptual shift in both theory and practice from the earlier ideas of cultural difference to those which embraced thinking about students in a particular context. This theme had been taken up earlier by Johnston (1990) who points to dangers integral to both sides of the difference debate: treating everyone the same and ignoring social and cultural determinants of educational success; treating people differently which could bring about a curriculum that restricts knowledge and disempowers learners from future action. Johnston proposes *contextual thinking* as a counter-hegemonic strategy which would not ignore the diversity of the learners in their context, but rather enable curriculum to be structured from their standpoint:

> Here it is useful to distinguish between the principles, skills and knowledge to be learnt (universally applicable for all learners regardless of social background) and the social contexts in which the learning takes place (Johnston, 1990:29).

The advanced stage of theorising about the relationship between poverty and education aligned DSP curriculum development with notions of social justice and inverted curriculum (Singh, 1994). Although in theoretical intent[9] these aims were paralleled in the growth of Aboriginal Education in the 1980s and 1990s, the reality has been that Aboriginal students as a group have had a much greater struggle to achieve educational success than all other groups in Australian society. Indeed, until the early 1970s, the main fight for Aboriginal people was merely gaining access to mainstream education. (See Harris, 1978, for a history of public education for Aboriginal students in NSW schools.)

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[9] The intersection of the two is obvious, with the majority of Aboriginal people living in poverty (Response by Governments to the Royal Commission, 1992).

The election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972 was significant for the recognition of the educational needs of Aboriginal people. The Karmel Report (1973), as mentioned above, officially showed the lack of educational success for Aboriginal students at all levels of education. Funding for education was made available by the upgraded Department of Aboriginal Affairs and one of the early benefits was the employment of Aboriginal Education Assistants (AEAs) from 1975. The National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) was established in 1977 to advise the Federal Government.

The NSW 1982 *Aboriginal Education Policy* has the stated twofold purpose of developing better teaching strategies for Aboriginal students and teaching non-Aboriginal students about Aboriginal culture. In effect, the main thrust of this, and similar documents throughout Australia, was to address the limited access of Aboriginal children to mainstream education. (The second purpose was seen to help the first.) There are two aspects of this aim, to promote greater access to the dominant curriculum by involving more students for longer periods of time and to reduce alienation and cultural exclusion by developing a culturally appropriate Aboriginal curriculum (Keeffe, 1992).

The progress towards these curriculum aims reflected motifs in Aboriginal culture. Keeffe (1992) identifies two themes which compose the conscious construction of Aboriginal identity: *Aboriginality-as-persistence* and *Aboriginality-as-resistance.* He describes Aboriginality-as-persistence as:

> a belief in the persistence of an inherently unique cultural identity; the continuity of cultural practices that originate in traditional Aboriginal culture; the common sharing of these by all Aboriginal people in Australia (Keeffe, 1992:46).

This aspect sees culture as "a fixed and static body of material, knowledge and concepts" (Keeffe, 1992:46).

By contrast, Aboriginality-as-resistance is defined as an active theme:

> not only a specific set of shared elements, but also a living set of cultural practices. These practices are in dynamic interaction with the dominant non-Aboriginal society, and the cultural practices that are an essential part of this society's way of life (Keeffe, 1992:46).

(Note the similarity between this definition and Willis's (1981) definition of culture. Both stress the consciousness of the subordinate relationship within mainstream society.) Keeffe argues that these two cultural themes constantly overlap, interact with each other and contradict each other. Importantly, their interaction is shown "by the fact that the persistence of Aboriginal people, as an identifiable social and cultural group, is in large part due to their successful and continuing resistance" (Keeffe, 1992:47).

