

Resistance as a Social Drama: A Study of Change-Oriented Encounters¹

Daniel A. McFarland
Stanford University

Resistance is a change-oriented process that follows certain stereotyped sequences of behaviors. These sequences are promulgated by intentional actors who cue cultural forms (rituals) in order to guide interaction. This process can be understood as a social drama composed of four stages: breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration. Using interviews and ethnographic accounts of behaviors in 165 classrooms at two high schools, this article describes the nature of each stage and the strategies used by both protagonists and antagonists of change. Since social dramas are disruptive episodes of social action, special attention is paid to the potential they have for transforming the social order, thereby affecting micro- to macrolevel change.

INTRODUCTION

Much of the literature on student resistance describes it as a discrete event, and scholars orient their research toward identifying attitudes and social relations that spark its occurrence (Stinchcombe 1964; Gurr 1970; Cusick 1973; Willis 1977; Swidler 1979; Apple 1979; Giroux 1983; McLaren 1986; Cummins 1986; Ogbu 1987; Alpert 1991; Jenkins 1995; Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; McFarland 2001). A great deal of fruitful research has identified various mechanisms that are associated with and cause individual and collective forms of resistance. However, the empirical methods utilized often require the researcher to abstract defiant acts from their social and temporal context and to predict their occurrence independent of one another. As a result, the *process* of interaction that follows incipient acts of resistance gets overlooked.

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In this article, I analyze the process of interaction that follows incipient acts of resistance and, in particular, the dramatic episodes where actors make strategic attempts to change definitions of the situation. I find that dramatic episodes of resistance are not chaotic, but ordered, processes and that many are social dramas with a recognizable story or narrative structure (Turner 1969, 1974). While this narrative structure partly defines stage-appropriate behaviors, the drama's progression is ultimately reliant on the definitional claims actors successfully impose on the evolving social situation (Turner 2002, p. 247). Hence, this article's analyses find that resistance is a structured process that is variably enacted through the strategic framing efforts of actors (Giddens 1986; Sewell 1992).

Prior sociological research on the structure of interaction rituals (Goffman 1967; Turner 1969, 1974; Collins 1981; Turner 2002) and the process of collective action (Snow, Zurcher, and Peters 1981; Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982; Snow et al. 1986; Gamson 1990; Benford and Hunt 1992; Tarrow 1993; Gould 1995, 1999; Diani 1996; Benford and Snow 2000) has been a useful guide in my analyses of resistance episodes. On the one hand, research on the structure of interaction rituals offers some explanation for the repeating patterns and sequence of behaviors seen in resistance episodes. Turner's work on social dramas helps explain why resistance episodes are revolving situations that have a recognizable narrative of deconstruction and reconstruction (Turner 1969, 1974). Likewise, Goffman's work on interaction rituals helps explain how various stages of these larger narratives are cued. Microrituals of aggressive facework commence dramas; character contests constitute the heart of them; and remedial interchanges and role-distance efforts become routes of closure (Goffman 1961*b*, 1967, 1971). As such, the social drama is the larger game at play, while interaction rituals act as microlevel guideposts in this process. On the other hand, social movement research on interaction processes helps explain the strategic framing efforts of actors who are embroiled in resistance episodes (Snow et al. 1981; Snow et al. 1986; Gamson 1990; Benford and Hunt 1992; Benford and Snow 2000). Even though dramas have larger constraining narratives and interaction rituals cue sequences of interaction, the social situation requires some consensus or the cued series of actions will never take hold. Strategic framing efforts aimed at undermining or building audience consensus (i.e., frame contestation and frame alignment) are a key mechanism driving the progression of the situational drama (Fligstein 2001). By weaving together these perspectives, structure and agency are interrelated, and together they help describe the process of how resistance arises such that some episodes end in social reproduction, while others result in more dramatic social change (Giddens 1986; Sewell 1992).

Before resistance is described as a social drama, it helps to have a

working definition of “resistance.” In the sociological literature, the term “resistance” has been overused and is now applied to everyday acts without any description of how these everyday acts are related to serious forms of collective rebellion (Rubin 1996; Scott 1990; McFarland 2001). In order to overcome these problems, this article conceptualizes resistance as an interpersonal process arising in actual social settings. Both weak and strong forms of opposition are described and interrelated such that mobilization potential can even be seen in everyday acts of passive nonconformity. This article views *resistant acts as a type of nonconformist behavior that questions the legitimacy of the current social order. Resistant acts challenge the definition of the situation and, in more dramatic instances, attempt to supplant it through appeals to a different normative or cognitive framework of interaction.*

Serious acts of resistance attempt to change the social order, and they commence a larger process that resembles a social drama (Turner 1969; 1974, pp. 23–59; 1982, p. 9; McLaren 1986). Social dramas are volatile episodes of social action that erupt forth from the otherwise smooth surface of routine social life (Turner 1969, p. 9; Mische and White 1998). They are potential turning points in social situations where the social order gets deconstructed, debated, and reformed. Social dramas resemble narratives in that they have discernible plot structures or stages that resemble beginnings, middles, and ends (Turner 1969, p. 68). Actors recognize this process and attempt to cue different stages and plot structures that define the larger social drama, thereby directing it down various sequential paths of their choosing. Each stage and plot structure has an affinity with particular interaction rituals that call forth stereotyped sequences of behavior from participants (Goffman 1967; Collins 1981; Turner 2002). Careful study of social dramas and their compositional rituals of interaction reveal that the structure of the interaction process itself places moral imperatives on participant behaviors that potentially transcend the influence of causal variables prior research has identified. Regardless of the compositional actors’ attributes and attitudes, and regardless of the network resources and grievances that persist, acts of resistance and rebellion conform to certain stereotyped sequences of behavior that promulgate social dramas to recognized conclusions. In short, this article describes how actors are propelled through stages of the social drama, such that the social order is deconstructed and then either reproduced in its old form or transformed into a new one.

SOCIAL DRAMAS OF RESISTANCE

The empirical dimension of this article is student resistance to learning. When students resist learning, they symbolically invert cultural forms in subtle and dramatic ways, such that the norms and pre-established codes of conduct in the school and classroom are distorted or undermined. As such, resistance is an *oppositional form of nonconformity* that can commence drawn-out episodes of conflict, which often span a succession of interactions. This conflict has the potential to change the normative pattern of interaction in a classroom and school. Such resistant behavior can be expressed in passive and active forms. Passive resistance is a tacit or indirect subversion of the normative codes of schooling (Goffman 1961a; Scott 1990). In contrast, active resistance is an open attempt to subvert and undermine teacher instruction and the norms established by school authorities. Therefore, passive resistance is at most an expression of mal-content and critique (i.e., diagnostic framing), while active resistance entails an open effort to reject or alter the situation (i.e., prognostic framing; Benford and Snow 2000).² *Serious forms of resistance*, then, are *change-oriented efforts that galvanize the social order and commence a dramatic series of events*.

When acts of resistance breach classroom affairs and demobilize participation, they commence an extended *social drama* that resembles a story with discernible phases and stages of development and resolution. Social dramas of resistance first entail a phase of *ceremonial deconstruction*, where “students are transformed into combatants and antagonists: hidden grudges and tensions are mobilized for the purpose of rupturing the cultural axiomatic rules of the school and subverting the grammars of mainstream classical discourse” (McLaren 1986, p. 83). Dramas of resistance also entail a phase of *ceremonial reconstruction*, where meanings are reconstructed such that a new agreement and definition of the situation is formed and actors know how to go on (Van Gennep 1960). As such, social dramas are change-oriented processes wherein an actor’s understanding of what is going on is undermined, wrought over, and remade. The deconstruction phase of the social drama can be further reduced to stages of breaching and crisis, and the reconstruction phase can be reduced to stages of redress and reintegration (Turner 1974, 1982). The aim of the *breach* is to demobilize the current situation and to posit the resistance’s ideological position. Hence, resisters adopt aggressive maneuvers that undermine class tasks, question teacher roles, and attempt to instantiate a

² Goffman makes a similar distinction between disruptive and contained adjustments (1961a, p. 199). Disruptive and contained adjustments correspond to active and passive forms of resistance.

new sociocultural order that is either an altered version of the prior academic framework or another framework altogether (Goffman 1967).

In many regards, resistant acts are student efforts at frame contestation (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 625). In order to contest and breach academic affairs, students adopt a standpoint or interpretive mode (of, say, the academic framework or the social framework) and then attack current affairs from that perspective. Often, this critique, inversion, or profanation of the current social order is accompanied by an alternative interpretation of events that either reorients the academic framework or jettisons that interpretive model altogether for another (e.g., a social framework and a person framework). In this manner, students shift the flow of resources and mobilize participation in directions different from those the teacher desires.

After an initial breach, it is possible for the problem to implode on the resister or for it to expand as it strikes a chord in the audience. In the latter case, there is a mounting *crisis*. The breach escalates as one claim of unfairness snowballs into a series of collective remarks about competence, cruelty, style, and so on. Bystanders begin to take sides so as to support the rule-breaker or the target of resistant actions (Turner 1982, p. 108), and the conflict expands as latent tensions manifest and old wounds are reopened. Matters can even escalate to the point of becoming “coextensive with some dominant cleavage in the widest set of relevant social relations to which the conflicting or antagonistic parties belong” (Turner 1974, p. 39). In a crisis, the hidden intrigues and motives of teachers and students are exposed, and the true state of affairs is revealed—there is something “rotten” in the situation. The public crisis now has liminal characteristics because actors no longer don masks of their academic roles and they no longer pretend “schooling” is actually happening. Interaction fails, and the crisis cannot be wished away.

In the crisis, the social drama has reached a turning point as representatives of order are pressed to grapple with the situation. To limit the spread of the crisis, key actors of either party perform *redressive actions* that direct how the classroom situation is to be reconstructed. Key actors have legitimate authority in some form; they are usually teachers, principals, or popular students representing peer concerns. Efforts to contain the breach and dispel the crisis are often instigated by the teacher, who uses official or personal authority to get students back on task (Waller 1932; Metz 1978). At the redressive stage, protagonists and antagonists use rituals of aggressive facework and engage in character contests as they seek to win others to their cause (Goffman 1967). Teachers use rituals of frame contestation to demobilize student resistance, and they use rituals of frame alignment to draw students back into academic affairs (e.g., amplifying grades, costs of transgression, relevance of tasks, etc.). As the

crisis becomes more extensive and serious, teachers use increasingly radical efforts at framing in an effort to co-opt students. In like fashion, students adopt a series of framing efforts to counter the teacher and to mobilize participants in the direction of their definitional claims. Given these competing efforts at redress, it is not uncommon for a crisis to escalate even further and eventually to make the annihilation or removal of some party a necessary condition for the conflict's resolution (Turner 1974, pp. 39–41). It is also possible that the drama may stall between crisis and redress as responses get debated and disparately received.

Eventually, the drama reaches a final stage (see fig. 1) where participants either *reintegrate* the situation or recognize that an irreparable *schism* or a state of dissonance exists between the contesting parties (Turner 1974, pp. 41–42).³ In reintegration, certain frame alignment and frame contestation strategies succeed in convincing class members how the social situation should progress. In most cases of reintegration, the teacher wins and the prior social order is *reproduced*, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of the prior social order. In such instances, the student opposition commences a remedial interchange by acknowledging its failure and complying with teacher demands (Goffman 1967). However, this reintegration is often accomplished through displays of humor and complaint that enable the resistance to save face. In other instances, participants will *negotiate* a resolution such that combative parties become allies, asymmetric ties between teachers and student become reciprocal, and status differences are rendered more egalitarian. In such cases, the contesting parties will either engage in open negotiations by offering concessions and compromises aimed at mutual gain, or they will engage in closed negotiations where parties avoid offering concessions or apologies and only begrudgingly compromise (Woods 1978). It is also possible for the student resistance to win and to create a social *revolution* in the classroom social order by transforming the classroom situation as planned. In these cases, it is the teacher who begrudgingly acknowledges the failure of the prescribed academic affairs, and the teacher's action is subsumed by the mores students define.

Most every social drama of student resistance is resolved within a single class period. However, once enacted each of these social dramas can become an agreed-upon pathway for conflict resolution. Participants recall how similar problems were collectively managed in the past, and they invoke the memory of those narratives to repeat or further their academic or resistant efforts. Hence, even though dramas have immediate resolutions, they may be repeatedly enacted and invoked as a means to more

³ Fig. 1 is discussed further below.

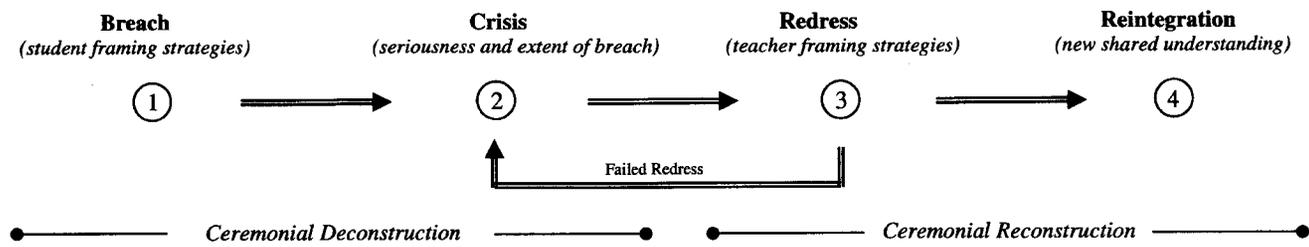


FIG. 1.—Resistance as social drama

substantial, long-term change in the social order. Ad hoc narratives become important resources for future resistance episodes.

Having given a general introduction to resistance as a social drama, I now describe the study and offer some conceptualization of the different interpretive standpoints from which actors present various ritual maneuvers. The remainder of the article describes each stage of resistance dramas using ethnographic evidence. First, I describe how *breaches* are made from certain standpoints and presented via passive and active expressions of resistance like joking, complaining, challenging, and rebelling. Second, I describe how some breaches quickly implode on the resister, while others become a mounting *crisis* that expands and escalates well beyond the initial resistant act. Third, I explain how actors *redress* various crises through frame contestation and frame alignment procedures geared at undermining one perspective and elevating another. And finally, I describe how accepted forms of redress *reintegrate* the classroom in a variety of ways to resolve the social drama.

DATA AND METHODS

My description of student resistance is drawn primarily from ethnographic work in classrooms at two high schools in 1996 and 1997. If the empirical focus is honed to a select number of schools and classroom settings, then a rich description of the resistance process is acquired. During my fieldwork, I observed many social conflicts between teachers and students and found them to utilize various strategies of action and behavioral tacks to manage classroom situations. Breaches of academic affairs were seldom an isolated event but were part of a larger process of reproduction, negotiation, and change. Most of these social dramas were completed in a single class period, but some took only several turns at talk, while still others spanned several class days before the dramatic episode was resolved. When each class came to a new agreement on how to proceed collectively, the social drama was ended.

Settings

Classroom behavior was observed in two high schools. One high school, Magnet High, is an elite magnet school located in an inner-city neighborhood of a large Midwestern metropolitan area.⁴ Magnet High is an integrated high school composed of approximately 900 high-ability students (grades 8–12) from predominantly lower-income households. The

⁴ In order to protect confidentiality, all names have been changed to pseudonyms.

school is composed of 35% African-American students, 6% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 57% white. Approximately 25% of the students are eligible for financial assistance with lunch. While heterogeneous in ethnic background, Magnet is rather homogeneous in terms of student ability. Magnet is an elite school that students enter only when they apply and achieve exceptional scores on the entrance exam.

The second high school, Rural High, is over 500 miles away in a rural town of 17,000 residents. Rural High is a traditional rural school that is racially homogeneous and is composed of around 1,600 students (grades 9–12) from predominantly lower- to middle-income households (employed primarily in agricultural and blue-collar jobs). Around 10% of the school's population is eligible for financial assistance with lunch. In contrast to Magnet, Rural is ethnically homogeneous (97% Caucasian) but heterogeneous in terms of student abilities. A substantial number of students enter Rural High with mathematics test scores two or three grade levels below the ninth grade. Magnet and Rural represent very distinct learning environments, but they nonetheless have surprising similarities in terms of student and teacher behaviors. The social drama of resistance is not specific to impoverished inner-city schools but is a process arising in most every school and every classroom.

Classroom Observations

At each school, classroom observations focused on tenth and twelfth grade core subjects (e.g., English, math, history, and science), with a secondary focus on performing arts and foreign-language classes. An effort was made to span course ability levels when offered. The tenth and twelfth grades were observed because they had been the focus of prior studies (Bidwell et al. 1992), and it was also apparent that a single researcher could not observe the entire population of students at both high schools. Eventually, observation was focused on 25 classrooms over the course of the year, spanning an average 14 class periods. However, the larger observation sample consisted of 165 separate classrooms observed an average of 4.2 class periods each, and spanning over 2,000 different students. Table 1 displays how these classes are distributed across subjects.⁵

In the observations, I acted as a nonparticipatory observer. Such an approach was necessary to get at resistant behaviors that usually arose

⁵ Throughout the body of this article, I use a labeling convention for classrooms, such as “re633.” The first letter pertains to the school—Rural (r) or Magnet (m). The second letter pertains to the course subject—e = English, m = math, s = science, h = social science or history, and f = foreign language. The first two digits pertain to the teacher, and the last digit pertains to the class period. Thus, re663 indicates Rural High, English, teacher 63, class period 3. Other codes refer to specific individuals.

