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**A Radical Critique of Juvenile Boot Camps:
A Critical Analysis of the Juvenile Boot Camp and the Rationale
Behind This Form of Corrections from a Socialist
Humanist Perspective**

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Abstract

This paper is a critique of boot camps as a method of juvenile delinquency treatment. Humanist theory is applied to suggest that boot camps fail to meet basic treatment philosophy of adaptation to normal communities and reintegration of youth into society as specified by the primary goal of juvenile courts, rehabilitation.

This paper shows that the juvenile boot camp, also referred to as a shock incarceration program, is a repressive structure that is part of an oppressive institution, the American criminal justice system. This will be addressed through the call for a diffusion of violent structures which serve to oppress and thus hinder human self-development. Because this institution is a tool of an oppressive, elite-run society, the scope of this paper must go beyond simply addressing the boot camp from a micro-level analysis of a specific institution. These reforms can only be truly effective if originating from a macro, critical theory; hence, this paper will address this macro theory level to show that only by beginning at this level can humanist analysis and reform be achieved, through the operationalization of more micro-level theories informed by critical, macro theory. The first half of this paper will be devoted to macro-level theory. The latter half will be the specific analysis of the boot camp.

It will be necessary to show that the entire paradigmatic world-view within which this type of corrections originates and is embedded is not adequate to deal with crime and deviance because it is the same paradigm¹ that has produced the structural conditions (capitalism) that are the cause of a significant portion, at the least, of crime.² I will attempt to show that there are at least two world-views that have developed adequately to be differentiated and categorized as separate and competing paradigms. Furthermore, the paradigm out of which capitalism developed is the same paradigm that has produced most of the attempts to deal with crime—including the juvenile boot camp—and, thus, is not able to effectively deal with the crime problem. It is, therefore, necessary to work within a new paradigmatic world-view to effectively deal with crime (and all of the other problems that come from the capitalist structure of society, a result of this paradigm).

These paradigmatic world-views do not necessarily produce personality types; moreover, if people have certain beliefs that fit into one paradigm, they are not necessarily bound to think and act as that paradigm would suggest. Paradigms are simply useful categorization schemes encompassing many ideas, ideals, values, and perspectives that logically align and are fundamentally opposed by other sets of aligning ideas, ideals, values, and perspectives. To be sure, the ideas and/or values of particular individuals, for example, can cross

¹ From this point on, the majority of the time I will simply use the term “paradigm” to refer to a paradigmatic world-view.

² See Ronald Kramer (1984) for a detailed discussion of how advanced capitalism generates crime, specifically: “1) the surplus population which is produced under the conditions of late capitalism; 2) structured unemployment; 3) income inequality and relative deprivation; and 4) . . . the destruction of cooperative social relationships” (p. 255). There is also a discussion of particular policies that are humanistic and could work within the existing political economy, as “prefigurative socialist programs,” specifically, interventions in the labor market (e.g., “adoption of a full employment policy”), the family (e.g., “develop comprehensive multiservice programs for high risk families”), and the network of community supports (p. 280-285).

paradigms; however, people will generally fall into one of these paradigms and will tend to associate with others who are of this general persuasion affecting each others' ideas, ideals, values, perspectives, etc. Most importantly, there are many social facts that can be seen as emerging from the interaction between a particular paradigm and the individuals and groups who accept this paradigm. For example, capitalism and the boot camp as a type of corrections have emerged from the consensus paradigm. This is where these paradigms become useful; they inform us of the logic behind particular social facts. Because we can understand the basic rationale behind a social fact, it becomes easier to predict how that social fact will affect individuals and groups. This will help in the formulation of operationalizable theories.

With the above in mind, let's consider two of the major paradigmatic world-views—the consensus paradigm and the conflict paradigm³. The consensus paradigm sees order as being the ultimate good and, thus, the goal of society. The way to achieve this order is to be guided by the consensus as to what is the best for the most people in society. This view acts to elevate the society to a level above individual people, i.e., the whole is greater than its parts. This results in a reification of the state. The ultimate good is what is best for the state. Order is what is best for the state, and it is best achieved through a consensus, which means that everyone should be the same with the same ideas, values, and goals.