Keeffe argues that the dominant theme in Aboriginal education and curriculum development has been Aboriginal-as-persistence. That is, the notion of Aboriginality "as being part of a 'natural heritage', rather than as an active construction" (Keeffe, 1992:97). This ideology, ratified and reinforced through official policy, meant that changes in Aboriginal Education have concentrated on cultural differences between school and community. While such an approach had correctly seen that the locus of change should be in the institution rather than the individual child, shown in the DSP

emphases, there was an inherent sense of cultural dualism in operation: all Aboriginal people were thought to share certain cultural characteristics which were diametrically different to their Anglo counterparts. Despite the fact that attempts had been made to make schooling a more culturally relevant place through the introduction of Aboriginal support staff and Aboriginal studies, classroom relationships and the key to curriculum exchanges were dominated by the theme of Aboriginality-as-resistance:

> Aboriginality-as-resistance takes specific oppositional form in the school lives of students. White authority, personified in teachers, is actively resisted with a range of responses that include 'cheeky behaviour', sullen withdrawal, inattention and absenteeism (Keeffe, 1992:57).

The tension between policy at a wide level and practice in the classroom is heightened in this dialectic. It will be shown later that this is a continuing dilemma for many schools serving poor and Aboriginal communities. Consideration of this central point about classroom practice brings us back to the idea of cultural production as it applies to Aboriginal students: collective and conscious responses to the perceived conditions of resistance, generated from the local community, "drawing creatively from the resources of the dominant society, and from Aboriginal traditions" (Keeffe, 1992:102). It will be shown in this thesis, that for many Aboriginal children, politicisation and socialisation are concurrent processes (Keeffe, 1992).

Summary of Literature Review

The Literature Review has drawn together three themes. The first two considered the nature of first students' and then teachers' responses to their school contexts. The

third theme discussed systemic curriculum developments within the wider Australian context which are relevant to the thesis.

To explore the first theme, given its significant contribution to the understanding of the actions of disaffected educationally disadvantaged students, resistance theory was discussed and evaluated. Important features of resistance theory as proposed by Willis (1977, 1981, 1983) were acknowledged. Central to the theory was the relationship between structure, culture and agency. Resistance to school was seen to be a cultural response to schooling. Students responded to their school situation using cultural resources available to them within their specific local contexts. Willis (1977) argues that these responses to school were both free and creative, yet constrained by external factors imposed on the students' lives. Significant also in resistance theory was the relationship between educational inequality, social reproduction and student oppositional behaviour. It was argued that when students responded with oppositional behaviour to their perception that the local school was not able to deliver promised educational success to the majority of their group, then indeed, that behaviour constituted a rational response. When it is accepted that school oppositional behaviour among certain groups of students may be rational, the search for changes in that behaviour is refocussed towards the circumstances at school and in the local and wider community which are implicated in the way students act at school. Therefore, resistance theory and Willis's (1981, 1983) notion of cultural production provided new avenues in the exploration of the disaffection displayed by many different students from a variety of socially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

Despite its strengths, significant weaknesses in resistance theory were also identified. Whereas educators have seen possibilities within resistance theory to challenge the reproductive function of schools (see, for example, Giroux, 1981, 1982, 1983, McLaren, 1985, McFadden, 1995), there are inherent limitations in continuing to focus on students who have a clear rationale for rejecting school. Not only is it difficult to bring these students back, but it is an "end of the line" position which does not fully consider all conditions leading to the rejection throughout all the school years (Furlong, 1991). It was pointed out in this review that research in the resistance theory tradition had usually concentrated only on students. This is inadequate for a study focussed on school life. As Jones (1989) has argued, classroom practice is an active construction between students and teachers. Jones's (1989) notion of *the cultural production of classroom practice* linked the first and second themes of this review.

The second theme concerned research on factors shaping the way teachers approached classroom practices. Literature had shown that teachers were influenced by both the experience and conditions of teaching (see, for example, Woods, 1977, 1980, Denscombe, 1982, Haberman, 1991) and values, experiences and attitudes in society (see, for example, Hatton, 1994a). Other research had suggested teachers were influenced by a combination of these micro and macro factors (see, for example, Pollard, 1982, Sharp and Green, 1975, Hatton, 1994a). The linking of the first two themes foreshadows a research intent to focus on the interaction between teachers and students in classrooms. Such an intent supports McFadden (1995:297) who says that "what resistance theory fails to capture is the variation in the responses to schooling

which arise from the intersection of student and teacher perspectives, perceptions and expectations." Thus the research aims to build on the strengths of resistance theory while overcoming the inherent limitations of only focussing on students.