TABLE 1
SAMPLE OF OBSERVED CLASSES

Subject	Magnet High	Rural High	Total
English	16	27	43
Mathematics	14	21	35
Science	10	25	35
History	14	15	29
Foreign language ...	9	9	18
Performing arts	2	2	4
Visual arts	0	1	1
Total	65	100	165

as soon as classroom participants became used to my presence.⁶ My observation notes used a shorthand format to record interaction patterns (McFarland 1999), segments of different activity routines (lecture, recitation, discussion, group work, etc.; see Stodolsky 1988), seating locations, and streaming accounts of dialogue during conflict episodes. Upon arriving home each day, I used these observation notes to develop more extensive field notes on classroom affairs.

Surveys

Each semester I also administered surveys to teachers and students with classroom-specific questions. The surveys were administered to the 25 focal classes and drew a 95% response rate from both students and teachers. Among other questions, these surveys asked teachers to report how task or socially engaged each student was and to identify pupils who were withdrawn, class clowns, or disruptive. Similarly, students were asked to report their opinions about the teacher, the subject, its instruction, and what kinds of behavior they and their peers engaged in during class. These surveys enabled me to see the range of subjective perspectives that students and teachers had on classroom affairs and on the behavioral patterns within them.

Interviews

In April and May of 1997, I interviewed 27 teachers and over 140 students from the focal settings I observed all school year. Teacher and student

⁶ In theory, video data would enable me to develop reliable codes and formal tests of my observations on social dramas. However, current video equipment fails to capture the entire classroom situation and can only be focused on small sets of individuals. In addition, video equipment would be intrusive and lessen the occurrence of resistance.

interviews were conducted to acquire participants' descriptions of the classroom situation and explanations for the behavior of various actors within them. In particular, I used interviews to check participants' survey responses and my own observations of classroom resistance episodes. In each interview, I used seating charts of the classroom and students' completed surveys as props to guide the conversation. As such, data sources were triangulated so as to focus on problematic individuals and conflict episodes that arose within classrooms.

Methods

It is important to reiterate that the empirical question of this article is not why students resist, but *how* they resist. How students resist, or how dramas of resistance proceed, is primarily described through qualitative data drawn from teacher and student interviews, as well as from in-depth classroom observations. From such material, I describe how actors move through stages of a social drama such that a deconstruction of academic affairs occurs either to be reproduced in its old form or to be transformed into a new one. Through ethnographic examples, I describe how definitions of the situation are fought over, negotiated, and won. While no single example fully characterizes a classroom situation or the essence of social dramas, they are emblematic of social actions consistently observed across settings, making for reasonable classifications applicable to future hypothesis testing (Weber 1949).⁷

STANDPOINTS OF RESISTANCE

In order to understand the process of resistance, it is important to recognize the *standpoints*, or *frameworks of interaction*, that participants adopt in classroom settings. Frameworks of interaction are interpretive modes of (and for) action whose definition is anchored in particular activities, roles, relationships, forms and contents of communication, and status conceptions (Goffman 1974; McFarland 2003). As Turner argues, "When a person starts thinking about 'what can we talk about,' 'do I dare broach this,' 'how should I relate to these people,' and so on, they are consciously pondering frames" (2002, pp. 157–58). Framing is a process by which actors make definitional claims and seek agreement as to what meanings to include and exclude in a social encounter.

⁷ Clearly this work is not a random sample of resistance dramas or classrooms more generally. Hence, making generalizations is difficult. The aim of this article is to develop a theory of the resistance process with empirical evidence and to present ideas on how such a theory can be systematically tested in the future.

Most streams of classroom activity are interpreted from an *academic framework* of interaction. Actors use the academic framework to make sense of the ongoing stream of events as “doing schoolwork.” Interpretations from the academic frame are anchored in certain organizational characteristics, such as educational goals of social control and learning (Waller 1932); teacher-student roles (Bidwell 1965); classroom tasks of lecture, recitation, seatwork, student presentations, and so on (Stodolsky 1988); forms of talk, such as turn taking and teacher monopolies on directive and informative speech (Mehan 1979); subject-matter contents of math, science, and so on (Haroutunian-Gordon 1991); and status structures like zero-sum achievement rankings (Coleman 1959; Michaels 1977).

Resistant students target and oppose the current academic framework from at least two interpretive standpoints. First, actors can adopt the academic framework and challenge it *from within*. This type of opposition is best understood as a form of *mutiny*, where the actors adopt the same framework but delegitimize the author and task that guides academic endeavors. Hence, this first standpoint uses the interpretive frame against itself, so that students challenge teachers as inept, unfair, or incorrect and tasks as ill-specified or unrelated to learning objectives. Roles and activities are characterized as failing to live up to the expectations of those participating in the academic framework, and as a result, the resister contends matters should be redirected, reconstructed, or jettisoned altogether.

Second, actors can rebel against teachers and tasks *from a standpoint outside* the academic framework. This form of resistance is more an act of *piracy* than mutiny since external meanings and interpretive frames are brought to bear as standpoints from which to undermine academic efforts and redirect collective action. At least two external frameworks of interaction are adopted as standpoints from which to breach streams of academic activity in the high school classroom: *social frames* and *person frames*. The *social framework* has a distinct logic and set of organizational anchors that differentiate it from academic modes of interaction (akin to “street state” in McLaren [1986]): the social framework entails friendship roles and peer relations (Giordano 1995); talk activities of collaborative storytelling, gossip, and ritual teasing (Eder 1988; Eder and Enke 1991; Eder 1991, 1995); rapid, egalitarian, overlapping turns of talk (Goodwin 1980); references to adolescent styles and nonschool topics like movies, television, music, dating, gossip, parties, shopping, and sports (Sieber 1979, pp. 227–31; Doyle 1986, p. 397); and a status system that rewards young people for following group norms (Homans [1951] 1992; Sherif et al. 1988). When adopting the social frame as an oppositional standpoint, young people generally claim that a teacher lacks style (e.g., as fat, not socially “cool”), that friendship loyalty and clique endeavors eclipse that

of schooling, that topics of the adolescent social world are more important than academic work, and that immediate social goals (e.g., gaming, getting dates, attending dances and parties, etc.) are more highly valued than those of the classroom. Adoption of the social frame alters the way in which actors perceive and react to ongoing events and can lead persons who are still in the academic frame to become uncertain as to what is going on in the classroom setting.⁸

A slightly distinct standpoint is that of the *person framework*. Here, the actor does not adopt the role of student or friend but takes the standpoint of a person independent of the roles and institutionalized activities being performed (Turner 2002, p. 156; Goffman 1961b).⁹ The person framework is anchored in rituals of facework that establish the self as something ceremonially protected, presented, and revered (Goffman 1967, 1974, 1983). Oppositional stands from this framework emphasize the rights of persons, character issues, and personal attributes that distinguish the individual from that person's roles and social identities (Gordon 1976). From this framework, students will take offense on personal grounds independent of their obligations to friendship and student roles (e.g., it offends their character when a teacher thinks they are lying). Other frames exist as well, such as cultural frames affixed to categorical or corporate units of analysis and activity frames at microlevels of talk (Tannen and Wallat 1987; Turner 2002, p. 157). But most of classroom life can be characterized by the standpoints of academic, social, and person frames, and therefore these standpoints can be realistically applied.¹⁰ From each of these frameworks there arise developed scripts or codes that become the standpoint

⁸ It is possible for frames to overlap as multiple simultaneous streams of activity persist in a setting (see McFarland 1999).

⁹ I believe the person frame is a more foundational framework to which interactants often "parachute" when role frames and activity frames fall apart or become problematic. At the very least, person frames are ubiquitous so that actors key this interpretive standpoint from a wide array of other primary frameworks. More foundational than the person frame is the natural frame of physical reality to which all actors ultimately parachute when all other frames fail them (see Goffman [1974, chap. 1] and Collins's "parachute" [1994, chap. 4]).

¹⁰ In some interaction episodes, it is difficult to distinguish whether an actor adopts the interpretive frame of the adolescent social world or that of a person concerned with issues of character, or both. Moreover, it is difficult to assess whether these vantage points are adopted in sincerity or purely on strategic grounds to maneuver the situation. Future work will investigate this, but the general point of this section remains—actors make oppositional stands from different frameworks of interaction in order to undermine academic affairs and redirect collective action.

from which arguments are presented, events interpreted, and claims staked.¹¹

RESISTANCE TO LEARNING AS A BREACH

Not all breaches or tears in the classroom situation are instances of student resistance. Different from acts of resistance are unintended deviations and intentional acts of deviance. Unintended deviations are accidental departures from the rules of tasks or talk (e.g., mistakes, misunderstandings, gaffs)—the more routine and microlevel components of the academic tasks. For example, a student may answer out of turn or the teacher may make a mistake on the board. Such unintended deviations are common occurrences in routine social life and the learning process itself. Slightly different are intentional acts of *deviance*, or subversive misbehaviors (Merton 1968, pp. 411–22). Deviant students usually hide their actions and thereby acknowledge the legitimacy of the cognitive and normative rules of the academic framework. The deviant typically seeks to escape the force of the current normative frame in order to serve his or her own interests. Hence, deviant actions like private socializing and cheating break with the normative rules of academic tasks, but they do so without opposing them. The action is aimed more at “getting by” in the system rather than aimed at changing it (Burawoy 1979).

Student resistance may seem similar to deviance when it is hidden, but the actions more closely resemble sabotage and guerilla warfare. The main distinction between deviance and resistance is that the deviant acts out of self-interest and does not try to present himself or herself as an agent of social change. In contrast, the saboteur claims to be an agent of an interpretive stand that is oppositional to the current academic framework, and this individual hides his or her actions so as to develop the opposition. Thus, student resistance is distinct from unintended deviation and intentional deviance because it is always a form of nonconformity that questions the legitimacy of the broader academic framework (i.e., class tasks,

¹¹ A parallel discussion will arise with teachers' redressive actions. They can be described as adopting the same interpretive standpoints. Teachers can use sarcasm and insults to perform mutinous breaches of adolescent social affairs during the opening segments of class time when everyone socializes. In this manner, teachers demobilize participation in a social frame and redirect student participation back onto academic routines. Teachers can also address a crisis by transforming the task into a person frame. Here, teachers jettison their roles and address the resistant students (often outside the classroom) in “heart-to-heart” conversations about the problem. Rather than confronting the adolescent on the basis of the student role, the conflict is framed in terms of persons.

formal talk, lesson contents, achievement rankings, and teacher authority).¹²

Resistance can arise in at least two forms: passive and active (McLaren 1986). Passive resistance is a tacit, indirect subversion of the normative codes of schooling and is at most an expression of malcontent and critique (i.e., diagnostic framing). Active resistance is more serious since it openly undermines the normative codes of schooling and attempts to posit a new framework of interaction on the situation (i.e., prognostic framing; Benford and Snow 2000). Hence, resistance becomes increasingly serious as it moves beyond critique to challenges and attempts to supplant the current “illegitimate ideals” with appeals to a “higher morality.” In what follows, I will give examples of these types of resistance and how they commence social dramas in classrooms.

Passive Resistance

Many acts of passive resistance manifest in classrooms as *jokes* and *complaints*.¹³ Jokes about teachers and tasks allude to the hidden transcript that the class is boring, the teacher inept, and academic affairs of no interest (Hansot 1986; Douglas 1991; McLaren 1986). Such jokes are ideological in that they invert meanings of the academic frame at the expense of the teacher and to the benefit of students. Jokes about task relevance and teacher competence make the task less serious and suggest that a better way of organizing the learning experience is possible. Jokes about a teacher’s person and style also diminish the task and teacher’s importance but from a perspective that privileges concerns of the adolescent social world.¹⁴ These jokes key the content of the academic frame and invert the meanings to illustrate the adolescent’s control of the situation (e.g., a social joke keys the task frame, as when “doing disrespect” and “being cool”; see Wieder 1974). In addition, jokes build solidarity among

¹² It may be that it is the attribution of intentional nonconformity that is a necessary condition for social dramas and not the intention of the resister as I have described. As such, it leaves open the possibility for unintended rebellions since others attribute the label to such actions, further fueling its occurrence. Future work will need to explore the implications of this point further. I thank the reviewers for this insight.

¹³ There are certainly many other forms, such as withdrawal (refusals or nonaction) and symbolic inversions in texts (such as graffiti or hidden notes). For the sake of parsimony, I overlook them here and leave it to other work to elaborate on their importance.

¹⁴ The status of academic or social roles is contingent on the character of persons occupying them. If the character of a person is undermined, then the status of their roles in either academic work (as student) or social affairs (as friend) is diminished. Hence, the person frame is somewhat more foundational to the academic and social role frames.

those “in the know.” They empower the interaction order of students by providing an outlet for their frustrations (Goffman 1983). Over time, jokes about a teacher may embolden active forms of resistance. In general, jokes about the teacher and tasks either (1) focus on academic competence (*mutiny* from within frame) or (2) unfavorably interpret behavior from a different framework altogether (*piracy* from outside the frame).

In an accelerated trigonometry class at Rural High (rm666), students found it easy to joke about their teacher’s competence, and they made jokes that eventually challenged the teacher’s legitimacy. In interviews, six different students in this class described how the teacher did problems straight out of the book and that whenever she strayed from the text she began to make mistakes. One eleventh grade student, Daren, described how he kept a tally of teacher mistakes for the entire school year (#15667)

Every time she [Mrs. G] messes up on the board or says something and corrects herself and we correct her, we give her a little counting mark. . . . I started it one day I guess early first semester. We were wonderin’ how many times she’s messed up on it, so I thought well ‘I’ll start keeping a tally.’ So we got her average per week and everything. Just something to pass the time. . . . We just really don’t like the teacher. Pretty much sums it up.

Remarks in interviews are mild compared to the notes that students sent Daren regarding the tally. These mistakes were so common that the tally entailed over 263 teacher mistakes (averaging about four mistakes a class) and 14 teacher absences in just the first semester (see fig. 2). The entire class was “in the know” about the tally.¹⁵ With each mistake, students from across the room would send a smiling glare so that Daren would be sure to make a fresh mark. In this class, students did not posit another frame of interpretation but applied the same evaluative process the teacher used for them. Their jokes about the teacher acted to distance them from the task and teacher and became a precursor to open academic complaint and challenges as the year progressed.

In many classes, students adopt the social or person framework to joke about their teacher’s appearance, mannerisms, dress, weight, and speech patterns (mm182, rm666, rs726, mm173). These jokes are stated in an effort to reveal how socially incompetent the teacher is from the looking glass of the adolescent’s social world. In some settings, the prevalence of joking and sociability between teachers and students can entail ritual teasing that seems to transgress formal roles and express greater discontent

¹⁵ The teacher confessed that Daren had a bad attitude, and she suspected he was a locus of problems in the class, but she did not mention any knowledge of the “tally.” I suspect she knew that most of the class wrote notes making fun of her.

Resistance as a Social Drama

<i>Fuck-Ups</i>		9/30/96	
4		Absent 1 day	6.25/day 25
6		Absent 9 days	1.6/day 2.5/day
8		Absent 3 days	3.6/day 41
13			5.5/day
			7.4/day 78
18			5.0 103
			4.0/day
23			4.0/day 123
27		Absent 1 day	3.25/day 136
32			5.4/day 163
35		Absent 2 days	6.0/day 181
40			3.6/day 199
44		Absent 1 day	4.5/day 217
47		Absent 3	3.7/day 228
52			5.0/day 258
53		EXAM DAY	5.0/day 263

FIG. 2.—Student’s record of teacher “mistakes.” This figure is a typewritten representation of the student’s handwritten record. Stylistic attempts have been made to preserve the look of the original.

with academic affairs (Goodwin 1980; Eder 1991). In an algebra 2 class at Magnet students began the year by making private jokes about a teacher’s weight and mumbled speech, but as they became more sociable with each other and with the teacher there were episodes of open teasing. One such open joke was played on the teacher by several girls and their clique. The girls would approach the teacher one at a time at his desk so as to ask him about the homework. The girls would feign interest in the task so as to lure Ellis, the teacher, into a private conversation and then touch him on the arm or shoulder in a privately flirtatious manner (mm182, 2/5/97). The action was followed intently by members of the clique and often accompanied by giggling and knowing looks. Moreover, it was done by several girls in a row when the teacher finally caught on and shouted, “Stop touching me!” at which point the girls’ giggles turned

into an uproar of laughter. The teacher tried to return the teasing with personal jokes about students, but he quickly found himself outwitted and outmaneuvered. His acknowledgment and use of social teasing made him a target for the entire class by associating his person more with the identity molded by the relentless tirade of student jokes and less with his official role as teacher. For this class, the social jokes set the stage for future rebellions when tasks were eventually supplanted by social affairs (see example 9, below).

Frequent jokes about the teacher and tasks will diminish the seriousness of academic affairs and open the way for students to make more bald statements of discontent. One form of such expression is to voice direct *complaints* or criticisms of tasks and teachers. Since complaints lack the humor of jokes, they make oppositional expressions less ambiguous and harder to ignore. They also leave little room for the author of the statement to avoid a face-threatening response. In spite of being direct, complaints are passive forms of resistance that merely inform the teacher of the students' different perceptions of the situation; they do not suggest ways of altering it.

