

The concept of youth resistance employed by the CCCS is adapted from the work of Gramsci (1971), who argued that class relations in late capitalist societies centred around an ongoing 'hegemonic struggle'. According to Gramsci, as capitalism progresses, the power of the bourgeoisie can no longer be assured through domination but has to be won by consent. This involves a shift from economic to ideological (that is, hegemonic) control. However, the very nature of hegemonic power means that it can be subjected to challenges from the subordinate classes. Relating Gramsci's model to post-war British working class youth, the CCCS maintained that the process of creating subcultural solutions to material problems involved simultaneously the winning of space – 'cultural space in the neighbourhood and institutions, real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street corner' (Clarke et al, 1976, p. 45). The negotiation of space for the collective expression of subcultural identities, it was argued, constituted a challenge to authority that formed part of the 'theatre of struggle' which, according to Gramsci, characterized class relations in late modern society (ibid., p. 44).

Specific examples of subcultural strategies of resistance are examined in a series of case studies. John Clarke's (1976) essay on skinhead culture develops Phil Cohen's (1972) work in arguing that the skinhead style represents an attempt to re-

create through the 'mob' the traditional working class community as a substitution for the real decline of the latter' (Clarke, 1976, p. 99). Jefferson's examination of the Teddy boy style argues that the latter reflected the 'Teds'

"all-dressed-up-and-nowhere-to-go" experience of Saturday evening' (1976, p. 48). The relative affluence of the Teddy boys allowed them to 'buy into a middle-class image – the Edwardian suit revived by Savile Row tailors in 1950 and originally intended for a middle-class market. Jefferson argues that the Teddy boys dress represented a symbolic way of expressing and negotiating their symbolic reality, of giving cultural meaning to their social plight' (ibid., p. 86). Similarly, Hebdige claims that the mod style was a reaction to the mundane predictability of the working week, and that a mod attempted to compensate for this by exercising complete domination over his private estate – his appearance and choice of leisure pursuits' (1976, p. 91).

Ultimately though, for all the symbolic creativity represented by post-war subcultures, resistance does not and cannot alter the fundamentally class-based order of society. Subcultures 'solve, but in an imaginary way, problems which at the concrete material level remain unresolved, (Clarke et al, 1976, pp. 47–8). Moreover, according to Hebdige (1979), the resistant qualities of any given subcultural style is ultimately compromised because of

its incorporation and commodification by the fashion industry. The CCCS thus offered a bitter–sweet analysis of subculture, one that celebrated its achievements at the same time as noting its inevitable limitations.