



Cultural Reproduction

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The idea of cultural reproduction was first developed by Bourdieu (1973) who sees the function of the education system as being to reproduce the culture of the dominant classes, thus helping to ensure their continued dominance. Through his concepts of cultural capital' and habitus' Bourdieu's influence spread into other areas of socialization and high culture. However, despite the complex of influences that contribute to Bourdieu's method, sociologists of culture and students of cultural studies seem to have picked up on the negative and critical elements in the work. In particular, they developed the metaphor of reproduction as copy or imitation rather than reproduction as regeneration and synthesis. As a consequence cultural reproduction' has become part of the orthodoxy of studies in the theory of ideology and neo-Marxisms. While still addressing this well established theme of ideology and structural determinacy in cultural reproduction theory, this collection of original essays seeks also to explore other possibilities, in terms of ethnomethodology, Durkheimianism, structuralism and post-structuralism. Many of the arguments put forward also confront the most contemporary challenges presented by postmodernism. The papers address an unusually wide spectrum of cultural formations including gender roles, fine art, film, journalism, education, consumerism, style, language and sociology itself. The introduction discusses the origin and development of the concept of cultural reproduction and shows the variety of analytic possibilities within several traditions of social theorizing, all later expanded in the body of the text. Most of the contributors are academics working in the area of sociology of communication studies. All of them have taught in and have continuing research interests in the sociology of culture and cultural studies.

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