Here are some brief statements of student complaint:

1. "How can I do this by tomorrow? I have a paper due!" (mm173, trigonometry)
2. "How are we to memorize all this?!" (rs641, advanced biology 2)
3. "I don't understand what we're doing?!" (rs641, advanced biology 2)
4. "You're pretty confusing Mr. Grace!" (re349, basic English 10)
5. "What are you talking about!? Man I hate this class." (mm182, algebra 2)
6. "This is stupid!" (re633, English 10, speech)
7. At a point in the lesson, the teacher scratches his fingernails on the board as an example of friction and a student exclaims, "That's pathetic, man!" (i.e., that's bad teaching) (rs699, accelerated physics)

In all these statements, the students voice discontent but almost invariably comply and complete their work. As such, many complaints and critiques are contained adjustments that do not actively breach the academic order (Goffman 1961*a*). However, when teachers are sensitive to complaints, they may adopt preventative measures and momentarily stop the learning process and redress complaints and establish greater frame alignment between teacher and students.

Complaining, then, is a form of passive resistance because it draws attention to the illegitimacy of academic affairs but does not call for their transformation. Even though complaints seldom breach academic affairs, they can create an environment wherein active forms of resistance easily

take hold and lead participants into an extended social drama. Should teachers push too hard and students complain too much, a new ideology can be openly posited as a replacement for the old order and the situational alignments of participants can be readily swayed.

Active Resistance

In comparison with passive forms of resistance, active resistance is more obscene and shocking because the actors breach academic norms and propose situational transformations. Active forms of resistance manifest as overt *challenges* and *rebellions*. *Challenges* are actions that incite disputes within the academic framework (mutiny) and often concern whether tasks or teacher-student roles are being enacted in a way that maximizes task commitment and education payoff (i.e., frame resonance disputes; Benford and Snow 2000, p. 626). Challenges are issued from within the academic framework but invert or reorder norms so as to undermine the teacher's authority and the effectiveness of the task as a medium for learning. Challenges usually characterize teachers as corrupt or inept and the classroom activities as ineffective. Moreover, challenges entail suggestions for how the teacher role and class tasks could be performed better. Hence, they go beyond complaints by breaching academic norms and calling for some type of transformation in the academic frame. Below is a set of stated challenges:¹⁶

1. A male student is tired of following homework problems from the overhead and challenges the teacher in the middle of a lesson—"We don't learn a lot from this. It's boring. Why don't we do more labs?" (rs699, accelerated physics)
2. A female student challenges Ellis's teaching style, "Why don't you teach us and then let us do the homework? Not the reverse! Your way we ain't learnin' anything and don't know what we're doing!" (mm182, honors algebra 2)
3. "We can't sing it! We need to see the music not just the words to know how to sing it!" (rf253, French 3-4)
4. As the teacher lectures about paper structures a student shouts "This class is so boring! You need to make it more interesting!" (re633, English 10)
5. As the teacher discusses a problem at the board, a female at the front rudely interrupts him to say "We know that already—let's go

¹⁶ Longer, serious challenge efforts entail repeated statements from multiple participants. When such a situation arises, it often pushes the classroom situation into the crisis stage of a social drama. In the next section, we will elaborate more on how such crises emerge.

- on!” (mm173, trigonometry)
6. After the teacher gives students directions on writing in their journals, a female in the middle of the room exclaims, “Why do you give us all this work, make us write all this stuff, and we do it and it then sits in a folder useless. What’s the point? There isn’t one is there?” (re674, English 10)
 7. A teacher criticizes a student, who replies with indignation that he illegitimately used his role, “That’s not right! You’re here to teach, not criticize!” (mm182, honors algebra 2)

The statements are selectively brief, but they illustrate how challenges do more than critique. They suggest ways the role or task could be performed so that certain goals of the academic framework can be better accomplished. In this fashion, challenges diagnose problems of the current academic frame—as illogical, unreasonable, incompetent, unfair, and so on—and offer a prognosis on how it can be improved or performed differently. Such challenges imply that the students know better, and they call upon the teacher to come through on their obligations. Whereas challenges entail frame disputes and mutinous behavior, *rebellions* entail counterframing and piracy (Benford and Snow 2000, pp. 625–27). Rebellions breach academic affairs by interpreting formal roles and activities to be illegitimate from an external frame. As such, rebellious stands are anchored in primary frameworks outside that of academic affairs, such as that of the social world of adolescents, or person frames. Below is a list of brief actions that help illustrate the difference between rebellions and challenges:

1. In reaction to a teacher reprimand, a student issues a personal attack, “No need to shout, jeez! You need to see a psychiatrist!” (re633, English 10)
2. Unprovoked, a student personally attacks her teacher in order to get a laugh out of her peers, “Do you live with your Mom?” (re674, English 10)
3. In the same class, a couple of students state the following insult loud enough for anyone to overhear, “Yeah she’s a dumb sub. . . . I hear she lives in a van down by the river [implying she’s a hick/loser]!”¹⁷ (re633, English 10)
4. In a losing argument with a teacher, a student makes an obscene remark loud enough for the teacher to hear. He says, “Fuck you,” and then walks away (mm182, honors algebra 2)

¹⁷ At the time of my observation, the popular television show “Saturday Night Live” had a skit on it where they play fun that a “loser”—an obese, poorly skilled, motivational speaker—“lives in a van down by the river.”

5. When ritual teasing between students and teacher goes too far, an offended female student openly insults her teacher, “You were once a washed up drunk, weren’t you!? And now you eat donuts and smoke to cope!” (mm182, honors algebra 2)
6. A student refuses to do his work and says, “Why should I do it [the assignment]? I don’t need this for my future! I’m not going to college! I can just work at my brother’s [night] club.” (re633, English 10)
7. A student responds to the teacher’s request for his attention with rage, “You stop talking!!—No one wants to listen to you!!” (mm182, honors algebra 2)

Notably, in the first three statements, rebellious acts are presented as jokes, but they go beyond passive critique in that they are made with complete disregard for the teacher’s authority and role as leader. In fact, the remarks are issued from a standpoint outside the academic framework, as they are clearly inappropriate within it. Open suggestions that teachers get a mental examination and questions of whether a teacher lives with his or her mother are presented as humorous insults that illustrate the speaker’s concern with style, poise, and being cool (social and person frame values). The insults become less humorous and more obscene as we move to comments 4 and 5. These overt insults are issued in an effort to shock and undermine the current state of affairs, and they successfully do so.

Initial acts of rebellion are often ill-defined and lack a developed platform for resistance even though they imply the existence of another standpoint of legitimacy. More serious acts of rebellion refer to an alternative ideology or interpretive framework that is considered more legitimate. As such, serious forms of active resistance both deconstruct and supplant. Typically, the rebellious student will posit the ideology of another framework as a replacement for the academic mode of interpretation. The last two comments are perhaps the most developed in that the students reveal a rationale for rebellion—that there is no point or use-value to the task (comment 6) and that everyone in the class wants the teacher not to talk so peers can socialize (comment 7).¹⁸ All of these acts of rebellion are made with complete disregard for the teacher’s authority and role as leader. The academic framework is jettisoned, and a different interpretive mode is adopted in an effort to shock or deconstruct the current state of affairs.

¹⁸ In this latter comment, the class is very sociable and the teacher reprimands the student before he angrily shouts back at the teacher the listed remark. In that context, the boy meant the teacher’s lesson and authority were null and that the class had a different, inverse desire in mind from the teacher’s stated one. This argument even flares up further as the teacher attempts to send the student to the office and he refuses to go (see example 9, below).

In field observations, the most serious forms of collective rebellion posited the social frame as the dominant interpretive mode, in spite of the teacher's efforts otherwise. This seemed to be the result of students privileging peer norms and adolescent social values over and above academic concerns. In my observations of a particular twelfth grade English class at Magnet High (me433), I saw the students feed off each other in their social antics and constantly undermine the tasks and teacher (Mrs. J). A large group of senior boys were the loci of such behavior in this class (10 of them), and they were highly coordinated in their efforts. Class discussions were translated into jokes (Gutierrez and Larson 1995) so that a discussion about the literary term "irony" became a collaborative joke where students incessantly quoted a song by Alanis Morissette—"Isn't it ironic—don't ya think?"¹⁹ Mrs. J did not understand why her students laughed at this in the discussion and wrote on her attendance sheet, "Why do they keep saying, 'Isn't it ironic?'" The boys even had a game of stealing the teacher's personal possessions from her desk, such as her room keys, ornaments, and pictures. The teacher responded to this by reprimanding everyone and administering detentions so students would confess, but no one ever "ratted" on the boys. Mrs. J eventually had to change the locks to her room and get new keys. In another episode, the boys brought Mrs. J to tears—they argued that she made a scheduling error on assignments (she did not), criticized her teaching methods (as poorly organized), and attacked both her style (weight, dress) and character (as "clueless")—all the while cracking jokes and undermining her rebuttals. In short, the boys coordinated their efforts and drew upon the social framework and peer loyalty to make their resistant stands, to much of their classmates' enjoyment. A fellow teacher described Mrs. J's situation (#25):

I think she [Mrs. J] has been getting the shaft here [at Magnet] a lot. They stuck her with these difficult [kids]—the thing is they are sticking me with them next year, so maybe I'll find out what my mettle is worth next year. But they have stuck her with that year after year. . . . Talk about giving her the worst kids in the school! These maniacs, I mean some of them are maniacs that have no business being kept here, I'm sorry. . . . The thing with Mrs. J, you know with the boys—the white males just harassed and tormented her, you know. . . . And they were awful. I'm sorry, I've had some of those guys in the past, they just came to their fruition their senior year.

¹⁹ Students actually took the song forward several stanzas in their discussions, weaving it in as if it was meant in earnest discussion. All the students did peer-evaluations during this class period and noted that the senior boys were "screwing around" far more than other students in the class.

In sum, both challenges and rebellions are forms of active resistance because they are oppositions to the status quo and are aimed at transformation. Both forms of active resistance breach the instructional process, but rebellion makes an oppositional stand from a framework external to the academic state (piracy), while challenges make an oppositional stand from within the academic framework itself (mutiny). Hence, breaches differ in how seriously they oppose class tasks, teachers, and the interpretive framework from which they are issued. The more direct and developed the statement of resistance becomes (i.e., shocking prior collective endeavors and presenting a viable alternative route for action), the greater its effect on class tasks and likelihood of inducing a breach.

MOUNTING CRISIS

After a breach occurs, a *crisis* stage ensues where bystanders get drawn into the conflict and are cast as antagonists and protagonists with relation to the jeopardized situation. These moments of crisis can be short, such as when a student challenges the teacher, bringing the class to a brief hush before being redressed by the teacher with a verbal sanction. Moments of crisis also can be prolonged, such as when peers reinforce the breach and extend it to other issues. One act of resistance can snowball as latent tensions manifest and old wounds get reopened throughout the classroom population. As the crisis mounts, the initial breach is reinforced and expands, such that the gulf between protagonists and antagonists (e.g., teachers and students) becomes difficult to span with minor redressive actions and concessions. This section focuses on how disruptive acts of resistance get recognized and reinforced so as to create a mounting crisis that has the potential to transform relations in the classroom setting.

The *type of resistance*, its degree of *support* (or reinforcement), and the *context* in which it is expressed, all define when a breach creates a situational crisis. When a breach is an open act of defiance that is adopted by much of the class, it almost invariably undermines the current state of affairs and makes it difficult to interpret what is going on in the classroom (McFarland 2001). A degree of liminality emerges when the situation is undermined, such that roles are questioned and all interpretive frames are rendered ineffective. Hierarchical distinctions are washed away and repair work must be performed before collaborative interaction can begin again (Turner 1982).

As a larger proportion of students resist tasks and the teacher the academic frame is more likely to lose participants and be undermined. If one or two students withdraw or complain, then the defiance can be shrugged off and participation in academic affairs will generally continue

onward such that task goals are met (of producing various work products like papers). However, there is a tipping point at which passive forms of resistance can make the accomplishment of activity goals impossible. Hence, as acts of defiance diffuse participation ceases to flow into the academic framework and the classroom situation is in crisis.

Crises Unfolding

In what follows, I describe a few extended examples where breaches are either undermined or reinforced so as to illustrate the process by which crises mount. In the examples, there are stages of breach, crisis, redress, and resolution, so my descriptions jump ahead somewhat beyond the article's current stage of explanation. In the next section, on redress, I will come back to these examples and describe how responses can escalate or diminish the crisis.

The first example shows that not all breaches of the social order escalate and draw in the wider populace so as to become a serious social drama. The episode comes from my field notes on a tenth grade English class at Rural High. It describes a student breach that implodes on itself when a relatively unpopular female student, Heather, challenges the teacher but is undermined by her peers (re677, 10/31/97).

Example 1

Failed crisis.—Today I observed a loud, uncomfortable episode of interaction: a student named Heather openly challenges the teacher and finds herself undermined by peers. Without being provoked the student shouts at the teacher in a confrontational manner as they write in their daily journals, "Why do you give us all this work, make us write all this stuff, and we do it, and it then sits in a folder useless! What's the point?! There isn't one is there?!" This comment leads to a brief hush but is quickly followed by side comments from two boys sitting near her, "Shut up, Heather." "Yeah, shut up." Heather looks visibly upset and then shouts at them, "You shut up assholes!! I'm tired of your guys shit!" She even strikes one on the shoulder really hard, but their reaction is just to laugh and scoot their chairs away from her. At this point, the teacher asks her what she meant, but she is so angry at the two boys that she drops her attack on the teacher and says, "Forget it!" The teacher then moves on in the lesson, but Heather sits fuming at the boys for the remainder of the class period.

This was an uncomfortable episode to observe because Heather makes a big scene when she confronts the teacher and then an even bigger one

when she shouts and hits her classmates. Her challenge was active and loud, but it was not reinforced by peers. She did not represent the class's views and lacked the social support required to mount an extensive crisis that would undermine and redirect academic affairs.

The next example also involves a student challenge, and it again fails to diffuse throughout the class. However, this episode shows how a student can work the audience to extend the breach, while the teacher can work the audience to redress and contain any resistance effort. The episode takes place in an accelerated trigonometry class at Magnet High (mm173, 2/4/97). A popular African-American female, Jocelyn, jumps to the defense of her peers in disputes with her teacher, Mr. M, who is a rigid taskmaster.

Example 2

Challenge followed by crisis management.—In lesson today, Jocelyn interrupts the teacher, who is explaining math problems from the board (recitation and demonstration). She asks him about more difficult math problems that he says he will answer later as the lesson progresses. But she grows angry at being put on hold and challenges the teacher from her seat, saying, “We know that already! Let’s go on!” There is a brief hush in the class this time, but again, the teacher asks Jocelyn to hold off just a little longer. Jocelyn repeats her challenge and interrupts the lesson yet again. This time, the teacher demands she desist or take a detention.

At this point, Jocelyn withdraws from the lesson and starts griping quietly to her neighbors. Mr. M sees this and seems to adopt certain strategies of action to legitimate the lesson and his instructional style. He offsets his sanctioning of Jocelyn by complimenting other students who participate correctly. “Todd, what do we do here?” “Right, very good!” Moreover, he acts as if nothing is wrong and attempts to draw others implicitly to his side in the dispute. “I want this to be crystal clear, you see? . . . It will be on the test and probably on the PSAT too, you see?” In certain regards, Mr. M tries to convince the class (and Jocelyn) that he is right by showing them that students are successfully learning the material his way. I interpret this as an intentional countermove to Jocelyn’s recruitment effort because he continually monitors her reactions. Meanwhile, Jocelyn covertly turns to her friends and neighbors to generate support for her cause. She complains about the teacher to her neighbor and privately mocks his mannerisms with distorted facial expressions. She even frames others’ experiences as similar to her own in an effort to align perspectives and build consensus. A neighboring student, Jennifer, asks Mr. M a question, and he answers it by discussing another problem like it rather than explaining the same one again. After the exchange, Jocelyn

turns to Jennifer and says, "Did he answer your question?" Jennifer replies, "No!" Jocelyn agrees, "I didn't think so. He gets me soo mad!" Jennifer agrees, "Yup, me too!" Thus, Jocelyn and Jennifer share interpretations and align their opinions. This reinforces Jocelyn's initial breach and encourages her to try again.

At another point in the lesson, Jocelyn openly reinforces another student's dispute so as to give voice to her own anger and discontent. A couple of seats away from her, a student asks if it is fair to use a state exam as part of their grade in the class. The teacher does not understand the question and simply restates that the exam is part of their grade. Jocelyn then comes to that student's defense, shouting, "No! You didn't answer her question!" Mr. M glares at Jocelyn and warns her, "One more time Jocelyn, one more time! [and detention]." The conflict becomes covert as teacher and student play the audience to their sides once again.²⁰

Jocelyn makes explicit attempts to diffuse her anger and acquire the support of peers for the challenges she directs at the teacher. The teacher redresses the breach by containing it and mobilizing support in his direction as well. As a result, Jocelyn's challenges are kept under control but fester for another day.

A mounting crisis will not just happen. In this class, many of the students are alienated from the tasks and the teacher, but they have infrequent opportunity to mount a crisis and negotiate changes in the academic frame because the teacher tightly controls participation via recitation routines. That means he carefully monitors student behavior and catches transgressions whenever they arise in mild forms. In this context, Jocelyn breaches the tasks and then works to build reinforcement to her view, while the teacher suppresses her breaches and works to acquire reinforcement for academic affairs. Relative to other classes, this classroom is very "stable" and "controlled," but this stability and control is less an "equilibrium state" than a negotiation process where protagonists and antagonists work to mobilize audience members to become constituents and adherents of their cause.