This view of the consensus paradigm has many implications and consequences. First and foremost is that if an individual or group of people is not part of the consensus then they should become part of it, but because it may not be possible for all people to conform or simply because some will not, competition occurs and becomes legitimized and valued. These values are the very characteristics of democracy, the paradigm that has played the major role in shaping the form of government in this country and its economic system,

³ These paradigmatic world-views could be analyzed in much more detail, however, for our purposes here, a relatively superficial summary will do.

capitalism. The individuals and groups who have played the major role in shaping this country have accepted this paradigm and worked within it as a world-view that has resulted in a capitalist society.

The conflict paradigm, on the other hand, sees the world as more characterized by conflict than consensus or order. Because there are so many different individuals and groups in society, there are many different perspectives and goals that are in competition; however, this paradigm does not see assimilation and consensus as the way to overcome this competition. Instead, the competing views are all valued as legitimate, and change is seen as a good thing that can lead to progress. Just because there are competing views does not mean there has to be competition in which there are winners and losers. Rather, there is enough "room" for all views to be expressed, and through cooperation there will be change and development. Thus, the individual is of paramount importance. Society is made up of individuals and only exists because of them, so it is the good of the individual—every individual—that is most important.

There may be other paradigmatic world-views that have developed or could develop, however, it is these two that are most prominent in our society. Out of the consensus paradigm has developed capitalism and many other institutions, perspectives, ideas, and ideals within society. If individuals and groups do not accept the institutions, perspectives, ideas, and ideals that come from this paradigm than they are likely to fall into the conflict paradigmatic world-view.

It is within this conflict paradigm that a critical perspective can be developed. This perspective allows for a critical analysis of the ideas and perspectives that come from the consensus paradigm, from its own paradigm, and, most importantly, a critical analysis of all existing structures in society. Through this critical perspective, one can see the consequences of the consensus paradigm. For example, by assuming that there is or should be a consensus within society, those who hold this perspective are able to justify their claims that all nonconformists, deviants, and others they do not like or with whom they disagree are *the* problem, i.e., the cause of contemporary social problems. Because of this and the fact that competition is valued, subordination (through the natural emergence of dominance from

competition) and oppression (through the “need” for social control, and the acceptance of dominant/subordinate relationships) are also justified.

It is the consensus paradigm that guides the thought behind and the actions of the criminal justice apparatus (and most other institutions in our society). What are the consequences of this? Many are negative. Most generally, the resultant action of this consensus perspective necessarily benefits some groups of people and negatively affects others. The people who benefit from this are obviously the people capable of controlling the dominant ideology: the ruling elite.⁴ There is a dialectical relationship between the ruling elite, who perpetuate this consensus paradigm to maintain their control of the society, and this paradigm, which perpetuates its control over all other groups. It is worth noting here that while there may be some (possibly many) people working within this consensus paradigm who are conscious of and supportive of the oppression, exploitation, and alienation that it produces, not all people who operate from this paradigm have to be. In fact, it is not necessary for any of them to be conscious of this situation (or of their support of it) for it to still benefit them and negatively affect other individuals and groups.

Of the more visible negative effects of this situation are the oppression, exploitation, and alienation felt by the many individuals and groups whose views are not represented by this so-called consensus. This negativity and oppression is manifest through the law, resulting in punitive sanctions against any person whose actions run contrary to the interests of the ruling elite. A less visible but very important and harmful negative consequence of this situation is the dialectical effect that all of this oppression, alienation, and negativity

⁴ Quinney comments on this consensus-paradigmatic view of law: “[S]ociety is regarded as being relatively homogenous and static, rather than being characterized by diversity, coercion, and change. Moreover, rather than viewing law as the *result* of the operation of private interest, law is seen as something that operates *outside* of particular interests for the good of the whole society. At best this is a naïve conception of law. But it is also dangerous, in that it would have us live according to a myth” (1972, p. 3).

have on all people in society, i.e., humanity as a whole.

When sociologists and criminologists act from the consensus paradigm—thus, favoring the status quo—they are ultimately aiding and abetting the forces that seek to exploit others. That is, the status quo is one of exploitation and oppression, and criminologists who work within this consensus paradigm contribute to this exploitation and oppression. As Quinney states, “Criminal law is used in the capitalist state to secure the survival of the capitalist system and its ruling class. . . [O]ur current understanding of crime—our criminology—is archaic and dangerous. Criminology today serves an existing system that is as obsolete as it is oppressive” (1973, pp. 61, 64).