The third theme reviewed the evolution of theory and practice in systemic educational responses (in particular the Disadvantaged Schools Program and Aboriginal Studies and Education) developed in Australia to address educational inequality. As well as providing a background to curriculum change at the school in which the research was conducted, the third theme showed that educators increasingly believed that change aimed at overcoming educational disadvantage needed to occur at the level of classroom practice. Again, this further justified the research intent of looking at students and teachers and the cultural production of classroom practice.

This review has located this study within an established theoretical tradition but has signalled the intention to focus this research on what goes on in classrooms between teachers and students. The next section proposes and discusses a theoretical framework for the research focus.

Conditions of Resistance

The theoretical process in this thesis, as discussed above, moves the fundamental inquiry from whether students are resisters to whether there are conditions within the milieu of the school which might bring about resistance. An initial consideration in the presentation and discussion of data in following chapters was under what circumstances the terms "resistance" and "resister" could be applied. It was acknowledged in the review that research in the tradition has been criticised for

applying the term too broadly and unproblematically (see, for example, Walker, 1985a, about Willis, A. Hargreaves, 1982b, about Anyon). Within the wider research focus of this thesis a framework is proposed that demonstrates the use of the term "resistance to school" can be applied under certain converging conditions. These are intended to be pointers through which it may be determined whether the oppositional behaviour by the students constitutes in reality or potentially a resistance position. This process provides a framework through which resistance may be defined, while at the same time addressing issues surrounding correct application of the term.

The framework is well justified within the research focus for the following reasons. First, this process and shift in focus forces an acceptance that resistance is an issue which involves all areas of education. As discussed earlier, the main concentration in research has been on disaffected high school students, particularly those who are belligerent and disorderly. This thesis will investigate whether oppositional behaviour which exists in particular primary school settings, is actual or potential resistance. If this is the case, schools and teachers may be able to change the conditions which encourage the students to adopt resistant positions.

Second, this change in focus, away from the student as an individual and in a group, to the exchanges on all sides (students and teachers) within the school curriculum, provides the potential to address a continuing problem at its source. As Willis (1977), Furlong (1991) and subsequent researchers in the resistance/cultural production tradition have shown (see, for example, Jones, 1989), the moment of final rejection of the school with its underlying cultural support, is very much an irretrievable position - there is little turning back from a full-blown resistance position. The continuing dilemma for many secondary schools facing resistance is that they are forced to apply solutions which are almost always too late. Consequently the schools have to rely on, among other things, costly and invariably futile attempts to coerce within the existing paradigm (behaviour modification programs and their derivations), paradigm

modifications which often bring about a separate and unequal curriculum which is essentially reproductive, or removing resisters from the system (suspension and expulsion, special classes, special schools, helping them find employment or alternate education [for example, TAFE[10]]). Moreover, there is a strong link between primary and secondary schooling in this framework. Conditions of resistance not satisfactorily addressed in the primary school produce effects along the whole continuum of the schooling experience and beyond. This resistance position demands an interrogation of all aspects of education - in primary and high schools, curriculum and social practices at local and systemic levels and the dialectic between these.

The theoretical framework utilises Willis's (1981) definitions of culture and cultural production, but is widened from their initial concentration on class as the only determinant of future educational possibilities. The key features are a consciousness of social position bringing forward creative culturally produced responses which are generated from the local milieu but reflect wider relationships in society. The position then adopted by this thesis is that for the term *resistance to school* to be applied, there must be the following general conditions in the relationship between the students, the school and society.

1. Inequality in the cultural relationship. Resistance to school is generated among groups who historically are socially disadvantaged. Their relationship to other groups is characterised by a continuation of their generalised subordinate position in an unequal society. The intersection of class, gender and ethnicity interacts with structures in society to limit future possibilities[11].

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[10] Colleges of Technical and Further Education are institutions which offer post-school education. Much of their work is to do with training for trades. However, because they also offer courses in areas like adult literacy and communication, TAFE is often seen as an educational alternative for people who have not reached higher levels of secondary education.