A third episode describes a crisis that successfully mounts and eventually undermines a lesson because the students reinforce the claims of a

²⁰ The steps in this episode can be identified as follows: (1) breach task—Jocelyn challenges; (2) crisis—repeated challenges but no reinforcement (low extent); (3) teacher redress—detach Jocelyn from floor and narrow relevance to academic frame; (4) re-integrate—reproduction with some schism; (5) teacher redresses others to build support—bridge and amplify academic frame; (6) Jocelyn redresses neighbors—bridge, amplify other elements of academic frame; (7) breach task—Jocelyn challenge; (8) crisis—problem with unspoken reinforcement (low extent); (9) teacher redress—detach and amplify academic frame (threatens); then basically a repeat of (4) → (5)/(6).

resistant student. In this class, the social drama opens when a student refuses to comply with the prescribed task for personal reasons (rh349, 9/5/96).

Example 3

Rebellion grows into crisis.—The teacher for a basic-level tenth grade English class asks students to speak in front of their peers. Students are asked to either read a paragraph they wrote or talk about a topic that interests them. The teacher calls upon one student who refuses:

Teacher: Okay Chris, it's your turn [to talk].

Chris: I don't feel like it!

Teacher: C'mon Chris, there must be something you can say. [The teacher offers Chris encouragement and extends the scope of relevance so he can speak on whatever he likes.]

Chris: There's lots I don't want to talk about. . . . I don't like talking in front of people.

Peers: He shouldn't have to talk if he doesn't want to! [Chris's friends and neighbors reinforce his rationale for not speaking.]

An argument ensues, and the lesson fails from students' supporting the refusal to speak on personal grounds (i.e., "personal rights"). Some even elaborate, explaining that they see the school psychologist to talk about themselves if they want to (several are troubled individuals who do use the on-site counseling program). The student who refused also happens to be physically handicapped, and this was the second week that the teacher had been in a classroom alone with his students. It appeared as if the students "worked" whatever angle they could to disassemble tasks and avoid work. At the same time, this new teacher was trying to "get by." He confessed to me after this class that he made up the lesson as he went—they were to give speeches and then remark on what was said—and that he lacked a lesson plan since things seldom went as planned anyway.²¹

Chris's refusal is reinforced by his peers, and the teacher finds it difficult to argue with this stand presented from the person frame. The point here is that the crisis mounts by peers' elaborating and reinforcing the ideological standpoint that justifies the student's rebellion. The teacher's inability to contain their resistance eventually leads to the task's demise.

²¹ A breakdown of the drama's steps are as follows: (1) breach—refusal-rebel (personal grounds); (2) crisis—task stops; (3) teacher redress—extension/encouragement to redo; (4) student redress—elaborates personal grounds for refusal; (5) crisis mounts—peers reinforce.

In each of these examples, the extent of the crisis differed. In the first, the crisis was brief and the breach imploded in on itself from lack of support. In the second, the crisis was again brief due to teacher containment efforts, but, nonetheless, we saw how students attempted to broaden the sense of discontent and shore up reinforcement for future episodes of resistance. In the third example, the breach quickly diffused and got reinforced while the teacher was unable to mount a redress that would save the task from being demobilized on personal grounds. All three episodes entail active resistance that develops into crises, but only the third diffuses enough to pit all the students against the teacher.

More extensive, dramatic crises than these tend to arise from repeated cycles of crisis and redress that ratchet up the stakes and pit all the students against the teacher. In a full-blown crisis, the legitimacy of the academic role frame is undermined (not just a task), and its repair requires some form of structural change so that the class can be reintegrated. Such dramas will be the focus of the final section of this article, which discusses end states and reintegration. There, I elaborate fully on the ritual maneuvers taken in every stage of the social drama. In the next section, I turn to rituals of redress that are adopted by teachers, so as to contain a crisis, thwart resistance efforts, and redirect the classroom audience back on task.

REDRESSING THE CRISIS

When a crisis arises in a classroom, agents of each standpoint—that of the resistance and that of the academic frame—are pressed to grapple with the classroom situation. Agents of the academic frame perform *redressive actions* aimed at limiting the crisis and defining how the classroom situation should proceed. Most often, redressive actions come from the teacher who adopts a range of framing strategies so as to preserve his or her control (Snow et al. 1986).²² Teachers employ framing strategies in response to resistance because it enables them to revitalize tasks or at least to preserve their control over the ensuing situation even if it has little to do with schooling. Student resisters also employ framing strategies in response to the teacher and in an effort to reinforce and expand their breach. The example of Mr. M and Jocelyn in the prior section (example 2) illustrates this nicely. There, Mr. M responded to Jocelyn's challenge by trying to persuade her and the classroom audience of the academic frame's legitimacy. In response, Jocelyn tried to counter Mr. M's claims

²² These alignment activities are also used by adolescents to draw teachers into the social or person framework.

and to convince her peers that her challenges were legitimate. In this section, I elaborate these types of redressive maneuvers and explain how they are utilized to manage crisis situations.

In the redress stage, each party presents their solution to the crisis, tries to attract support, and takes aggressive definitional measures against (Fligstein 2001). Hence, whereas the breach emphasizes deconstruction and usually offers only vague prognoses, the redress stage is characterized by debate. When a teacher is faced with student resistance, the first response is to counterattack the resistance so as to contain the breach, and the second response is to draw participants back into the prescribed academic affairs (i.e., the academic frame). Conversely, the resisters counterattack the teacher's claims and academic affairs, trying to convince additional persons to be defiant. As such, the stage of redress is characterized by contestation *and* alignment maneuvers. In field observations and interviews, it is apparent that every type of frame-alignment strategy had an opposite form of frame contestation. Drawing on Snow and colleagues' initial description of framing, I relate four types of frame alignment/contestation (see table 2): *amplify/dampen*, *bridge/detach*, *extend/limit*, and *transform/reverse* (Snow et al. 1986). The analytic distinction of these opposing maneuvers is useful because it highlights the fact that, in a crisis, actors take sides so that, on the one hand, they act as protagonists of their own frame and, on the other, they act as antagonists of other interpretive frames. Thus, frame alignment strategies are adopted by protagonists to attract others to one's own frame, and contestation strategies are adopted by antagonists to malign a competing frame (whether it be a resistant stand or other collective action frame).

Amplify/Dampen

When students resist learning, the meaning of events is ambiguous and participation becomes contingent on the clarification and reinvigoration of the interpretive frame being used (Snow et al. 1986, p. 469). *Frame amplification* efforts are made to clarify, reinforce, and elevate the academic frame with regard to particular issues, problems, or sets of events. These actions are issued in an effort to remind classroom participants of the academic frame's relevance. The opposite effort, *frame dampening*, is focused on the resistant efforts of students and the collective action frames they proffer as a viable alternative. This occurs when actors debilitate another framework on particular issues through the use of regulative powers stemming from the academic world.

One way teachers amplify commitment in the face of resistance is to remind students of the values and beliefs that undergird academic affairs. Teachers do this when they refer to the goals and end states of schooling,

TABLE 2
STRATEGIES OF FRAME ALIGNMENT AND FRAME CONTESTATION

		Frame Alignment: Mobilization Effort		Frame Contestation: Demobilization Effort
(1) Frame integrity	Amplify	Embellish academic beliefs, values, and reward adherence	Dampen	Cite violations, interdict, and punish transgressions
(2) Participant boundaries	Bridge	Include, bring together parties	Detach	Exclude, break away resisters
(3) Frame boundaries	Extend	Include others' interests/contents	Limit	Exclude others' interests/contents
(4) Frame changes	Transform	Transform for—revolutionize	Reverse	Transform against—insult and stage failed transformation

such as grades, credentials, and post–high school attainment. One teacher in a Magnet English class made it a habit to respond to student complaints and challenges by describing what “smart students do,” “what it takes to get an A-grade,” and “what it takes to get into colleges like Bowdoin or Duke” (me155, me116). Another teacher would respond to student resistance by reminding students of the course’s elevated status and that “honors students” are held to higher standards (rs648).

In contrast with amplification, frame dampening contests the competing frameworks posited by resisters. Hence, frame-dampening efforts use official powers and roles to dampen the rewards gained from adopting alternative standpoints (or highlight the costs). Teachers adopt frame-dampening strategies to contain and undermine a breach. Teachers note the violation and then address it through a variety of gestures, verbal cues, and informal sanctions like citing prohibitions and rule violations, or they threaten to use their formal coercive powers (e.g., detentions, calls home, suspensions, etc). Below is a series of teachers’ verbal responses to student resistance:

1. Students interrupt a student presenter with laughter, bringing the task to a halt, and the teacher shouts, “I will not tolerate disrespectful behavior, period!” (me155, English 10)
2. Students complain and the teacher shouts, “No whiners in this class!” (rs763, chemistry)
3. Students fail to start their work and the teacher shouts, “C’mon!! Quit screwing around!!” (re677, composition 10)
4. Students refuse to do work and play—“I can’t do this all year! We can’t have it! . . . My name is not ‘Hey’!” (rm148, basic algebra B)
5. When students refuse to sing again, the teacher specifies costs, “If you don’t want to sing, we can always write essays!” (specific threat, rf253, French 3–4)
6. A student challenges a task, “Why do we need to do this work?!” The teacher responds with the threat of failure, “Because you’ll flunk if you don’t.” (re633, English 10)
7. After Jocelyn challenges the teacher several times, he threatens administering a formal sanction, “One more time Jocelyn, one more time! [and detention].” (specific threat, mm173, trigonometry)

In actions 1–4, the teacher issues prohibitions and cites rule violations. In each case, the concern is placed on behavioral norms, effort, task focus, and respect for formal authority. In actions 5–7, the teachers threaten punitive measures. In this fashion, they increase the costs of resistance by threatening harder tasks, failing grades, and detentions.

Bridge/Detach

Whereas frame amplification/dampening refers to the integrity of the academic framework, frame bridging/detachment refers to the relations that are to be included or excluded from academic affairs. *Frame bridging* is the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular problem or issue (Snow et al. 1986, pp. 467–68). This tack is adopted in the face of resistance to shore up support and illustrate to the audience that the academic frame is active and legitimate. The opposite tack, *frame detachment*, refers to the exclusion of ideologically incongruent persons who are vocal participants in the class.

Teachers make *direct* or *indirect* efforts to bridge the academic framework to students who are ideologically congruent, and thereby they reinvigorate commitment to academic affairs.²³ Indirect bridging is a broadcast statement, whereas direct bridges are dyad specific. Following resistant actions, teachers often target students who seem to be starting to drift or deviate from the class tasks: “Anybody out there?!” (rm148, basic algebra B). “Anybody but Ann out there?!” (rm141, algebra B) “Scott, Russ, you two are supposed to be listening to this [goes on to explain example, then turns to boys]. . . . Now you guys try the second one” (rm148, basic algebra).

Each of these responses entails students who withdraw or refuse to perform the task and then are redressed by the teacher in an effort to draw them out and back into tasks. These are not ideologically incongruent students, just ones who have given up on the task for the time being. In response to active forms of resistance, bridging efforts are aimed at forming a coalition or unified front against the resistance. The example of Jocelyn and Mr. M in the last section of this article is relevant here (see example 2). As the reader recalls, Jocelyn challenged the teacher’s instruction and was verbally threatened to drop her challenge and comply. Jocelyn then began underground efforts at resisting the teacher. The teacher saw this and he tried to adopt certain bridging strategies to legitimate the lesson and his instructional style. He offset his sanctioning of Jocelyn by complimenting other students who participated correctly. “Todd, what do we do here?” “Right, very good!” Moreover, he acted as if nothing was wrong and attempted to draw others implicitly to his side in the dispute. “I want this to be crystal clear, you see? . . . It will be on the test and probably on the PSAT too, you see?” Mr. M tried to convince the class and Jocelyn that he was right by showing them that students

²³ To some extent, specificity is defined by the form of speech used to elicit student responses. Some are indirect broadcasts, where the entire class is asked a question, and others are direct requests from particular students.

were successfully learning the material his way. Hence, the teacher bridged outward to ideologically congruent students as a means of illustrating to his doubters that his organization of the academic frame had integrity.

The opposite of frame bridging is frame detachment. Frame detachment is typically focused on rebels and more malicious jokers. These individuals are simply silenced or extracted from the setting. In order to recapture the floor, teachers commonly detach students by shouting angrily and calling for quiet. These loud calls *sound out* other discourse, clearing the floor for the teacher to redirect focused interaction. Frame detachment efforts can be indirect broadcasts aimed at the entire class or direct statements issued at particularly problematic individuals. For example, teachers will reply to student resistance by shouting, “Quiet please!” (*indirect*, re633); “If you’re not listening—Shut your mouth!!” (*indirect*, mm182); or “Would you (Duncan) shut up?! I can’t hear myself think!” (*direct*, mm182).²⁴

Another detachment strategy is when teachers *move resistant students apart* or *extract them from the classroom*. Teachers make both indirect and direct detachment statements:

1. Students socialize openly and the teacher threatens, “You guys are going to talk yourself into a new seating chart!” (*indirect detach*, rs726, chemistry)
2. After students disrupt class from their group, “Alright, move one of you! . . . I said move away from him!” (*direct detach*, mm182, honors algebra 2)
3. After a student disrupts class from front of the room, “Don’t you go back to your seat. . . . You come sit up here Duncan!” (*direct detach*, mm182, honors algebra 2)

The threat of detachment is technically a dampening effort, but it keys the ability or power by which the teacher can relocate students. Teachers frequently remark on how they will not only move a student’s seat, but how they will remove a resistant student from the class altogether for a day. One teacher explained why he did this to particularly resistant students in his chemistry and physics classes: “Sometimes I, you know, boot’em out for the day. Just take that kid and tell them you gotta go sit out in the hall. There they don’t have anybody to talk to, they’ll probably get to their work, and everybody else will be able to as well” (#69). I observed one teacher do just this in one of her French 2 classes at Rural High (rf259, 11/22/96).

²⁴ Parenthetical words note the strategies being utilized in each example.

Example 4

Frame detachment by physical removal.—A tenth grade male named Shawn is causing the French teacher a lot of stress today because he ignores her directives by socializing and horsing around with neighbors. She directly asks him twice to be quiet, and angrily the second time (*dampen*). Shawn ignores her and continues to socialize, so she warns him, “The only way you’ll stay in this class is if you get busy!” (*threat*). A moment later he is laughing aloud with a peer and the teacher sends him out into the hall (*detach*). The teacher then goes on in her lesson with her back to the door. As she does, the boy looks through the glass to smile and make faces as his friends giggle (*bridging for support*). The teacher catches on to the laughter and its source, so she goes into the hall to discipline Shawn. I overhear her threaten to call his parents if he continues (*threat*), and Shawn acquiesces, “Okay, okay, fine. Sorry!” (*apology, re-integration*). They enter the class a moment later, and Shawn quietly takes his seat.

Alone in the hall, the student is detached and his body language reveals an effort to draw on the “support” of his peers in the class so as to maintain his rebellious efforts. Detached and redressed in isolation, the student has little defense and calms down when the teacher makes threats that he cannot ignore. When the student comes back into the class, he is quiet and contained.

Extend/Limit

Thus far, I have described how teachers redress student resistance by managing the salience of meanings and the boundary of participants in both the academic framework (by alignment) and the resistant stand students present (by contestation). Teachers can also redress resistance by extending the content of tasks beyond the boundaries of the academic frame to encompass interests or points of view incidental to academic objectives but of considerable importance to potential adherents (Snow et al. 1986, p. 472). Such *frame extension* occurs when teachers graft and incorporate the social and personal interests of students into class activities.²⁵ Extending the academic frame so that it has relevance to the in-

²⁵ This can occur at a superficial level or at a more meaningful level (see Diani 1996; similar to “inclusion”). On a superficial level, frame extension can occur when teachers refer to movies, school events, and use all sorts of tricks to draw resistant students into the tasks. A couple of teachers at Rural High would use various tricks to get students to pay attention and settle down. One amicable math teacher told stories of his youth that students loved hearing. After he got their attention, he would shift to

terpretive standpoints of resistant students is a way of co-opting rebellion and quelling complaints. Hence, extension strategies are a first step toward integrating resistant students back into the academic program and its norms.

At Rural High, I was surprised to observe even the most unmotivated students embracing their work in several English classes. What I found was that these classes asked students to express themselves about topics meaningful to their own lives. In speech classes, students spoke about their hobbies, pet peeves, favorite foods, and more (re901). In creative writing classes, students were allowed to select their own topics and to write their own stories and poetry (re741). In both courses, students were allowed to integrate their social interests into the activities without jeopardizing the basic academic purpose and instructional format (e.g., how to write and present speeches, and how to write good poetry and short stories).²⁶

In interviews, teachers argued that they could only reach the most resistant students by first trying to relate to them on a personal basis. When I asked teachers in interviews how they would approach and reintegrate students that “did not care and did not care if it showed,” almost all said they would make a special effort to “get to know the pupil better.” When I probed further as to what that meant, many said they would try speaking to the student on a more personal level (*frame extend*), akin to what I have labeled the person frame. One teacher had this to say about the approach many used to reach resistant students:

I think a lot of times when you let the students know that you care about them, that you want them to be successful, then that makes a difference. It just, it's a more personable relationship. I try to establish that with uh, a lot of my students. I mean if I ask a student, “Hey what's going on, what's happening here?” I've indicated to them that *I care about them as a person, as opposed to a student* (#24).

