

For Giroux, citizenship is about the struggle for "empowerment," and schooling, as a vehicle for citizenship, is about the "elimination of those ideological and material conditions that promote various forms of subjugation, segregation, brutality, and marginalization" (p. 6). Democratic, "critical" schooling requires teachers to think of themselves as "transformative intellectuals" infused with "an ethic of risk and resistance," who are capable of realizing schools as "contradictory sites" at the center of continuing struggles over cultural and political identity, empowerment, and social transformation. In this context, Giroux rejects any close comparison between his view and "cultural relativism," which, he says, uncritically tolerates every point of view and cultural expression. Giroux avows "respect for the autonomy of different cultural logics" (p. 124), but insists that culture is a "terrain of struggle" (p. 125). This apparently means that it is not enough merely to hear the voices of the oppressed; teachers (and other citizens) need to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and join actively in the struggle for liberation.

The chief accomplishment of Giroux's polemic is to point out how "notions of struggle, debate, community, and democracy have become subversive categories" (p. 4), so that "cultural politics" is often subservient to what he calls the "discourse of domination." That is to say, American schools, like other cultural institutions, are too often organized to serve the existing power structure, by training workers and instilling in students an uncritical acceptance of existing social arrangements. This latter is accomplished by transmitting forms of "knowledge" that are actually distortions of social reality, by "marginalizing" criticisms of the existing power hierarchies, and by insisting that marginal or oppressed groups have the option to assimilate into the dominant culture, but not the option to change it on the basis of the validity of their own cultural experiences.

Giroux is effective in raising these issues, and in showing that they relate to the theme of education for citizenship. He is much less effective in probing beneath the surface of his main themes, to examine them with the same acuity he brings to discussions of opposing educational and cultural philosophies. When, for example, he writes that "any attempt to develop a curriculum for democratic empowerment must examine the conditions of knowledge and how such knowledge distorts reality" (p. 102), he does not seem to appreciate the equivocation between his reference to "conditions of knowledge" (in general) and "such knowledge" that "distorts reality." There is a great deal in the book like this. Giroux invariably writes as if the values, interests, and perspectives of "the oppressed" have a kind of a priori validity, so that siding with "emancipation" just *means* being in solidarity with these groups. He offers no defense or explanation of any kind to support this kind of claim.

Again, while it is refreshing to see schools presented as scenes of cultural struggle, rather than somehow elevated above the fray, Giroux never addresses

the concrete problems that teachers face in terms to speak in "the language of domination?" How does one negotiate these communities, while at the same time holding views on students, as Giroux does, to say, as Giroux does, to conceive of school and culture as an "emancipatory view" of the world? Giroux's prescriptions are too often reduced to formulas.

There are a number of other problems that beg for definition and clarification. "struggle" build "community" and "empowerment." After reiterating the goal of the struggle, the ability to think and act in a way that is of democratic (not to mention) nature never confronts the question of the nature of the schools. It is an expression of a form of domination, or how his advocacy of "emancipation" a new form of domination, or how he regards the explicitly political nature of no regard for the "unmarked" and no appreciation for the "marked" (science) strive—of which Giroux cannot be dismissed as a simple.

Giroux seems content to let it be. Despite its importance, the struggle is limited, in the end, to a struggle against social structures. A considerable advance in the struggle is ignorant of these structures.

Reviewer, David W. Brown, Lynne V. Cheney, Washington, D. C., 1989. 40 pp.

Perhaps it is a reflection of our permissive liberalism that our permissive liberalism offers such an extensive

the concrete problems implicit in his formulas. What does it mean in concrete terms to speak in "the language of possibility" rather than in "the discourse of domination?" How does a teacher stand in solidarity with students from oppressed communities, while at the same time refraining from imposing his/her own political views on students, as Giroux insists they do? It is not a response to such questions to say, as Giroux does repeatedly, that teachers need to adopt an ethic of risk, conceive of school and cultural authority as "a terrain of struggle," and take an "emancipatory view" of everything, from curriculum to professional preparation. Giroux's prescriptions are typically nothing but repetitions of his chief ideological formulas.

There are a number of classic political and philosophical themes in the book that beg for definition and expanded discussion. How, for example, does constant "struggle" build "community?" What does it mean to achieve "empowerment?" After reiterating this goal for several chapters, Giroux "defines" it finally as "the ability to think and act critically" (p. 90). This is hardly a compelling description of democratic (not to mention radically democratic) freedom. Again, Giroux never confronts the question of whether there isn't a limit to the useful polititization of the schools. He writes as if *every* form of "knowledge" is the ideological expression of a form of domination, without offering any account of why this is so, or how his advocacy of "suppressed knowledge" will produce anything more than a new form of domination should it achieve its ends. At times, it seems like Giroux regards the explicit polititization of schools as an end in itself. This attitude shows no regard for the "immediate" and "private" in experience, and their expressions, and no appreciation for the ways in which certain forms of knowledge (e. g. science) strive—at least—to achieve "objectivity" or "neutrality." These notions cannot be dismissed by references to the "social construction" of knowledge, as Giroux seems content to do.

Despite its important contributions to contemporary debate, Giroux's book is limited, in the end, by what might be called an uncritical, "romantic" view of struggles against social, cultural and political oppression. This is, however, a considerable advance on discussions of the same issues that appear completely ignorant of these central problems of democracy.

Reviewer, David Myers, University College of Central Queensland
Lynne V. Cheney. *50 Hours: A Core Curriculum for College Students*. Washington, D. C., 1989. 66 pp.

Perhaps it is a reflection of our democratic individualism, our relativism and our permissive liberalism in the West, that our 20th century humanities curriculum offers such an extraordinary variety of courses and electives. Colleges take