[11] This position has been challenged in the literature. McFadden (1995) cites research evidence from Britain and the USA which claims resistance to school is not always

2. Consciousness of their position. Resistance to school relies on various degrees of understanding about where the oppressed group stands in an unequal society. As with Willis's (1977) lads, this is most likely experienced and expressed as a them versus us feeling, an awareness that things are not fair. Cultural responses to this consciousness are articulated in ways which are historically and regionally specific.

3. Inequality at the heart of the educational paradigm. Resistance to school occurs among groups who continue to be educationally disadvantaged. That is, resistance is a rational response to the reproductive nature of education - its continuing failure to challenge the reality of social inequality. The first and third conditions are obviously interdependent.

4. Resistance is rejection of an unequal education system. Although resistance may interplay with other contributing factors, its basis is rejection of schooling at a wider level. The point of convergence of this rejection is almost always in the local school, but it is the articulation of the school's curriculum with wider educational issues which is the focus of resistance.

5. Cultural support. Resistance to school is culturally supported and strengthened within the everyday milieu of the resisters. There is a cultural resonance in the resistant responses to schooling, support in the lived experiences which reflects an

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class based. In Australia Connell *et al.* (1982) argue that ruling class students may resist school. It is acknowledged in this thesis that student *opposition* occurs in all school settings to varying degrees. However, the theoretical links between resistance and social reproduction are clearly drawn. In accepting the arguments developed by CCCS theorists and Willis (1977), *resistance* must be seen as a response to the part played by education in the continuation of an unequal society. Ruling class students have no real need to challenge school authority along class lines because of the advantage which education continually offers them. Willis (1977:123) is unequivocal on this point:

> The working class does not *have* to believe the dominant ideology. The very existence and consciousness of the middle class is deeply integrated into that structure which gives it dominance. What kind of bourgeoisie is it that does not in some way believe its own legitimations? That would be a denial of themselves. It would be the solution of a problem which they were the main puzzle (emphasis in original).

underlying fear of educational failure and resignation to the seeming inevitability of the situation.

Given this theoretical framework, this thesis employs the terms "opposition" and "oppositional behaviour" when referring to student responses which appear to work against the school, teachers or the classroom. "Resistance" will be used to signify a conscious choice by students to widely reject education. Further discussion of terminology, and the connection between opposition and resistance will be taken up in Chapters 6 and 7.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is presented in the following six chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the research methodology, describing how data is collected and analysed. It discusses distinctive features of the ethnography which are relevant to the research context. Chapter 3 introduces the school and its ethos and provides the backdrop for the study. From an historical viewpoint it is seen that curricular movement has been greatly influenced by the reaction of the school to the dual intersecting concerns of student opposition and low academic standard, particularly of the Aboriginal students. These reactions have corresponded to theoretical movements in DSP and Aboriginal Education. There is also a development of an understanding of the conditions in the school which affect the curriculum decisions and strategies of the teachers. The interplay of these conditions with pedagogical ideas and student responses are taken up in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4 describes the nature of the relationship between the students and the school. A detailed picture is drawn of the students at the school and their teachers' perceptions of their degree of opposition and their academic standard. This exploration is undertaken across different classes in the school. The data shows a high

representation of Aboriginal students who strongly oppose the curriculum and who are categorised in the lowest academic group. Movements in their oppositional behaviour are revealed as their school relationship develops. A connection with the conditions of resistance is made by showing that the curriculum is being opposed as the crucial determinant of success at school. Community factors which penetrate to the classroom through cultural production are explored. This chapter shows how the relationship that the students have with their school affects curriculum and classroom practice.

Chapter 5 focuses on the extent to which the teachers' pedagogical practices in the research school are contributing to the educational advantage or disadvantage of the students. The culturally produced classroom practice has a number of features which, it is argued, lead to a compromised curriculum which ensures, for the majority, continued educational disadvantage. Consequently, the educational paradigm contributes to social reproduction.

Chapters 6 and 7 analyse data and discuss implications. It is suggested that a resistance framework has the potential to challenge educators to examine schools and the wider system. By identifying and working on conditions of resistance at their essential point provides opportunities for schools to worry at the heart of their own reproductive paradigm. The concerns of this research are relevant to a wide range of schools serving communities with similar educational needs and problems to the research school, and provide a model for a contextualised interrogation of their work.