Another said this:

doing math. If they became rowdy again, he would use examples that the students could relate to, such as going to the local hangout and paying for a burger and the tip (rm541, rm544, rm548, rm549). An English teacher in the same school also used tricks to draw his resistant students into the lesson. However, his trick was to use magic. One magic trick he used required students to think of a number between one and ten, and then he would guess what they wrote down (really a matter of probability). The trick had nothing to do with the course subject, but it did calm the students down and help them focus (re792, re797, re799).

²⁶ In contrast with Rural English classes, Magnet English classes were less engaging because they focused on grammar and vocabulary, and they seldom related the materials to students' personal lives.

Find one thing you can click with the kid. Whatever—if they're in any activities whatsoever, inside, outside of school. Uh, doesn't even have to be an activity. If you can relate to them in some way, uh, like housewives—"Oh yeah my mom was like that"—something. They might, they might connect with a teacher better knowing that there's a connection there somehow. And then they try to push them along so that they're, maybe make them feel like they . . . you know, we have something, we got this going, don't let me down, uh . . . I would try to find a connection" (#69).

Hence, in the cases of student refusal and withdrawal, teachers extend the academic frame so as to appeal to students as persons. Rather than transforming the situation, they include personal matters in the activity as a means to develop a rapport that can be used to reinforce the prescribed tasks.

A more complex version of frame extension was used in a highly acclaimed advanced composition class at Rural High. The teacher, Mr. Roosevelt, built his course around an ideological construct advanced as a means of empowering students through critical thought (re508). In essence, his course ideology encouraged students to resist authority: "Question what you are told to believe by teachers, parents, religion, science. . . . Know the basis upon which you rest your beliefs!" He continually stressed how student interests and empowerment could be had not by listening and incorporating the knowledge he conveyed, but through reflecting on the underlying assumptions of various arguments, both their own and others'. Mr. Roosevelt presented this ideology to students as an interpretive framework that he and his students could draw upon to settle disputes. This ideology struck a chord among the seniors, most of whom were tired of high school and sought to leave their rural community and families far behind. Thus, there was a shared ideology, which stood above the teacher's authority and which was presented as a means through which students could resist authority and empower themselves.

The opposite tack of frame extension is *frame limiting* (or contraction). Whereas frame extension is used to attract students to academic affairs, frame limiting is used to exclude irrelevant topics and demobilize student resistance efforts. Frame limiting entails efforts to narrow the boundaries of the academic frame, making only a few points of view relevant. Excluding inappropriate contents and materials is a concern for teachers who use the opposite tack of extension. By opening academic affairs to other topics and issues, the teacher risks allowing students to import meanings that contradict academic norms. A good example of this occurred for a creative writing instructor (Mr. O'Leary) who ran an open class where students could choose the topics they wrote about and read aloud to their peers. This created an engaging, expressive environment, but some students took advantage of the situation. The teacher describes

his effort to limit and contain the academic frame (#74):

Mr. O: I try to run an open classroom . . . and this ninth hour, or eighth hour this semester, I had a kid who, um . . . I said “If it’s going to be anything in dialogue other than ‘hell’ or ‘damn’, it’s because of the story and the characters that you’re creating. You know, they’re really rough, and some rough language has to be worked in. Check with me ahead of time, because we read this in class.” And this kid was just being an idiot. Time after time he was reading up shit, and the rest of the class was tired of it. And finally he got up to read a paper, and I said, and he started, I said, “Time out.” And I said, “You know, I’m getting tired of this.” I said, “I think it’s an insult to all your classmates, for you to just keep slapping us in the face with this trash. You’re just trying to be sensational and draw attention and be very humorous.” And I said, “That insults . . . I—I don’t want to hear that. I don’t think your classmates really want to hear although a few idiots might be laughing, and you think you’re really cool. I don’t think it’s cool.” I said, “I think you’re out of line.” So, I’m not, I said, “I try to run an open classroom. You people know that we try to let people express themselves even if your views are different from mine. You have the right to express yourself, but I think you’re just being an idiot.” I said, “This is just crap.” And I said, “It’s an insult.” And I said, “I think it’s my responsibility as the teacher in here to make a call.” I said, “You’re not going to read that.”

Interviewer: What kind of stuff would he write about?

Mr. O: Um, well he did a dialogue on a, you know, his dialogue paper was supposed to be a conversation, (and) was a phone sex thing. . . . And his last paper that he read was ah, he said, “Well there’s a little but of, ah, it’s just a slight drug thing” you know, but it was . . . it was the whole thing you know. . . . And he, you know, he just hasn’t used some good judgment. But now, I mean he was really ticked the day that I shut him off in front of them, but I think it helped the class.

The teacher extended the relevance of the academic frame to include students’ personal lives and social world. This served to increase their participation, but it also encouraged some resistant behaviors. To counter these behaviors, the teacher excludes certain topics, forms of dialogue, and so on—basically narrowing and delimiting what is appropriate for the academic framework.

Bracketed Transformation/Reversal

The most drastic measures a teacher can take to maintain control of the situation is to transform the classroom. *Frame transformation* occurs when different values have to be planted and nurtured, old meanings and understandings inverted or jettisoned, and erroneous beliefs or “misframings” reframed in order to garner support and secure participation (Goffman 1974, p. 308; Snow et al. 1986, pp. 473–75). When teachers lose control

of the class, they often have to revamp or jettison the current framework to regain control. The idea here is, “when you can’t beat them, join them,” but with the corollary that you still lead. In the social movement literature, frame transformations are characterized as permanent shifts leading to negotiated or revolutionary outcomes. However, in classrooms, frame transformations vary from brief, *bracketed transformations* of task segments, to the jettisoning of entire lessons, to long-term transformations of the academic role frame itself (see next section on reintegration). Hence, depending on their extent and seriousness, transformations can serve to reproduce, alter, or invert the social order of a classroom.

Two types of these bracketed transformations stood out in my observations: (1) social transformation and (2) person transformation. In each of these bracketed transformations, the teacher attempts to stop academic affairs and shift to another framework of interaction so as to redress the resistant students. Bracketed social transformations occurred when teachers cued their class to momentarily turn off the academic framework and shift into social activities. This bracketed switch was often performed in the hopes that commitment to tasks would be revitalized. Perhaps the most benign form of this would occur when teachers had students move between social and academic phases of class time in a sequential manner. Thus, several teachers would give the first and last 10 minutes of class time for social activity if, in exchange, the students calmed down and complied with task demands (rm823, ms123, ms121, re674). In an interview, one tenth grade English teacher at Rural explains how he bargains with students by offering them time to socialize (#67):

I have them blow-off steam right at the beginning of class. Say, “Ok now that you got it out of your system. . . . Hang on, you know, I know you have other things to think about and do. You’ve got to give me this amount time.” And then . . . I mean there’s some you can see they’re just, they’ve got to do it. You’re not going to get them to shut up or stop whatever they’re doing, pretty much with whatever you do . . . [so he says], “Alright, you got, you got that. We got this to get through today right now. We need this time, the whole class needs it, you gotta stop.”—I try to do that.

During these social segments, the teachers chat, tease, and interact with students on a more egalitarian, peer-like basis than their teacher role (rm823). In a sense, they switch “hats” and transform interaction in the class from work to play, as when doing sequential role performances. The result is a negotiated order, where sequential role frames are had as a compromise for the easy maintenance of academic tasks (see next section on *negotiation*).

More extensive social transformations that completely jettisoned teacher and student roles seldom occurred in the classes at Rural or Mag-

net. However, I did interview one biology instructor who described how he occasionally jettisoned schoolwork for basketball as a way of combating student resistance (#21): “A few days a year, the kids will be all squirrel-y and causing trouble, and I can gauge it when I walk in too, so I just say ‘Screw this class! Let’s go play basketball!’ ” I actually witnessed him playing with his anatomy class in the school gym on one such occasion as I walked down the halls. He explained that former students often came back from college and told him they remember “that day back in ninth grade” when they blew off class to play basketball. According to the teacher, *occasional* acts like that go a long way in building camaraderie and a personal relationship with the teacher that overcomes problems of resistance (he emphasized occasional). Hence, bracketed social transformations can work well to reinvigorate student commitment to the academic framework (reproduction outcome).

Another transformation response to student resistance is a bracketed transformation to the person framework. Here, the teacher detaches the student from the classroom setting, exits the teacher role, and alters the register of voice to have a “heart-to-heart” conversation as equal persons.²⁷ Frame extension is different from transformation because it is aimed at understanding the student as a person so as to better relate lesson contents. In transformations, there is a qualitative shift in both the form and content of the situation. The teacher and student exit their roles in an effort to address the crisis as individuals distinct from their roles, and they adopt the person framework to negotiate the matter (see example 7, below, to see how this approach can create a negotiated outcome as the long-term resolution).²⁸

²⁷ This ritual is akin to the stereotypical case where the military officer and subordinate officer exit their roles (and uniforms) to have a physical contest (fight). This role exit and contest is performed to settle the dispute as persons. In most movies, the officer wins and infuses person status into his or her formal role.

²⁸ In my observations, several classes made long-term changes in their academic framework by jettisoning the old way of doing “algebra” for a new one (rm628, rm629, rm668, ms082, me251). This *reorganization* was not a reaction to resistance, but typically occurred at the start of second semester because the population changed and the teacher saw it as an opportune moment to change instructional methods. In these reorganized classes, the most rebellious students dropped the course and new students entered, creating a different social context. In each case, the class diminished in size and the teacher adopted more student-centered tasks, looser grading methods (from homework problems to “journals”), and a more personal tone. This shift was most pronounced in a precalculus class (rm628), where almost half the students transferred to another teacher or dropped the course altogether. A first semester class of 18 pupils had only 10 remaining in second semester. These students had good grades, but they formed a tight group that frequently socialized and challenged the teacher. The teacher caved in to these students’ complaints and challenges, whereas the prior semester she would sanction and contain them. In addition, during second semester, she sought to

Teachers frequently use this type of frame transformation to confront their most resistant students. Most contend that they try to get the student alone and then speak to the individual as a person (#69, #15, #74). One teacher describes this approach in an interview: "I boot them out of the class for a day, maybe a day or two. And I'll say, and then I'll talk it over with them one on one about it, you know, in a private conference, to try to, you know, 'Are we going to be able to handle this? I mean, can, can you come back into the class without hating my guts or without, you know, spewing, you know, profanity in the classroom or just being a real jerk?'" (#74).

This teacher transforms the situation into a private character contest (Goffman 1967). He detaches the student and pits his own character against that of the adolescent in an effort to acquire submission. Other examples of this behavior are less aggressive and entail negotiation or revelations of hidden personal sentiments and efforts at bargaining. In every case, there is a clearly bracketed episode where actors remove themselves from ongoing academic affairs and adopt the person frame to confer with one another.

As in prior sections on framing, the redressive action of frame transformation has a counter action. In the case of bracketed frame transformations, the opposite tack is *frame reversal*. Three classes of frame reversal were observed: *redoings*, *staging failed transformations*, and *person challenges*. Frame redoings occur when a failed task or role frame is "rebooted" or restarted again, but this time it is serious (an interaction "mulligan"). Attempts at redoing the task are common, but they can have disastrous effects if they repeatedly fail (see example 8 in next section). That said, some teachers successfully confront student resistance by performing an exaggerated redoing of the task. Such "redoing" is often accompanied by the teacher losing composure and adopting extreme forms of anger, such as yelling and physical aggression (#12, #5, #76). In an interview, one teacher explained how he enacted frame redoing:

Dr. H: If students act up, and you laid the law down, ahh, I get as pissed as I can and get right in their face. I don't worry about taking people to the hallway. I don't worry about counseling. I just get really mad, and ahh. . . . You've gotta have a mind-set too. Ahh you're here to give the taxpayers their money's worth. And to get them their money's worth, you've gotta get the kids attention. . . . I get right in their faces. In fact

make the class more enjoyable for students with games and student-centered tasks like group work, discussions, and individualized instruction. In addition, she made grades less reliant on test scores. In contrast, during first semester, she used lecture, recitation, and occasional flash-card drills and based grades totally on test scores. In sum, the teacher reorganized her precalculus class so as to create a different academic situation.

Resistance as a Social Drama

that second hour class I had in for—gave the whole class an eighth hour (a detention) about three weeks into the year—and they all came!

Interviewer: What did they do?

Dr. H: They came in the class totally unprepared for like a game, like a Jeopardy-type game. Nobody knew anything. I said “Hey—This was when you were supposed to do it! We’ll just come in tomorrow night and do it!” And they all showed. . . . I was pissed big time. I threw some shit around. I mean I got really mad.

Dr. H goes on to explain that he used class time that day and the next day to prepare for the exam that the entire class took in the evening during an eighth hour. I asked him how he acted through these periods, and he said, “I didn’t say a word.” In short, Dr. H reacted to student refusals to do work by yelling, issuing severe sanctions, and redoing the same task with higher stakes. Students were essentially shocked by the teacher’s fury and submitted to his demands since challenging him further would surely have meant an even worse fate than a collective eighth hour.

A second frame reversal arises when teachers facetiously accept student efforts to reorganize the task, only to stage that transformation’s failure.²⁹ When students challenge, they call for a transformation of the academic framework from within. In a reversal, the teacher will accept the suggested transformation but ensure its failure so that the prior organization of academic affairs is reaffirmed. One accelerated chemistry teacher explained to me how he did this (#76):

There have been times where, you know, if they constantly whine about the work I’ll go, “Alright, we’ll try a chapter without any homework. You guys want to do this without any homework, let’s do a chapter and a chapter test. And I’ll just lecture and at the end of six days we’ll have a test.” And ah, after a few days of that they start going, “Well okay maybe there is a purpose for this homework and stuff.” I’m like, “Hey, you know, the test is going to be on this chapter next Wednesday if you want to be ready for it or not . . . It’s up to you.”

The teacher essentially accepts student challenges. He states his justification for going over homework—to prepare for test—and if students negate that justification, fine. However, he knows that they will eventually perform poorly on the test and will not want to continue the academic frame as negotiated. Once students fail a quiz, they realize that doing their homework is a good idea. Hence, the teacher does a bracketed

²⁹ The common example of this is for a teacher to say, “Okay, you teach it then!” Most students refuse this offer and the class goes on. Students who take up this offer eventually fail and are usually asked to step aside by the same peers who sponsored and reinforced their initial challenge of the teacher.

transformation and stages its failure so as to reproduce the academic situation he prescribes.

A final form of frame reversal arises when the teacher adopts another framework (person or social) and attacks student resistance and social affairs from that standpoint. In this fashion, the teacher attempts a mutiny so as to undermine the framework from which students mobilize their resistant efforts. Below are a few quotes from my field notes illustrating this behavior:

1. A couple of students disrupt the teacher at the board. He turns to them and says, "How old are you now?" (rm172, trigonometry)
2. The teacher gets so flustered with a student's challenges that he just stops talking, paces a few steps, and says, "I'm not going to say much 'cause I don't want to ruin your self-esteem." (mm182, honors algebra 2)
3. A male student is putting a bow in a girl's hair and ignoring the teacher's lecture. When the teacher sees this, he says, "There was always a boy in the neighborhood who preferred to play with girls" (implying the student is gay). The girls giggle, and the boy responds, "Who?! You?!" The class bursts into laughter (mm182, honors algebra 2)
4. When the teacher moves a student across the room as a disciplinary measure, his friend shouts, "You got the shaft!" The teacher turns on the friend to say, "Don't ask me for a job or a recommendation!" The student replies with like anger, "I don't want a job—especially not with you!" (mm182, honors algebra 2)

In these instances of frame reversal, the teacher attacks students as members of the adolescent world (i.e., their cheerleading identity) or as persons (i.e., their character) and thereby attempts to undermine the students' social support. Notably, actions 3–4 entail student rebuttals. I include them because all too often the teacher's use of ridicule and sarcasm backfires since students are more familiar with that form of ritual arguing and almost invariably get reinforcement from peers (Goodwin 1980).

Some teachers see ridicule as a legitimate control maneuver. A physics teacher explains in an interview that he finds the limited use of social and personal ridicule to successfully redress resistance: "It's not a good thing to do—in all the education stuff they say you're not supposed to—but finally, if they get worse just get sarcastic, and if they are joking around and say something to you, just get 'em back—nothing real personal or mean. But I find that lately, that settles them down for a little while if you get something back at them" (#69).

The teacher claims to avoid "personal" insults, but the sarcasm and ridicule I observed him (and other teachers) use in class were just that.

Sarcasm and personal insults are reversal efforts in that the teacher adopts another framework from which to undermine student resistance. Hence, this teacher ridicules students as persons so as to undermine their credibility as an agent of competing collective action frames.

In sum, then, there is a wide array of framing strategies that teachers (and students) invoke in the redressive stage of social dramas and from multiple interpretive standpoints. The redressive stage is different from the breach stage in that the microrituals emphasize *debate* more than *deconstruction*. In fact, redressive actions take two forms: frame contestation and frame alignment. Contestation is usually the first response to student resistance and is aimed at demobilizing those efforts. This action is then followed by teacher efforts to align students with academic affairs. Hence, one set of maneuvers is deconstructive and defensive, while the latter is constructive and aimed at recruitment.