What then is the alternative? It is to adopt and proceed from a conflict world-view. Within this perspective through a critical analysis, we are able to see the exploitation and oppression that cause alienation and suffering, filling the world with ever more negativity. These elements—oppression and exploitation—which are seen as necessary from the consensus paradigm, are exposed for what they are using a critical perspective; they are necessary only for the continuity of the ruling elite. As Quinney writes:

The purpose of a critical understanding of crime in America is to expose the meaning of law and order in capitalist society. . . Only when we allow ourselves to break out of the conventional wisdom are we able to develop a critical understanding of crime and the legal order. This marks the end of a liberal criminology, a deceptive and oppressive criminology, and the beginning of a critical criminology. The task now is to create a socialist tradition in America — in thought and action (1973, p. 61).

A critical criminological (and sociological) perspective must guide our action, with the goals being humanist and socialist. This is the perspective that is most able to deal effectively with the manifestations of this consensus paradigm in general, and capitalism in particular, including, but not limited to, crime.

Socialist humanism is a teleological philosophy that demands action. Says Quinney, “Humanism. . . in its simplest terms is the

belief in the unity of the human race, and the potential of human beings to be perfected by their own efforts. *Socialist humanism* is human development in relation to the full development of society” (1995, p. 150, italics added). Thus it is a philosophy that sees full human liberation and self- and species-actualization as possible. The realization of this goal is only possible through conscious action. It is the role of sociologists and criminologists to try to achieve this through a critical analysis of society and the call for a diffusion of oppressive structures within it.

The socialist humanist perspective does not have to view human beings as inherently good or inherently bad. Instead, it should be assumed that human beings have no inherent predispositions. What should be assumed concerning inherent qualities is simply potential. This potential is of great magnitude, and it can develop in any direction, positive or negative. This potential includes not only the possibility for a person to become good or bad, as we know these qualities to be even in their extreme forms, but also to develop far beyond what we have ever experienced, possibly even further than we can comprehend. This development can take place on two levels: at the individual level through self-actualization and at the most macro level through species-actualization. Achieving this potential as far as possible (and as humanely as possible, always with the individual in mind) is the goal of socialist humanism. Species-actualization cannot, however, be separated from self-actualization; the two must proceed hand-in-hand, and only with both of these in mind can human beings evolve to a better, more humane existence.

This “blank slate” view of human nature could also be conducive to realist perspectives that foster competition, for example, social Darwinism and Malthusian economics. Realist perspectives like these are a part of the consensus paradigm; they accept that total agreement with the decisions of the largest consensus is impossible, therefore, what results is “what’s best for the most.” The difference between these theories and the socialist humanism perspective is that these perspectives see society as the most important thing (ergo, law and order above all else), and individuals who are the most capable are the most deserving (ergo, equality of opportunity). However, in the name of being the most “capable,” the ruling elite in this country

have legitimized the dominant/subordinate (i.e., oppressive) relationship and structure. Moreover, working within the consensus paradigm, the ruling elite has established a dominant ideology that has perpetuated many ideas and perceptions which have led to many heinous actions including

The idea, which entered Western consciousness several centuries ago, that black people are less human, [and which] made possible the Atlantic slave trade, during which perhaps 40 million people died. . . The idea, presented by political leaders and accepted by the American public in 1964, that communism in Vietnam was a threat to our "national security" led to policies that cost a million lives, including those of 55,000 young Americans. . . Other ideas—leave the poor on their own ('laissez-faire') and help the rich ('economic growth')—have lead the U.S. government for most of its history to subsidize corporations while neglecting the poor, thus permitting terrible living and working conditions and incalculable suffering and death (Zinn, 1990, p. 1).

These are the types of things (albeit extreme examples) that come about from the competitive mentality—under the guise of being the most capable—and are a result of the consensus paradigm. While there was much economic and developmental progress that came about within that context, there is still much other progress (e.g., humanitarian) yet to be made. Moreover, there is a limit to the overall progress that can be made within that competitive context. Although the consensus paradigm played a major part in shaping the modern world, it is not sufficient if we aim to eliminate the oppression and suffering that many people experience every day and to grow and evolve in a positive way.