REINTEGRATION AND LONG-TERM TRANSFORMATIONS

Social dramas of resistance come full circle when students and teacher reach some resolution or working agreement to their conflict or when they acknowledge an irreparable schism. At this point, the students have consistently staged challenges and rebellions, and the teacher has come to recognize that the lesson can no longer proceed “as usual.” This crisis impels the teacher to align and adjust the academic framework such that, on the one hand, participants are drawn in that reinforce the instructional efforts and, on the other, participants that disrupt or thwart such efforts are kept out. At the same time, the resistance adopts mirror moves, drawing in recruits to their defiance and disrupting the teacher’s tasks. Both the teacher’s effort at controlling resistance and the students’ effort to foster it may not take hold and overcome the crisis. Hence, a series of such conflicts may arise before teacher and student perspectives realign. It is this final stage of reintegration that the article turns to next.

Reintegration of the classroom situation takes place when students and teacher agree on “what is going on” and “how to proceed.” When students and teacher interpret events from the same framework (whether old, altered, or new) and gesture their acceptance of the situation, the class begins to move on in a collaborative manner. As such, resolutions to social dramas are accomplished via microrituals of *acceptance* and outward displays of *agreement* that bring the debate to a close. Various forms of reintegration are essentially defined by who accepts which redress, and how.

Social dramas have at least four states of resolution: *reproduction*, *negotiation*, *revolution*, and *schism*. Each outcome is the cumulative result of certain types of breach, degrees of crisis, forms of redress, and rituals

of acceptance that bring the conflict to a close. *Reproduction* outcomes occur when students lose in their effort at resistance and get reintegrated into class tasks. Typically, students lose because the breach is weak, the crisis does not spread, and teacher redress goes unchallenged. Resisters lose and fall back into the fold by signaling their acceptance of the academic frame that the teacher prescribes. Almost invariably, this process is accompanied by expressions of reluctance and humor that enable the resister to save face and distance him- or herself from the failure (Goffman 1961b). *Negotiated* outcomes occur when a party offers concessions. In these instances, challenges and mild rebellions breach tasks, crises are more extensive, and teacher redress usually entails frame extension and bracketed frame transformations. Here, acceptance is acquired via bargaining, contracts, and signals of acceptance and compliance. Social *revolutions* arise when the teacher is unable to contain student rebellions and finds he must concede victory to the students' social order in some form. Long-term revolutions arise when a collective rebellion creates a crisis that pits students against teacher, and all the teacher's redressive efforts are used up and fail. Here, the teacher is overwhelmed and eventually performs rituals of avoidance and reluctant compliance, and he is forced to approach students through the social frame they have established in the setting. (See fig. 3 as a summary diagram of these forms of reintegration.)

The last outcome of social dramas is not a form of reintegration but of *schism*. Schisms are unstable outcomes where all parties agree to live in a state of dissonance because the costs of compromise seem too high. Schisms follow challenges and rebellions and arise when crises are extensive and the redress is overly harsh. All too often, a schism results when participants on each side reveal their hidden grudges without resolving them. As such, both parties move on but with great malice for one another. The situation remains sour as actors voice animosity and repressed aggression. I elaborate further on each end state below and illustrate the entire progression of social dramas through a variety of examples.

Reproduction

The most common resolution of the academic frame to a social drama of resistance is *reproduction*. When teachers fully succeed in their efforts at redress, they reproduce the prior state of academic affairs. Such an end requires the teacher's definitional claims to take hold and for resistant students to accept defeat, show compliance, and reintegrate themselves into the class. This process of repair is accomplished by antithetical signals of *acceptance* and *role distance* (Goffman 1961a, 1961b). Resisters adopt

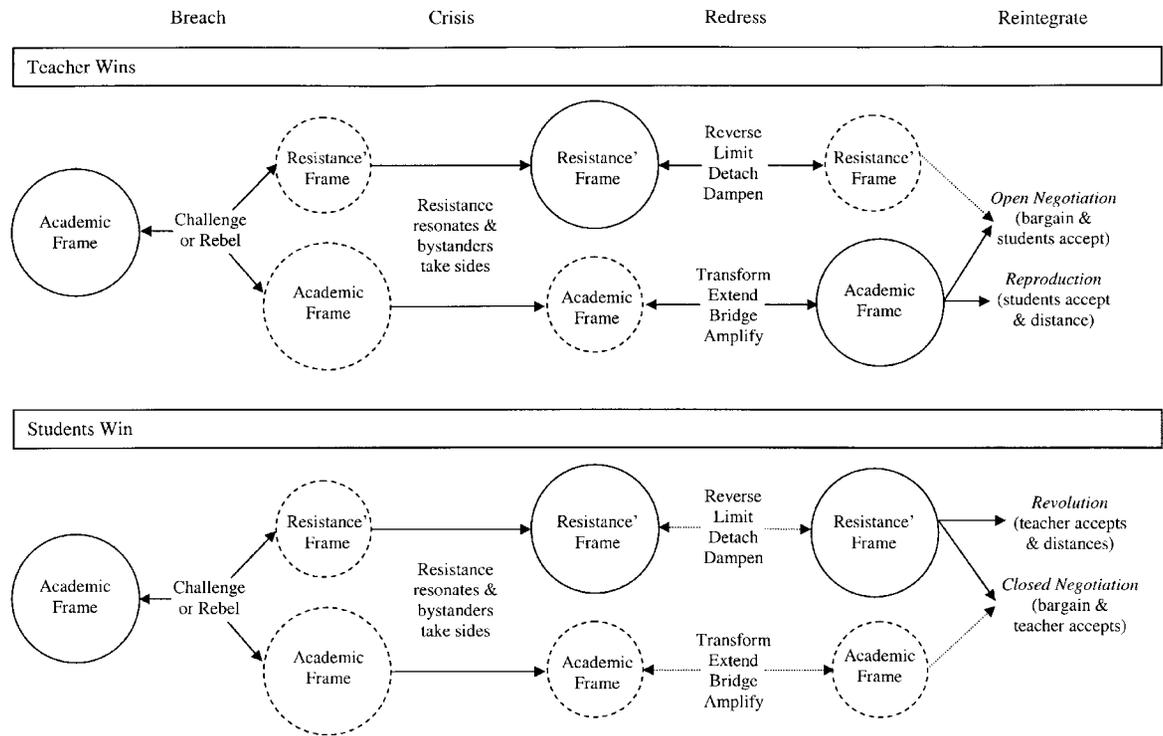


FIG. 3.—Progression of social drama to states of reintegration. Circle size = frame dominance; dotted circle = ambiguous frame; solid circle = stable frame; solid arrow = successful maneuver; dotted arrow = unsuccessful maneuver.

such antithetical signals because they seek reintegration without losing face. Instead of fully apologizing (Goffman 1971, p. 113), the student will signal some recognition that the behavior was inappropriate (an abashed face, bowed head) and then acknowledge that the teacher's prescribed endeavors hold sway over the situation. In an effort to save face and avoid any negative attributions, students often accompany these acts of compliance with humor and griping.

All too often, student resistance fails and the transgressors accept their fate. Humor and jokes facilitate a smooth reentry into academic affairs. Humor characterizes the transgression as misguided and harmless and thus diminishes attributions of responsibility. In addition, humor distances the student's self from the failed resistance and enables her or him to save face. Both adjustments reproduce the prior state of affairs by diminishing the seriousness of the problem and distancing the actor from such profane actions.

During second semester in a tenth grade English class at Magnet, I observed a reproduction episode that was facilitated by humor (me155). Tanisha, a high-status female, disrupted a discussion that her peers were conducting and tried to posit the social frame as the primary interpretive standpoint.

Example 5

Reproduction via comedy.—The teacher is not in the room, and the class is in a circle discussing the *Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. Many take the activity quite seriously and have an animated discussion. Tanisha has been gone for a week and tries to enter the discussion with a monologue on how “dumb” the characters are for their actions and how she can handle their situations better. Her solutions to the characters' problems are all farcical and refer to violent acts against the men in the characters' lives. It quickly becomes apparent from her comments and others' reactions that Tanisha had not read the book and that her remarks are unwelcome. It is not long before the other students ignore her and make it known that her interpretative standpoint is unwelcome. A semester earlier, Tanisha would have been successful at disassembling the task this way because she had the social support of her three cronies, all of whom had by now transferred to other schools. Her response to the class's rejection is at first a shocked silence, but she then acknowledges defeat with a joke that brings her back into the fold: “Oooo-kay . . . I guess I been gone a while. . . . I gotta read the book!” (Tanisha's “Ooo-kay” implies the class is short-fused, but she says it in a jovial tone and with a broad smile.) Tanisha then scoots her chair out of the circle and starts reading the book. Later, the teacher returns to find the discussion going well and

Tanisha catching up on her reading. Mrs. K asks Tanisha how she is coming along and Tanisha complains to her in a pout, “They told me to shut up!” The teacher merely smiles.

Tanisha breaches classroom affairs and is redressed by agents of the seminar in a negative fashion (here the agents of the academic frame are students instead of the teacher). Tanisha’s standpoint is devalued, and she is detached from the task. In response, Tanisha reframes her action as a joke, thereby rendering the event less serious, distancing herself from it, and saving face. At the same time, she complies with the academic frame and is allowed a degree of inclusion, so long as she does not interrupt.

Compliance accompanied by private griping or complaining reveals the actor’s distance from the action and some effort at preserving an identity as a resister. Nevertheless, the passive expression of resistance merely expresses the actor’s displeasure at accepting the academic affairs that the teacher prescribes. The actor will still comply and accept the fact that the effort at resistance has failed. In the following episode, two students rebel because they believe an English text they are asked to read is racist. The political rebellion commences a social drama where the students argue with the teacher but are berated back into compliance with the assigned task (me116, 3/26/97).

Example 6

Political rebellion to begrudging compliance.—About halfway through the class period, an African-American student, Tanya, is reading her assignment and stares at her book in disgust. She complains about the assignment and refuses to do it. Classmates stop their work and turn to listen to her. Tanya’s friend, Clarissa, asks her why, and Tanya remarks (loud enough so everyone can hear) how “Puerto Rican” is capitalized but “black” is not. She then elaborates for all to hear that this means the author does not recognize “black” as an identity or legitimate culture and is therefore racist for not recognizing it as such (the author is Puerto Rican). Clarissa agrees and adds to Tanya’s claims, “Figures we’d have to read this at Magnet!” Tanya loudly slaps the book down on her desk and refuses to cater to the “racist” task. Clarissa follows with a loud complaint. Other students stop their work and stare at the teacher waiting for the response.

The teacher (a middle-age African-American female), Ms. Washington, recognizes this public refusal and tells Tanya and Clarissa that they are using race as an excuse not to do the work. Tanya denies this and accuses Ms. Washington of not sticking up for her race. At this, the class and

teacher get very quiet, and the teacher asks Tanya and Clarissa to come out into the hall with her. They follow and are overheard arguing by everyone in the class. Both question the other's representation of ethnic identity and take the issue very seriously (racial identity is claimed as a central facet of the student selves [in survey responses]). I overhear Ms. Washington say, "As an African-American female, a black woman, I can tell you . . . !" Within 10 minutes, all three march back in, but Tanya and Clarissa sit quietly, still fuming. Clarissa picks up her work, but Tanya quietly refuses. The rebellion is contained, but the teacher does not accept Tanya's refusal to do the assignment and says she will eventually have to do it.

The next day, Tanya does the work but openly criticizes and challenges the teacher, saying she's moody and misinterpreted her refusal (*personal frame*). The teacher warns Tanya to let it go or else. Tanya then turns to Clarissa and tries to get further support—"She took it out on us. I have a right to an opinion. She doesn't make anything we learn relevant to the real world." Clarissa does not reinforce her claims and instead tries to normalize the situation by saying the teacher's not all bad, even if she's misguided on this issue. Ms. Washington goes on to help other students but frequently checks over her shoulder to make sure Tanya's complaints do not spread. The drama ends with both students doing the work but occasionally bad-mouthing the teacher to one another in private (me116, English 12, 3/26/97).³⁰

In sum, this is a case where a rebellion is contained and the task is repaired. The resistance of Tanya is reinforced by Clarissa, but when the teacher isolates Tanya and Clarissa in the hall, they debate about which framework is applicable—the academic frame or the one concerning racial equality. When the students and teacher return to the class, the academic frame subordinates their concerns about racial inequity. Tanya is still upset about this, but she fails to persuade Clarissa to reinforce further efforts at resistance. The end result is the girls' begrudging compliance with the teacher's demands.

The example illustrates how warring parties frame themselves as agents of particular ideological standpoints and how they debate the legitimacy of those stands. The immediate concern is to deconstruct the claims of

³⁰ The drama can be broken down as follow: (1) complaint; (2) elaborates resistant stand; (3) friend reinforces; (4) rebellion—public refusal to do "racist" task; (5) crisis—friend openly reinforces; (6) teacher redress—counterclaims using racist claim to avoid work (really the individual's interest, not race); (7) student redress—insults teacher as disloyal to race; (8) teacher redress—detach and argue; (9) student redress—argue; (10) teacher redress—stops debate, gives choice; (11) reintegrate—students comply/schism is latent.

the other party and shore up those of their own. The end resolution of begrudging compliance also illustrates a common outcome of many teacher-student arguments. Eventually, most students comply with their teachers, but they do not fully embrace the outcome of the conflict as part of their virtual selves (Goffman 1961a). This means students subordinate themselves but carry latent discontent that can manifest as anger in future situations.

Negotiated Orders

After reproduction, *negotiated orders* are the most common form of reintegration because they offer an amenable resolution to both parties (Strauss 1975). Reintegration via a negotiated outcome arises when some concession is acquired from the teacher and tasks. Usually, the negotiation entails some form of reciprocal exchange—such as a task concession for student compliance. Two forms of negotiated outcome are common in classrooms: *open* and *closed negotiations* (Woods 1978). Open negotiations occur when the teacher offers concessions that the students accept in order for the academic affairs to continue. So in prior sections, this was seen to arise when teachers planned to offer social activities in exchange for heightened compliance to academic tasks (assuming students accepted it) or when they extended the topic relevance of tasks to include viewpoints and meanings of the adolescent world. (See frame extension and frame transformation in the prior section.) In contrast, closed negotiations are begrudging concessions given against the will of the teacher (see fig. 3). Examples of such negotiations occur when teachers begrudgingly concede that their task has failed and they move on in their lesson instead of attempting a serious effort at redoing or frame reversal. The reason crises resolve into negotiated outcomes is that either certain forms of teacher redress prevail over students (e.g., extension and bracketed transformations) or students reject the teacher's containment efforts and demand some moderate concessions (e.g., of moving on). In what follows, I will describe examples of negotiated outcomes and highlight the interaction rituals that bring them about (e.g., teacher concessions and teacher apologies, but retention of academic authority).

A clear example of open negotiation arises when teachers and students conduct a bracketed transformation where they confer and create a *behavioral contract*.³¹ When teachers encounter a group of resistant students, it becomes difficult to sanction them effectively in class because they “stick up” for one another and incite prolonged arguments or frame disputes.

³¹ Most open negotiations need not be so formal and are often conducted via verbal bargaining (Alpert 1991).

In the example below of a tenth grade English class at Magnet High, the teacher came to a negotiated resolution with a clique of resistant girls during first semester by sitting down with them and writing up a behavioral contract (me155). At the time of the episode, Tanisha was the leader of a clique of popular girls who were disinterested in school. These sophomore girls would frequently disrupt lessons by openly socializing across the room or challenging the teacher. In an effort to manage the problem, the teacher redressed the students by having a conference with them during the lunch period and by adopting a person frame through which to negotiate a resolution (detach and transform). The teacher later described this incident to me as her “heart-to-heart” conversation.

Example 7

Open negotiation and the development of a behavior contract.—An English teacher, Mrs. K, has struggled to keep a clique of students under control for several days now. She has sanctioned them on repeated occasions and has even given a couple of them detentions (*amplification*). Today, they are so bad that she asks them to stay after class during lunch to work out a “behavioral contract” with her (*temporary transformation*). I stay after as well and watch the incident from a distance. All four sit down at a table together with the teacher facing the students. Mrs. K looks all three in the eye and in a quiet conversational tone begins to say that she can no longer put up with their behavior and that something has to change (*crisis*). They then begin a discussion about why the students act out and why the teacher treats them like she does. I hear Mrs. K ask them why they act out, whether they want to do well in school, and even hear her contend that she is only trying to help them learn and do well. The girls complain that the work is too hard, that they do not get to sit by each other (they sit across the room from each other), and that they feel unfairly treated since she singles them out all the time. They speak frankly and civilly like this for about 10 minutes during which the teacher takes notes. At the end of the conversation, the teacher summarizes their issues and writes up a “contract.” The contract is a signed agreement between all the parties that the teacher argues will enable them to get through the class together. She lists the students’ requests (to let them work together, and so on) and she lists certain minimal behavioral standards that she feels must be met for them to remain in the class and for these concessions to be given. At the end of the discussion, all four of them sign the contract that explains what concessions are made to prevent further conflict, and it explicitly states that failure to live up to the contract will lead to the students’ expulsion from the class (field notes).³²

³² Interestingly, the administration at both schools had behavioral contracts. Several
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Notably, the students and teacher adopt a different register of talk (nonauthoritative) and a more egalitarian form of communication. They put aside their teacher-student roles and discuss the dispute as persons confronting a problem. This transformation of the academic framework to a more personal, egalitarian relationship was an effective response to Tanisha and her friends. By working out a behavioral contract, both parties communicated their disparate views and negotiated an understanding by which they could carry on in the class. As a result, both students and teacher altered their behaviors. On the one hand, the girls lessened their resistance and behaved slightly more appropriately. On the other hand, the teacher allowed them to work together and was less active in her monitoring efforts of them. When further conflicts did arise, the teacher would remind the clique of their agreement, and the conflict would subside. In sum, then, the teacher offered and demanded concessions of the students, which they accepted.