In fact, if the good of humanity *as a whole* is considered, a world dominated by the consensus paradigm cannot lead to a good end. Because this paradigm justifies (and in fact values) competition, it is also conducive to negativity and hate. Within this context, any growth or evolution or progress is markedly one-sided. This cannot lead to anything good for the whole of humanity because all of the human species is interrelated and connected. Competition can breed

hate. Hate may be able to improve the economic position of some individuals or groups, but not their overall well-being. There is an interconnectedness among all people and a dialectical relationship between people and the hate and negativity (as well as love and positivity) that they put out into the world. Therefore, humanity cannot evolve and progress when the dominant paradigmatic world-view is one that produces negativity, hate, oppression, and alienation.

How does all of this relate to the boot camp? It is related in many ways. First of all, looking at the boot camp from a critical perspective, we can say that since it has developed out of the consensus paradigm, it will not work to deal with or correct problems that result from a structure (or structures) that comes from the same paradigm; in other words, it is a dialectical contradiction. In fact, methods developed by the consensus paradigm to deal with crime usually deal with it only after the fact. The most that can be done to try to reduce crime is to use specific deterrent approaches, e.g., the boot camp, and hope that these also have a general deterrent effect. Beyond this, it is impossible for a capitalist society to address the root causes of crime because this would be self-destructive for the capitalist system. Working from the conflict paradigm, then, could bring about the emergence of a socialist, humane society out of this dialectical contradiction of the consensus paradigm.

This critique of the consensus paradigmatic world-view and the resulting dialectical contradiction between capitalist society and its inability to deal with crime is only a starting point. The goal is not simply to criticize using abstract theories. The goal is to change things, i.e., to get rid of oppressive structures, to help end suffering and alienation, and to contribute "to the emergence of a society in which citizens are free both from criminal victimization and legalized oppression" (Friedrichs, 1982, pp. 209-210). There needs to be operationalizable theories and hypotheses that can be utilized in an effort to show that certain structures and practices are oppressive and that there are more humane and effective ways of doing things, e.g., dealing with juvenile delinquency. Guided by a socialist humanist perspective, sociologists and criminologists can make multilevel analyses to expose oppressive, exploitative, and alienating structures, institutions, and practices. They then can propose changes that are

more positive and humane, ultimately leading to a more humane society.

At this point I can now show specifically how the juvenile boot camp can be critiqued from macro, intermediate or middle range, and micro levels of analysis and shown to be an oppressive and inadequate form of dealing with juvenile delinquency. First, it will be necessary to give some background information about boot camps in general and then on the juvenile boot camp in Custer, SD, part of the Custer Youth Corrections Center,⁵ and the specific focus of this critique.

According to Doris Layton Mackenzie, the boot camp as a model for adult prisons began in 1983 in Georgia and Oklahoma. Since then, this form of prison has grown rapidly within the United States and has only recently begun to be considered as a possible form of corrections for juveniles. "The focus of these early programs was on creating a military atmosphere with drill and ceremony, physical training, and hard labor. Later programs added rehabilitation components such as counseling, academic education, and drug education and treatment" (Mackenzie, 1994, p.60). Mackenzie also noted, "If the core components of boot camps (military atmosphere, drill, hard labor, physical training) reduced recidivism, we would have expected that the boot camp releasees in all states would do better than the offenders in the comparison groups. This did not happen; therefore, *the military atmosphere does not appear to reduce recidivism*" (Mackenzie, 1994, p. 64; italics added).

The boot camp at the Custer Youth Corrections Center was designed using a prototypical boot camp model. The only significant difference between this and earlier boot camp institutions is that it does not have hard physical labor as one of its core components. The director of the boot camp is Colonel Clay R. Ramsey, and the assistant director is Major Mark Snyder, both of whom are U.S. Marines. I conducted a phone interview with Major Snyder on

⁵ The Custer Youth Corrections Center also has three other programs; the forestry camp, the Job Corps, and the Corrections Center for girls.

January 31, 1997, regarding the structure of the boot camp and its goals and methods. Information about the boot camp was also gathered from an interview with Doug Herman, the Superintendent of the Custer Youth Corrections Center, and Colonel Ramsey, that was broadcast on South Dakota Public Radio (January 30, 1997).

According to Superintendent Herman, the purpose of the boot camp is to “provide structure and discipline,” by “getting the kids’ attention.” This is achieved by the drill instructors being “very demanding” and putting the juveniles “in a situation where there is a lot of anxiety, a lot of stress, and a lot of confusion, and that is to . . . strip their identity.”