When student resistance is reinforced and coordinated, teachers will find themselves making concessions they would not otherwise make so the academic framework is maintained. As such, it is a form of *closed negotiation*, where the concessions are pressed upon the teacher against his or her will (Woods 1978). The concessions are negotiated in that the teacher retains control over the academic frame in exchange for admitting defeat now and then. The following excerpt from my field notes describes a challenge episode that took place in a French 3–4 class at Rural High that resulted in a negotiated outcome (rf253, 12/12/96).

Example 8

Closed negotiation, when challenges lead to task failure.—The teacher is trying to get students to learn a new song they have never heard before, and few sing along. The teacher cheers them on, “Attention si vous plait! Nous allons chantons!” (rough translation: Attention please! Let’s all sing!) One of the more popular students taking choir (Kelly) complains, “We can’t sing it! We need to see the music to sing it, not just the words!” Four other students also from choir repeat Kelly’s complaint, saying all they can do is read it. The teacher ignores these remarks (they are not stated in French) and presses ahead with the task. She makes several attempts in French to get the class to enthusiastically sing the song. She starts by singing loudly but stops when she only hears mumbling. She

teachers remarked that they used them (rm666, rm668, re237, re689, re683), but in the case of Mrs. K, she used her own more informal version. Unfortunately, I never acquired her copy of the contract and can only afford a verbal report from field notes.

pressures students with directives and even breaks from using French (code switch)—“Everyone has to sing! . . . Come on guys, you better sing it!” The teacher starts again in French with the same result and stops to issue a threat of harder work. “If you don’t want to sing, we can always write essays!” At this, half the class begins to sing along with her, but with each measure, more of them complain and withdraw. The song goes from uniform singing (first measure), to reading the words like prose (fifth measure), to the teacher singing solo (tenth measure on), to silence. The teacher gets flustered, drops her efforts at getting them to sing, and moves on in the lesson. She says, “Fine, let’s move on.” Speaking French once more, she asks students to get out their books and to open them to a particular chapter. Students comply, and the next task segment begins.³³

The point of this example is to illustrate that reinforcement of active resistance and elaborations of the breach serve to demobilize participation in tasks to the point where they can fail. Even though the teacher redresses the crisis by increasing the costs of noncompliance, the students collectively express their challenge and refuse to participate. This undermines the teacher’s efforts to restart the task and eventually forces her to either escalate the crisis further (to the role frame more generally) or to continue on with another task. By making concessions, the teacher does not escalate matters but re-establishes her authority so the lesson can move onward. However, she also creates a pathway to resolution that participants remember and can invoke in future interactions. Over time, this may result in many failed tasks and a social order wherein the teacher’s authority is substantially diminished in the long term.

Revolutions

Thus far, I have described social dramas whose crises have long-term resolutions that either reproduce the prior social order (via acceptance and distancing maneuvers) or negotiate a slightly different one (via exchanges or some concession drawn from teachers). A third resolution arises when the student resistance wins, or when *social revolutions* occur. Here, students supplant academic affairs with a different interpretive frame-

³³ Here is how this episode can be broken down into dramatic stages that cycle and conclude: (1) student breach/crisis—students deviate and withdraw such that task fails; (2) teacher redress—teacher amplifies (sees as focus problem); (3) student breach—Kelly issues complaint/challenge (poor task); (4) crisis—peers reinforce Kelly’s breach; (5) teacher redress—amplifies/issues threats two times (like #2); (6) reproduction—most fall in line and sing; (7) student breach—withdrawal and refusal to sing grows; (8) crisis—task fails; (9) teacher redress—give up/avoidance; (10) reintegrate—transformation (new task).

work, such as that of the adolescent social world, and with relatively permanent effect (mm182, re674, re683, re689). In these contexts, it is the teacher who must constantly breach the student world that has usurped his or her control. Revolutions come about through a combination of resistant behaviors, but active forms of collective rebellion are necessary for these transformations. As such, revolutions are different from negotiated outcomes, which are often instigated through collective challenges or acts of mutiny from within the academic frame.

By definition, all social revolutions are characterized by social activities and standpoints that persist against the teacher's will. In these classrooms, teachers cannot help but realize that behaviors are being interpreted from a social standpoint of friendship loyalties, gaming, keying, and constant social activities like teasing, gossip, and storytelling. Academic work is seldom completed and then only in disembodied form (e.g., by cheating or by writing a three-sentence speech instead of a five-page one). Hence, these classes appear socially chaotic, and the teacher either tries to acquire control by aggressive (but failing) maneuvers or begrudgingly accepts the situation and withdraws. These situations are not schisms since teacher and students do not agree to disagree. They are revolutions because, in spite of the teacher's efforts, another situation and its interpretive frame characterizes collective endeavors. The dramatic sequences of interaction that characterize social revolutions are perhaps the most damaging transformations of teacher authority and instruction. Hence, I want to spend some time explaining how collective rebellions like these emerge and get repeatedly affirmed.

Social revolutions of the classroom situation are some of the most uncommon long-term resolutions I observed. Only in a few classrooms had the students installed the social framework as the primary frame of action and interpretation (mm182, re674, re683). In others, the social frame may have been strong and pervasive, but students still submitted to the primacy of tasks (me116, ms051). One classroom stands out as a prime example of repeated conflicts, and especially of collective social rebellions where the students win. The class is an algebra 2 class at Magnet that is taught by a progressive, well-qualified, African-American male named Ellis who struggles to manage his disinterested students. I will describe only one episode of collective rebellion that arose on one class day, even though similar episodes were observed on most other occasions. In addition, even though many collective sociable activities arose on this class day, I will limit the field accounts to the episode where the participants enter and move through an extended social drama of resistance.

Example 9

Collective social rebellion.—Up to this point in the class period, the teacher has been lecturing from the overhead on homework problems and has gotten minimal compliance from students. Most of the students sit in their groups (self-selected) and socialize with their friends at a level quiet enough that the teacher can lecture over them. I count only three of the 15 students paying much attention. About 20 minutes into class, the teacher is still lecturing and a student named Martin audibly farts, smiles, and then slaps his fist to his head and holds it there. His friends and neighbors recognize the game signal and start scooting their seats away. Martin gave the signal that he had farted and put his fist to his head as a “safety” from his peer’s punches (a reference to a juvenile game). The students openly laugh at this, but then someone claims to smell a foul odor. At this, the entire back of the class jumps from their chairs and moves to the front of the room. The teacher looks bewildered at this point. One student, Duncan, is in the lead making social exclamations and wild gestures as he runs to the front of the room. The teacher asks, “What’s going on?” and everyone points at Martin with a roar of laughter. Martin simply sits in his seat acting smug. Meanwhile, the teacher starts chuckling, shaking his head, and directing students to sit back down. Only after a couple of minutes of joking and laughing at Martin (e.g., “Go to the bathroom, would you!” and “Can’t you control it, man!”) do students finally take their seats. However, rather than listen to the lecture, they now horse around with one another even more. The teacher begins lecturing again, but he eventually gets frustrated with the heightened level of social activity, which he can no longer talk over. Mr. Ellis gets angry at Duncan, who is talking loudly with his neighbors. He shouts, “Would you shut up?! I can’t hear myself think!” The class gets quiet for a moment and then Duncan shouts back angrily, “You shut up, no one wants to listen to you!!” The class laughs at this, but the teacher appears taken back. He says to Duncan, “Why don’t you come up here for an autograph? (i.e., pink slip to office).” To which Duncan immediately replies, “I’m not comin’ up there!” The teacher and he then have several verbal exchanges where the teacher tells him to go to the office, and Duncan refuses, saying it is the teacher’s fault (he is never clear why, though). After several heated, shouted exchanges, Duncan walks up to grab the pink slip, but then he heads back toward his seat, once again refusing to go to the office. Rather than escalate matters further, the teacher gives Duncan a way out. He says, “Don’t you go back to your seat! . . . You come sit up here, Duncan!” The teacher moves a chair up to the pencil sharpener near the door. Duncan then turns around to go sit up at the front of the room. By complying with this demand, Duncan avoids going to the office.

Mr. Ellis then tries to restart his lecture, but as soon as he starts, the boys at the back begin mimicking “fart” noises and putting fists to their head as “safeties” (Martin initiates, but Jerry, Doug, and David join in). A roar of laughter follows, and the teacher is forced to quiet the boys down. As he begins to do this, the clique of African-American girls at the front of the room (Veranda and Rachel in particular) bursts out laughing and screaming. This completely derails the lesson for the few students who still wait for the teacher to recommence the lecture. Now the teacher—still fuming over Duncan’s defiance—has to reprimand multiple sets of disruptive pupils. He shouts at the girls, “Are you having fun?!” And they choke back a giggled reply, “Yes.” The teacher then threatens, “I’ll have to separate you!” to which they complain in chorus, “Nooo!” All this time, Duncan maintains a low profile at the front, facing the teacher’s back, and smiles at all that has been happening. The arguing has now taken up 10 minutes of class time. After Ellis reprimands each group, things calm down enough that he can once again lecture over students’ socializing. As he picks up in the lesson, Anice (a coconspirator with Duncan) says angrily, “I don’t understand!” The teacher ignores her and continues to lecture, trying to make up lost ground. Anice repeats the statement and gets the same response. At this point, she turns to her neighbor, Shelly, and says angrily, “He won’t listen to me!” and pushes away her books, giving up. Meanwhile, the teacher continues lecturing over the students who openly socialize with their neighbors. About 32 minutes into the class period, Kendra stands up and walks to the pencil sharpener near Duncan’s new seat and sharpens her pencil. She stares at Duncan with a smile and puts her fist to her head cuing the fart joke again (the teacher’s back is to her and Duncan). Duncan starts laughing, and as other students see, they fall into laughter as well. The teacher yells at Kendra to sit down and to not mess with Duncan. “He doesn’t need your encouragement, Kendra!” The students now socialize openly, and the teacher spends another six minutes lecturing over problems at the board without anyone really listening.

Toward the end of the lecture, Anice (who has been socializing with Martin and Shelly) tries again to ask Mr. Ellis a question but is again ignored. She turns to Shelly to say, “Why do I ask questions?” Shelly agrees, and Anice turns to the teacher to shout, “That’s alright, Mr. Ellis—I don’t care!” Ellis stops lecturing and replies to her, “I wish you cared.” Two of her friends come to her defense (Martin and Shelly) and ask the teacher, “Do you care, Mr. Ellis?! Do you?!” To which Ellis admits, “When I took this job I did” (a veiled insult directed at his pupils). Ellis admits that he is burnt out fighting them, and a few students ask him why he keeps teaching then (Martin, Anice). The teacher tries to get away from the discussion. He gives up on the lesson, turns his back on the students,

and shouts out the homework assignment as he sits at his desk. At this point, the students socialize with renewed vigor.

Meanwhile, Anice walks up to the teacher and asks him how she is supposed to do the homework when he has not explained how to do it. (He only went over yesterday's homework problems and did not explain how to do the new ones in class.) They argue some, and then she overtly challenges his teaching methods, "Why don't you teach us and then let us do the homework? Not the reverse! Your way we ain't learnin' nothin' and we don't know what we're doin'!" Anice makes very negative remarks about the school and the teacher not being any good. Ellis replies saying she does not listen or do her work. The teacher and she go round and round, bickering like this until the bell rings a couple of minutes later.

As the students file out, Mr. Ellis sits at the front of the room rubbing his eyes. Duncan had left without ever being sent to the office, and the lesson had never reached the students. In the 40-minute class period, Ellis verbally sanctioned students on at least 22 separate occasions, and students had challenged or rebelled from his lesson on at least 24 separate occasions. Moreover, sociable discourse occurred at nearly three times the rate of academic discourse.

The example here is illustrative because it shows the social frame sweep away the presence of the academic frame. The dominance of the social frame is most clear when the boys cue and coordinate their "fart game." The incident diffuses rapidly as actors push aside all tasks for the social affairs of their peers. The students who are involved are highly animated and laugh the entire time, drawing participation away from the teacher's uninspiring review of math problems at the overhead. This abrupt transformation and its intensity of positive emotional expression leave a strong residue on the classroom participants and the situations that follow (Turner 2002). This makes it hard for the teacher to reestablish even a mild semblance of his lecture routine.

Hence, the teacher is in an odd predicament where he must breach and demobilize adolescent social affairs so as to direct energies back into his "lecture" again. It is clear that he is not looking for total compliance but some minimal recognition of his lesson so that he can at least lecture over the students. His efforts to quiet students never gets a tolerable level of compliance, so he loses his temper and tells a popular, vocal student named Duncan to "shut up." The teacher's bald statement is a near insult and shocks the accepted social situation. The exclamation clearly angers Duncan, who redresses the breach by reciprocating the insult (e.g., "You shut up!") and claiming that the collective agrees with him that the teacher's authority does not apply (e.g., "*No one* wants to listen to you!"). Duncan is an agent of the student collective and the social framework. At this

point, the teacher administers his harshest formal sanction (pink slip to principal's office), but he is refused. This refusal and denial of the official sanction is very disturbing since it is unclear where the teacher can go from there. Both parties restate their stands and deny the claims of the other: Ellis presses his formal authority, and Duncan denies it.

The social transformation holds and Ellis's efforts to breach and redirect it repeatedly fail as new waves of social activity flood out the floor upon which he tries to enact various interaction rituals of discipline and repair. Ellis only succeeds at detaching and controlling a few students at a time, while the rest remain steadfast in the social framework. As the year progresses, the arguments grow more rancorous and the teacher withdraws more and more. In fact, the next day this class has an extended snowball fight in the room (snow was on the windowsills). Desks and chairs were pushed aside as snow flew, and the boys tried to stuff snow down each other's shirts and pants. The class was sheer pandemonium for at least 15 minutes. This time the teacher tried to send three students to the office but they again refused. In effect, the students do what they want and rebel from academic affairs whenever the teacher tries to start a lesson. The teacher repeatedly seeks to reinstate the academic frame, but he grows more and more ineffective at doing so as the year wears on.

Schism

Not all social dramas end in reintegrated classrooms. Irreparable schisms can arise where participants get so entrenched in their opposing views that compromise seems impossible. In these instances, the social drama of resistance escalates to the point where it is hard to imagine the academic situation being reintegrated without one of the parties losing their membership in the setting. In fact, the schism is often reinforced by the forced role-exit of a resistant student, which, in turn, confirms and expands the chasm between teacher and students (Turner 1974, p. 41). Schisms are therefore dissonant outcomes because the long-term resolution is an agreement to continue in a state of animosity and it is often sparked by some tragic outcome like role-exit (Ebaugh 1988).

I observed one such tragic outcome in a tenth grade English classroom at Rural High (re683, 12/9/96). The social drama of resistance ends in a long-term schism because the students and teacher become increasingly divided, and both sides see costs at full compliance with the other side's demands. Hence, there is little negotiation. In order to thwart a full rebellion, the teacher expels a student, but in so doing, she establishes a dissonant state between herself and the students. There is an insurmountable divide between the warring parties, as both parties agree to

disagree and move on in an imbalanced state of mutual antipathy. In the example below, I present the extended field notes so as to illustrate the cumulative features of dramas that have been discussed so far.

Example 10

Chaos and schism.—The first seven minutes of class concern maintenance and are characterized by students loudly socializing and teasing the teacher. At the end of the segment, the teacher hands back homework and criticizes the fact that only 8 of the 19 turned in anything. The students openly guffaw at this.

With maintenance out of the way, the teacher starts the day's assignment and distributes a handout that describes how sources are cited in research papers (10:17 a.m.). She explains to students that they are to complete note cards and cite works in their papers. She then reads from the handout, "First, as you take notes for your research paper, you will be gathering different kinds of information . . . (she continues)." After a couple of minutes, Jefe, one of the more popular, disinterested students at the back of the class starts complaining. He exclaims, "This class is so boring!" and the teacher responds with a sanction, "Quiet, Jefe." Jefe challenges her further, "You need to make it more interesting!!" (10:18 a.m.), but the teacher ignores Jefe and moves on with the lesson. "Number two. If you wish to paraphrase . . . (and on she goes)." Meanwhile, students are carrying on social conversations in private, and several do so openly. A female student named Erin asks the teacher a clarification question to which the teacher responds. Erin feels the teacher's response makes little sense. They snap exchanges that end with the teacher quieting Erin and Erin dismissing the teacher. Erin sarcastically retorts, "Whatever!" Meanwhile, another student (Angelo) asks, "Why do we need to do this work?" (10:23 a.m.). Mrs. M quickly replies, "Because you'll flunk if you don't." Angelo and Erin then ask odd procedural questions that throw Mrs. M off. She tries to end this barrage of distracting questions with an honest answer, "I don't know." She then moves on to describe the assignment and her expectations. A couple of minutes later, another student (Jon) loudly remarks, "This is stupid!" (10:25 a.m.). Mrs. M does not reply to him directly but to the entire class, and she attempts to mobilize them into a more focused state. She shouts, "Come on! You guys can handle it!" Mrs. M coaxes them along and explains the assignment yet again but in more simplistic terms than before. She then attempts to get the class to actually begin writing their research papers.