During my phone interview with Major Snyder, he stated that the boot camp uses about a 50/50 mixture of traditional boot camp components and remedial educational components, basically the same approach used by other juvenile and adult boot camps. The goals are: 1) strip the youths completely of their prior socialization and intensively resocialize them in order to instill self-discipline, respect for authority, and a strong work ethic, 2) give them life skills including employability, goal setting, and literacy, and 3) serve as a cost-effective alternative to institutionalization. Other goals of boot camps in general are to 1) “reduce drug and alcohol abuse,” 2) “encourage participants to become productive, law-abiding citizens,” and 3) “ensure that offenders are held accountable for their actions” (Bourque, et. al., 1996, p. 5).

The structure of the boot camp at Custer Youth Corrections Center is a direct copy of a Marine boot camp. It includes physical training, uniformed drill instructors, cadets with shaved heads and uniforms (with no stripes or medals, of course), a platoon structure, work detail, and very strict discipline. There is an attempt to balance this out with educational courses (five hours a day), group counseling (one hour a day), and some 120 life skills courses (e.g., employability and personal hygiene). The only types of juveniles that the Center will not take are sex offenders, those diagnosed as mentally ill, and serious substance abusers. The program is three months long with an aftercare/community supervision program. The aftercare includes a one month probation-like system administered by the Juvenile Corrections Agency, and then a “Level Two” phase of less intensive

supervision for six months. There is also a mentoring aspect of the program that utilizes volunteers from the National Guard that are to check up on the youths “every once in a while” (Tim Post, South Dakota Public Radio).

With the above in mind, we can now proceed to the actual critique of the juvenile boot camp. First, I will address the boot camp specifically as an institution and its (in)adequacy as a form of corrections. Then I will show how a critical analysis—using the socialist humanism perspective—can start from a macro level and proceed to the most micro level, i.e., the effects on the individual. This can be done by starting from the assumption that the effects on the individual actor are directly (and dialectically) related to, and cannot be separated from, the institutions that she/he encounters, including the entire society and the norms, values, and all other social facts that are a part of it.

Why is the boot camp still being pursued as an alternative to incarceration even though it has been shown that it does not reduce recidivism any more than traditional forms of incarceration (Bourque, et. al., 1996; Mackenzie, 1994; Bennett 1995; Gendreau and Pappozzi, 1995; Sharp, 1995; Simons, 1994; Souryal and Mackenzie, 1994; Keenan, et. al., 1994)? The most obvious answer is that boot camps have been more cost effective than traditional forms of incarceration. Should efficiency be *the* reason for continuing the research and development of new forms of corrections, especially in the case of juveniles? At least on the surface, it seems this is the case with the boot camp.

The research into and development of new forms of corrections is at least an implicit recognition that the more traditional forms of corrections are not sufficiently dealing with offenders, and it is an explicit recognition that they are costing too much. Thus efficiency and efficacy are the major concerns of corrections. What then does the continuation of a program shown not to be any more effective than existing methods of corrections say about the de facto goals of those in charge of corrections? Clearly they have little real concern for whether their programs can actually be rehabilitative and improve the lives of those whom they affect. This is true at least in relation to their most pressing concern: efficiency.

This is especially troubling considering it is taking place in the juvenile justice system. For this is one of the last places in society where an institution involved in dealing with those who cannot or have not “adjusted to the system” is supposed to be concerned with “helping” the individual; rehabilitation is still one of the stated goals of the juvenile justice system. To be sure, it is also one of the “stated” goals of the juvenile boot camp. There is doubt in my mind, however, whether this is one of the actual goals, let alone whether it is possible in this environment. I will grant that giving the juveniles life skills is a noble and attainable goal (although at least as effective without the boot camp); however, this will not change deviant behavior. The method proposed to do this is to “strip the juveniles” of all their previously socialized norms, values, and resultant action, and to resocialize them so that they have respect for authority and discipline. . . all in a three-month period. So the boot camp advocates say.

If this method so far has not lowered recidivism, how can it be expected to somehow work in the future? Is there to be developed more effective ways of teaching respect for authority and discipline? Using the boot camp model, this would entail more authoritative authority figures using stricter discipline and tougher training. So the only way to reach the juveniles through this method would be to make the boot camp environment even more structured and disciplined so the newly socialized juveniles can take their new attitudes that worked so well in this highly structured environment back out into the “real” world where they are supposed to know better than to succumb to the forces everywhere that “corrupted them” in the first place. Three months of a highly structured lifestyle under the direct control of very authoritative figures will presumably prepare them for a life in an environment that does not even closely resemble the one in which they were just as intensively socialized to live, one in which there is nothing even closely resembling the extreme structure they just left.

Is cost-efficiency the only way to explain the emergence of an enthusiasm for the boot camp as a mode of corrections? Jonathan Simon makes a very convincing argument that the boot camp as a method of corrections is a form of appealing to the “willful nostalgia” of the public. Simon notes several problems with the boot camp and the criminal justice system in general, concluding, “[I]t has been

difficult to identify any model behind penal strategies other than that kind of anti-model described by fiscal considerations and managerialism” (1995, p. 34), and “The penal boot camp is lacking in any real-world referents. Indeed, what referents it does have are self-consciously fabricated images of the past that characterize the mode of willful nostalgia” (1995, p. 36).⁶

Simon reaches the conclusion that the components of the boot camp are a collection of symbolic gestures, “to be consumed as nostalgia not only by the public, but also by politicians and correctional administrators” (Simon, 1995, p. 41). It invokes a willful nostalgia through a series of images referenced from popular culture. As Mark Osler (1991: 34) perceptively puts it:

The lure of shock incarceration is particularly acute in an age in which the primary medium of mass communication has become the sound bite. Video images of drill instructors two inches from an inmate's face, a team of inmates clearing brush, and reveille at 4 a.m. cater to 'popular desires' for a quick fix to crime through harsh punishment, discipline, and deterrence (quoted in Simon, 1995, pp. 28-29).

While the boot camp embraces the “therapeutic ideal,” it is not able to actually provide “therapeutic time” because of its brevity.⁷ Moreover, this brevity is a defining feature of the boot

⁶ Simon differentiates between classical nostalgia and willful nostalgia in the following way: “Although nostalgia may at times represent a serious effort to move forward by moving backwards, the kind of nostalgia evidenced by the boot camp is a ‘willful’ nostalgia that not only tolerates, but also thrives on, a misrecognition of the past it evokes. . . It reinforces complacency with the present and inertia against any real change” (p. 42).

⁷According to Simon, rehabilitative techniques, which the boot camp employs, are not the same as therapeutic time, which is time that is therapy oriented and devoted to helping the individual. This is as opposed to retributive time with a goal being accountability. The time that youths are in boot camps, between 90 (at the Custer Youth Corrections Center) and 180 days, is not enough time for a program
(continued...)

camp, and also a part of its nostalgic appeal that proposes to transform the wayward boy “into a worthy vessel of American manhood in a period of some weeks” (Simon, 1995, p.41); however, this brevity precludes any possibility for real rehabilitation of the offender or change in the structure of the boot camp to adequately give therapeutic time, because cost efficiency is one of the major attributes of the boot camp. Thus, any real change would undermine two of the major reasons for the boot camps’ popularity.

The final section of this paper includes a direct socialist humanist critique of the boot camp. Starting with a critical analysis at the macro level and proceeding to show the effects of macro-level phenomena on individuals, it is possible to end up with a micro level analysis.

The consensus paradigm in general, and the dominant ideology of capitalist society specifically, can be seen as valuing competition, and, thus, valuing those who emerge as the “winners” of competitive situations. Hence, capitalist society seeks to find and nurture the “best and brightest” in the society. This results in the relegation of those individuals and groups who are not in leading positions in society (those without power or those not immediately indicating the potential to be) to a second-class, subordinate position. They are socialized into menial, marginal, rank-and-file positions in society. This results in necessarily dividing individuals and groups into positions that are superordinate and subordinate, powerful and powerless, dominant and dominated, bourgeois and proletarian, man and woman, adult and child, white and nonwhite. To say nothing of the oppressive, exploitative, brutal, and alienating effects that this situation has on the groups who are in the latter position, we can proceed with this argument to show that the boot camp is a continuation of this divisionary tendency of capitalist society and the consensus paradigm.

This division of individuals and groups can be seen as

(...continued)

devoted to therapy (1995, p. 40).

occurring earliest with the socialization of gender roles. Borrowing from radical and socialist feminism is useful here for its ideas about this as the fundamental basis of domination. As Lengermann and Niebrugge write, "Not only is patriarchy historically the first structure of domination and submission, but it continues as the most pervasive and enduring system of inequality, the basic societal model of domination (Lerner, 1986). Through participation in patriarchy, men learn how to hold other human beings in contempt, to see them as nonhuman, and to control them. Within patriarchy, men see and women learn what subordination looks like" (in Ritzer, 1996, p. 462).