As the seatwork segment begins, a student at the front of the class (Hanah) challenges the teacher's instructional methods, "You are really making too much work for yourself (grading all the speeches and papers)."

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The student is actually trying to persuade the teacher to make the assignment easier in an effort to lessen the workload (10:27 a.m.). But Mrs. M is on to this and tells Hanah to be quiet and do the work. Moreover, when publicly addressing Hanah (so that the rest will hear), she tries to justify the task she has assigned so the class will begin doing it. She argues that if she made the assignment even easier, sure they could do it, but they would not learn anything.

At the back of the class, Jefe has qualms with this justification. He interrupts the teacher and refers to the teaching style of his favorite teacher (who, in student surveys, also happens to be the least demanding): “Mr. B makes it easier and more interesting and we do it (work) in there!” (10:29 a.m.). A couple of male classmates agree with Jefe’s claim, thus reinforcing the challenge (to 10:30 a.m.). At this point, the teacher looks overwhelmed by her students. They continually complain, goof around, interrupt her, and challenge her efforts to instruct them. The students fight her at every turn.

Mrs. M gets visibly upset and almost shouts at the disgruntled students, stating that she does not care what other teachers do and that the students need to quit whining and just do the work. She tries to shift from arguing about the assignment to the students’ actually doing it quietly in their seats.

Jefe says, “Why should I do it? I don’t need this for my future! I’m not going to college! I can just work at my brother’s club.” (His brother manages a nightclub in a suburb over an hour away; 10:32 A.M.). A male student across the room (Jon) counterclaims Jefe to say, “Yeah you do!” Mrs. M then tries to build on this student’s counterclaim by explaining to Jefe that Jon is right and that writing is important even if he does not go to college. She even tries to give examples of when he will need to write, such as job applications, business proposals, and so on. However, Jefe is not persuaded by this explanation and continues to complain to the teacher and those sitting around him (Ryan). He also jokes with a friend across the room (Mike). Jefe’s neighbors laugh at what he says and reinforce his claims, but the teacher puts her foot down and says, “Just do it!” After about 30 seconds of quiet, Jefe stands up, loudly crumples his paper into a wad (it consisted of two sentences he wrote), and tosses it halfway across the room into the waste bin. His classmates laugh and compliment him on his shot (10:35 A.M.).

Mrs. M: Jefe! Ask me to get out of your seat!

Jefe: [Defiantly, Jefe stands up again and crumples another piece of paper]

I can get up or out whenever I want. Can I get up? [Throws paper across the room into the wastebasket; few of his peers giggle.]

Mrs. M: You keep it up and you’ll be gone for good.

Zach: Jefe, remember your contract, you’ve used one.

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Jefe: Good, do it

Mrs. M: Okay—you're gone. [She goes to her desk drawer, pulls out a pink slip and writes him up—the class is now finally completely quiet. She stands at the front of the room, holding the pink slip for Jefe.]

Jefe: [Grabbing the slip at the front of the room] I'm happy to not be in here! [Smiles and walks out the door with the pink slip in hand; 10:37]

The students are somewhat quiet after Jefe leaves, but within a minute, they begin to openly complain. The students now complain how harsh Mrs. M was on Jefe, and they take up his cause, albeit in a less rebellious form. Mrs. M tries to ignore their complaints. Two friends of Jefe joke openly about the teacher, "Yeah she's a dumb sub. . . . I hear she lives down by the river!" (implying she's a hick/loser). The teacher contains student expressions of discontent by asking them to be quiet and do the work. This maintains some modicum of order, but the class teeters close to chaos. At one point, two female students shout loudly across the room to each other and the teacher shouts at them to stop. Both characterize Mrs. M's shouting at them as overly harsh and say, "No need to shout, jeez! You need to see a psychiatrist!" This causes an uproar of laughter, as many students openly joke about the remark with their neighbors. At this, the teacher turns on Eva, who tries to avoid responsibility, "I just wanted to talk to Sarah (to tell her something)" (10:45 a.m.). Mrs. M makes short directives and sanctions until everyone is more focused again ("Work, don't talk!" "Turn around!" "Shhh!"). After a minute or two, she withdraws to her desk, only intermittently sanctioning students who are very loud. More students begin to do their work (10 of 18 work on their papers, 8 still openly socialize), but even in this slightly more sedated state, she must deal with complaints, socializing, and students trying to get out of doing the homework.

As for Jefe, he was put on out-of-school suspension and never attended Mrs. M's class again. Students openly taunted the teacher as overly harsh. Toward the end of the class period, the teacher sanctions a student for talking, and her friend uses it as an opportunity to bring up the Jefe incident, "Watch out, she might expel you too!" When the teacher tells Sarah to be quiet, Sarah asks, "Why are you always so mean to Jefe!" The teacher counters this claim and explains, "I'm not. He was rude and went too far." Sarah then gives a counterinterpretation, "He's nice. He just doesn't want to look bad, that's all." Just then the bell rings and all interaction comes to a close.

Jefe became somewhat of a martyr, signifying the teacher's illegitimacy as a leader and leading students to further distance themselves from tasks (Turner 1974, chap. 3). Students used the Jefe incident to remind the teacher of how "unfairly" harsh she was. The next day, several students brought the incident up (re683, 12/10/96): Eva—"Why do you talk about

Jefe with other classes? You hate Jefe, don't you?" (suggesting she was mean and badmouthing him); Sarah (says to Eva)—"She probably talks about you with her other classes as well." Hence, even the severest sanction Mrs. M could apply was eventually used to mock and challenge her, furthering the tension in the class. Her expulsion of Jefe did have a temporary effect—students made fewer public outbursts in the next day of class (approximately 15 instead of 32), but the teacher became even more concerned with control (about 51 teacher reprimands instead of 41).

The example of Jefe and Mrs. M illustrates several things about social dramas and irreparable schisms (*example 10 is schematized in table 3*). First, initial acts of defiance define the warring parties, and then peer reinforcement and redressive actions serve to widen the breach and build a mounting crisis. Jefe and the teacher attempt to build coalitions and get reinforcement for their viewpoints. Jefe seeks his classmates' approval, and they egg him on. Similarly, the teacher seeks her pupils' approval, and she tries to justify her actions and interpretation so as to garner student support for her side of the dispute. She even builds on a student's (Jon's) challenge of Jefe, since this frames Jefe's rebellion as an illegitimate effort lacking support and reason. Hence, the social drama's progression is mutually constructed and negotiated by teacher and students, as each seeks to establish authority within the crowd. Second, acts of defiance and redress are repeated and increasingly serious. There arises a mounting crisis that everyone observes. The teacher's inability to cope with problems creates a sense of liminality where anything goes. When the teacher redresses Jefe's resistant efforts, a crisis arises where the teacher and Jefe become foes enmeshed in a character contest (Goffman 1967). Third, this episode of rebellion ends in tragedy when Jefe is expelled. Even though the teacher re-establishes a tenuous academic situation in the class, the social structure has changed. Students use the episode to goad the teacher into looser sanctions, while the teacher uses it to threaten students into compliance. As a result, this tragic outcome becomes a key event in the class's shared experience, and it is referenced in future conflicts so as to drive a deeper wedge between teacher and students over time.³⁴

Each of the examples in this article illustrates the general structure of social drama episodes and how they reach more immediate resolutions. Underemphasized is the fact that many of these episodes reoccur or get

³⁴ Jefe gets expelled for a few days and gets placed in another class. However, the schism of this class actually expands over time until eventually Mrs. M mysteriously resigns in the middle of the second semester. The school's official line was "family obligations," but it is possible that the job became too much to bear.

TABLE 3
DECONSTRUCTION OF EXAMPLE 10

Activity Segment	Student Action	Teacher Action
1. Maintenance 10:10–10:16 A.M.	NA	NA
2. Lecture 10:17–10:25	Complain 1 (Jefe) Challenge 1 (Jefe) Complain 2 (Erin K) Challenge 2 (Angelo) Complain 3 (Jon)	Direct detach (“quiet”) Ignore Direct detach (“quiet”) Direct threat (value ~ flunk) Indirect amplify (belief ~ capable)
3. Seatwork 10:26–10:32	Challenge 3 (Hanah) Challenge 4 (Jefe) Peer reinforced	Direct detach (indirect justify) Indirect deny (detach baldly)
3a. Expulsion episode 10:32–10:37	Rebellion 1 (Jefe) Peer redress (deny, Jon) Complain 4 (Jefe) Bridge peers (complain) Peer reinforced Rebellion 2 (Jefe) Peer reinforced (laugh) Rebellion 3 (Jefe) Peer caution (Zach) Rebellion 4 (Jefe) Acceptance (Jefe) Insult-departure (Jefe)	Direct bridge (Jon) (justify and expand) Direct detach Direct sanction (directive) Direct threat (expel) Direct coercion offer (expel)
4. Seatwork continues 10:38–11:00	More resistance but contained	

objectified in a way that effects future remedial interchanges. Social drama episodes often establish pathways of resolution that become easier to invoke with each enactment. Actors become familiarized with “how things were done in the past,” and they try to steer actions down these paths if it will serve their ends. For instance, the illustration of a social revolution in example 9 is not an isolated episode for that class. I observed similar dramas for that class on multiple school days and with increasing frequency. In fact, the very next day, I recorded a snowball fight in the classroom where students again refused to go to the office and the class never stopped socializing to focus on their tasks. The same cliques led the rebellion, the teacher adopted similar reprimands, and the students refused and counterframed events (i.e., humor) in a similar fashion.

If continually repeated, even a seemingly minor drama like a negotiated outcome can lead to substantial changes over time. For instance, example 8 is an episode that reoccurs. Over the course of the school year, this teacher found her students challenged and undermined more tasks. Eventually, students began to invoke these instances as a larger narrative justifying their repeated insurrections. The students saw the teacher as incompetent and could readily cite past instances where this shortcoming was mutually acknowledged and managed. This served to reinforce their challenge efforts. Hence, the seemingly minor social dramas of negotiated outcomes not only established a familiar pattern of mutual coordination, but past episodes became stories actors could invoke to legitimate a cause in the present.

In the case of the schism (example 10), the ad hoc telling of the drama became a tool of the resistance. Jefe’s dramatic departure from the class was characterized as “overly harsh,” and students would remind the teacher of this overstep at every turn—“Watch out, she might expel you too!” Over time, this reinforced a situation of mutual animosity and further divided teacher from students. In sum, then, social drama episodes not only reveal patterns of immediate social change, but they also become pathways to more substantial, long-term change when repeatedly invoked or used as a guiding narrative.

CONCLUSION

Social change is often commenced by episodes of resistance. But resistance is not just a discrete act that loses social relevance after it has been uttered. A series of interactions follow these incipient events and characterize a larger social process of deconstruction and reconstruction that I have called a social drama of resistance. Every social drama of resistance is promulgated by intentional actors who cue cultural forms (rituals) in order

to guide interaction in certain desired directions. By viewing resistance as a larger change-oriented process, the importance of processual units is elevated and sociological research gains a better understanding of how situations are reproduced, altered, and revolutionized.

This article has illustrated how dramas of resistance can follow certain trajectories of events (see fig. 3). Each trajectory is defined by actors who invoke ritual interactions or framing strategies at each stage of the drama, attempting to turn the sequence of events in directions most favorable to their preferred definition of the classroom situation. Most resistant behavior remains passive critique and fails to demobilize academic affairs and incite a social crisis in the classroom. Jokes and complaints diagnose problems and deconstruct the seriousness of academic endeavors, but they do not posit an alternative way of doing things. Instead, it is active, collective forms of resistance like challenges and rebellions that demobilize tasks and posit alternative frameworks of interaction. These overt forms of nonconformity must find resonance in the classroom audience and must call actors to take sides or else the breach implodes on itself. However, even when the crisis successfully mounts, it can be redressed effectively by teachers so as to minimize support for the resistance, undermine the voiced cause, and reinforce the prior academic routine. Initially, teachers use minor forms of framing and contestation, but students may reject these efforts and their initial breach may be so severe that the teacher must resort to more drastic forms of redress, such as extension, limitation, transformation, and reversal. In this iterative cycle of debate and redress, the platforms of teacher and students get developed and elaborated. The crisis ratchets up until the collective situation explodes and adopts some form of resolution. Should the resistance retain its support, collective challenges can result in various negotiated outcomes, while collective rebellion can result in schism and social revolution. The resolution is therefore contingent on the initial breach and the dynamic retention of social support as mutually defined in the teacher's and the students' persuasive efforts at redress. What results is a resistance drama that has certain primary channels or patterns of flow across stage-specific rituals of interaction.

Remiss in this work is some discussion of how larger cultural frames of race, gender, and class affect the process of resistance dramas (Hoyle and Adger 1998; Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Turner 2002). There is research that suggests certain minorities (Goodwin 1980), working-class groups (Willis 1977), and genders (Tannen 1993) will use different forms of resistance to breach situations. Hence, boys, minorities, and working-class adolescents may adopt more active rebellious stands, whereas girls, whites, and wealthy adolescents may adopt more passive forms of non-compliance or challenges (Phelan, Davidson, and Cao 1991). In addition,

some work even suggests that teacher and student strategies of redress may vary due to biased expectations and attributions of motives (Cummins 1986). This work found only mild evidence for this at the breach stage (McFarland 2001) and saw most students adopt the remaining maneuvers in equivalent fashion as responses. However, more systematic research may find that wider categorical frames affect the processual structure of resistance at every stage, leading actors to perceive a narrower range of appropriate interaction rituals for them to adopt.

Even though this was a limited study, focused on two schools, it did span over 165 classroom settings that entailed a wide assortment of classroom compositions, student social networks, subject matter, and teaching formats. Class composition, race, and gender may influence the array of framing strategies that actors are comfortable using (and expected to use), and structural features of classrooms such as friendship networks and work routines (tasks) define whether actors even have the opportunity to speak (McFarland 2001). While a variety of these traits may exist in any one school or classroom, they are finite, and I think the range of examples I show in this article span many of the possible combinations. Hence, I believe the findings here extend to a wide array of other high school classroom settings.

That said, the processes I describe may be less common in elementary and university settings. I believe there are fewer active, collective breaches in elementary classrooms because students are exposed to the same teacher all day, which creates a more personal environment. College students are also less resistant because they voluntarily select which courses to take, thereby giving teachers greater leverage over student motives than high school teachers have with their involuntary recruits (Bidwell 1965). Hence, it is likely that these types of social dramas are infrequent in elementary school and college classrooms. Whether these findings extend to other work settings is less clear and depends on how similar the organizational arrangements are to schools.³⁵ Like Scott (1990), I think it reasonable that with greater domination there will be developed hidden transcripts and resistance dramas will arise more often. In most cases, resistance dramas will resemble those I have described in the body of this article, but es-

³⁵ In prisons, there will always be the possibility of what I called “rebellion” since persons are involuntary members whose actions are highly constrained. Adopting another interpretive framework altogether makes sense in those circumstances since it potentially offers the individual a positive identity. In most other organizational settings, the members are there on their own volition. Should these individuals become displeased, they will either quit or enact what I termed “challenges” of authority. My suspicion is that passive resistance and mutinous behaviors are the most common in typical organizational settings and that, when repeatedly enacted, they change the social order over time.

tablishing such a claim more fully will require further research in contexts outside schools (Tucker 1993).

The strength of this qualitative work has been its ability to show how interpretive frames and strategic workings of them are relevant to the process of situational change. Further qualitative studies of micro-to-macro change will be fruitful if they reveal how localized dramas can reverberate and change larger social structures like schools. Theory suggests that changes in microencounters will lead to broader social change when key players are involved (central to system) and when the dramas occur at key moments, or at least in settings that are central to the school system's maintenance. Micro-to-macro change is also increased when the social drama has great emotional intensity, is visible, and reoccurs with many participants involved (Turner 2002, pp. 247–48). It may be impossible for classroom dramas to hold these attributes, and therefore they are incapable of invoking larger system-level changes in education. However, classrooms offer a relatively closed natural setting wherein we can observe and learn how localized transformations come about. As such, they are petri dishes or test cases for what could be studied in other settings so as to get at societal change, writ large.

This study presents certain challenges for future work. If the reader agrees there are multiple frameworks or standpoints from which definitional claims are presented and staked, it means that multiple, antithetical perspectives of the same behavior can arise and do so often. This suggests that a great deal of social behavior works within the ambiguities and regions between frameworks and social situations. This is the topic of current studies being developed with regard to multivocal actions and how strategic actors work the ambiguity and contradictions in both social encounters and social structure (Merton 1976; Steinberg 1999; McFarland 1999). This developing body of scholarship finds that, in the world of interaction, actors frequently use humor and fabrications as a means to manage contradictions of frame without attracting negative attributions of character.

Last, this work calls upon scholars to further develop the role of emotion in change-oriented processes (Hochschild 1983; Benford and Hunt 1992, p. 50; Turner 2002). Emotion is central to resistance, but it is given short shrift in this article due to data limitations. Future analyses can improve on this work by taking into account the emotion-work and the emotional reactions that teachers and students (or any contesting parties) express. Because student resistance is a dramatic form of ritual action, it tends to charge normative differences with emotional significance and achieve a cathartic effect for the social order, regardless of whether the result is reproduction, negotiated compromise, or social transformation (Turner 1974, pp. 55–56; Turner 2002). There is a degree of exchange between

polar positions in the liminal periods, such that even in cases of reproduction, the two parties come to see some element of the other's perspective. Future work needs to further describe how emotion affects and is affected by change-oriented processes like resistance.

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