This division is continued in schools. Although there may be other places and ways in which this division occurred temporally before the school was developed as an institution, it has manifested itself in them. The children who show the earliest signs of ability and potential are given all of the attention and rewards. They are put into honors classes and become the focus of the teacher's energy. Other students are left in the background, thought of and treated as if they are not as smart, nor as worthy of attention. This, of course, may not happen in all schools (or even very many) or not exactly in this way; however, there is great potential for division of children along various lines under the guise of ability including divisions in perceived ability, sex, race, ethnic group, class, actual ability, and many other indicators. Moreover, with the emphasis of the dominant ideology on competition and valuing the best and the structure of our patriarchal society patterning dominant/subordinate relationships and social inequality, it is highly likely that a division of individuals and groups within the school will develop to some degree.

This separation of individuals in schools and the resultant differential treatment and disproportionate attention to some and not others is, in fact, necessary for capitalist society to function. There must be many relatively or completely uneducated and unskilled people to form the working class (and surplus labor), and especially in advanced capitalism there will be a necessary marginal class (see Apter, 1971, ch. 3).

The boot camp can be seen as a continuation of this division

in society. There must be superordinates and subordinates; there must be people who are functional and indispensable to capitalism and those who are not—the marginal class. The juvenile boot camp is a channel for the marginalization of certain children in society. A review of the statistics shows that middle to upper class children are much less likely to be sentenced to programs like the boot camp—at least relative to lower class children—or in fact to any form of institutionalization (except maybe one of the better, and more expensive, drug treatment centers). Lower class youths are overrepresented in the justice system; however, self-report research shows that middle to upper class children are just as likely to be involved in delinquent behavior (Short and Nye, Gold, and Williams, cited in Siegel and Senna, 1997, pp. 60-1).

Children who have parents who care and who have resources are much more likely to be steered away from programs like the boot camp. The children which the boot camp and similar programs attract are lower class children whose parents do not care and/or do not have resources. The boot camp is an excellent way to marginalize these children and give them two choices. They can take to the “rehabilitation” and be well prepared for a life in the military. This country can always use more rank-and-file enlistees (for it is its military power that has been responsible for its major economic and industrial growth and its status as a world power). Or if they do not respond so well to their shock incarceration experience and continue their ways, they are likely to end up in prison.

As we have seen, the rehabilitational goal of the boot camp—being a stated ideal, but an unlikely to impossible realization in the 90-day period—has been reduced to an incidental by-product if it were to occur, overshadowed by the cost effectiveness to be gained. If any rehabilitation occurs, that is good; if not, it is still cheaper than incarceration. Even if the “treatment” works, it will not give juveniles independence and confidence in themselves to develop and mature, to empower them to live in a society in which there are many problems and inequalities. It will only empower individuals to function (i.e., have respect for authority, discipline, and self-esteem) in a highly structured environment that is only found in the military. The boot camp socializes them to fill one role

in society, sacrificing their individuality and independence for the society, to become a member of the group that are the defenders of Democracy and the ideals of unquestioning respect for authority, freedom (to compete), and self-discipline.

The rationale behind the boot camp, and the majority of methods to deal with crime and deviance that are developed within a capitalist framework (and, more generally, a consensus paradigm) come from the assumption that the criminal or deviant was not properly socialized. The social system *could* function in an orderly, stable fashion; however, there are individuals and groups that act contrary to the needs of the society (the needs of those in control of the society). Thus, the way to deal with them is to properly socialize them through more forms of social control.

Yet capitalist society is characterized by power/dependency relationships in every sector of life, necessary for its proper functioning. How can you (re)socialize people to accept a subordinate position (usually many subordinate positions)? Because some people may be superordinate in certain roles, they may accept their subordinate status in other roles. In capitalism, however, there will always be people who are subordinate in every aspect of their life. There will always be people who will not accept this and will rebel in various ways. Therefore, there will always be crime in capitalism.

Still, the boot camp seeks to (re)socialize delinquents anyway in an environment with no real-world referents. Resocialize them to what? A society that values only the best and brightest, the most able, but by no means all human beings. A society in which few have the power, and many are poor and without power or resources. A society in which they can see more negative than positive. As Paul Goodman aptly states, “[P]erhaps there has *not* been a failure of communication. Perhaps the social message has been communicated clearly to the young men and is unacceptable” (1960, p. 11).

What can this intensive resocialization in a situation of extreme power/dependency—an ultimately pure dominant/subordinate relationship—really teach the children? Socialist feminist theory can provide an answer. The shock incarceration

Vidal: A Radical Critique of Juvenile Boot Camps: A Critical Analysis of program can teach youths the intricate workings of that very relationship. If they also learn the respect for authority that they are intensively socialized to learn, i.e., if the boot camp "succeeds," then they are well on their way to an existence that no human deserves. While the feminist description of this existence was originally meant to apply to the role into which women are socialized, it can be applied to the life of any individual or group that is part of the oppressed and powerless have-not segment of society. The environment and socialization process of the juvenile boot camp actively perpetuates this type of relationship and is a continuation of the structure of society that causes alienation and powerlessness. That is, the boot camp is a continuation of the negativity that affects many of the juveniles that end up in the justice system who are "from childhood on, limited and maimed, so that they can move into their adult roles and in those roles 'dwindle' from full humanness into mindless, dependent, subconsciously depressed beings" (Lengermann and Niebrugge, in Ritzer, 1996, pp. 450-451).

If the juveniles do not "learn" the new values that the boot camp attempts to resocialize them to accept, with what do they leave? They will still have an understanding of the dominant/subordinate relationship, a part of their shock incarceration experience that they *will* learn. If they do not learn to be submissive, then they learn to be dominant. They learn that, if all else fails, their drill instructors—and their government—attempt(s) to get what they (it) want(s) by establishing a clearly and decisively authoritarian relationship. Would it be very hard for them to see a message telling them something along the lines of "force will get you what you want?" The boot camp is a no-win situation for the juveniles.

These children *do* need some values. They need independence, confidence in themselves, and a humanitarian ethic. They need to value human life—theirs and others. They need to believe in themselves and not in their drill instructor telling them what to do. In the boot camp, they are taught that they are equal to the other "delinquents" who wear the same fatigues as they do, have the same shaved heads, and are simultaneously stripped of their identities. This type of environment may bring pride and feelings of true equality and membership to individuals who *voluntarily* join the

armed forces. Individuals who become members of the whole group, drill instructors and all others above them included, individuals who receive medals and honors for their achievements; but, while it may look the same from the outside, this shock incarceration program is not the same. The juveniles are members of a stigmatized, delinquent group and are separate from and unequal to their drill instructors and others who are "above" them. Respect for authority translates into respect for those who are above and different from them. This is not respect for human life. It is respect for people who are in positions in which these juveniles will most likely never be; people who, the juveniles are made to feel, are better than them. Respect for human life is much more likely to teach them not to steal and harm others, not to victimize. Respect for the lives of only those who are above them cannot do this. The self-discipline that is taught in this environment will teach them that they are bad, and that they have to restrain themselves to be good citizens. They need to be taught independence and given positive feedback, so they understand that they can function in the society as *equal* members. The boot camp only serves to perpetuate dependency and subordination. It tells children that they are bad, and need others to help (or make) them be good.

In conclusion, a capitalist society is not able to actually deal with the root causes of crime because crime is a result of the structure of the capitalist state. Therefore, the efforts of a capitalist society can only deal with criminals. While some forms of corrections (particularly for adults) are explicitly designed to be retributive punishment, others (mostly for juveniles), like the boot camp, are said to be rehabilitative in nature. The reality of the situation is that the juvenile boot camp is a wolf in sheep's clothing. This wolf is as repressive as it is predatory. It is predatory and repressive because it actively devalues human life. It is a perpetuation of a pattern of dominant/subordinate relationships in society. It teaches dependence, submission, and respect for *some* human beings, but not *all* human beings. Some humans are worth more, some less. It is implicitly shown to the children in the boot camp that they are worth less. The real function of the boot camp is to perpetuate existing exploitation, oppression, and alienation.

If a 90-day intensive (re)socialization program *can* work, it is not in the negative environment of the boot camp. Human beings are not like old fences. They cannot be stripped down and repainted in a number of days. It is absurd to propose that you can strip years worth of identity and socialization away in 90 days, let alone give them an entirely new one.

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