

# Capital

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a) On page xii of *Bootstraps*, Victor Villanueva writes, “language is also race in America.” The same can be said about language and race on a global level. Discuss in detail one of the terms listed below in relation to issues of language and race. Use at least three figurehead scholars from the course. Cover the meaning(s) of the term as well as its strategic uses. Throughout your response, you **should be making an argument that demonstrates that the concept under discussion opens up important areas of knowledge and inquiry for the RWS field.**

On page xii of *Bootstraps*, Victor Villanueva writes, “language is also race in America.” The same can be said about language and race on a global level. As such, language (and race) are capital, a key concept in rhetoric. Capital in language is embodying and employing the language practices of successful social groups and capital is having the economic stability that allows for Capital is color conscious, racist, dependent on language and performances to be self-sustaining. Bourdieu: “Capital can be understood as the ‘energy’ that drives the development of a field through time. Capital in action is the enactment of the principal of the field” (p. 105). “Bourdieu’s purpose is to extend the sense of the term ‘capital’ by employing it in a wider system of exchanges whereby complex networks or circuits within and across different fields” (p. 102).

#### Bourdieu: Moore,

“[C]apital is objectified as *habitus*, and is embodied and realized in practice” (p. 111). Capital is embodied. Capital knows which fork to use and what types of clothes to wear. Capital is trust-worthiness and ethos, in both ideas and individuals. It is a good reputation both personally and professionally.

**Shubert on Bourdieu** – “Bourdieu identifies *linguistic capital* as a component of cultural capital. It would be incorrect to say that these students had no cultural capital. We all have cultural capital. The question is, do we have the appropriate kinds of sanctioned cultural capital? Will the cultural capital that we possess allow for a a trouble-free fit between our *habitus* and the educational *field*?” (p. 197 n)

“The fundamental difference between economic and symbolic capital, that is crucial to understanding how the concept operates within Bourdieu’s system, is that in the former, the instrumental and self-interested nature of the exchange is transparent. Mercantile exchange is not of intrinsic value, but is always only a means to an end (profit, interest, a wage, etc). Bourdieu contends that this is also true for other forms of symbolic capital, but that they, in their distinctive ways, deny and suppress their instrumentalism by proclaiming themselves to be disinterested and of intrinsic worth” (p. 103).

**Stuart** – pgs. 38 – 68. Especially pgs. 39 – 41

“the problem is not whether economic structures are relevant to racial divisions but how the two are theoretically connected” (p. 42),

Cultural capital – embodied /cumulative effect

**Pennycook** – capital is found in authenticity, ownership of language, fluidity of language.

“The perspective I am trying to open up here, then, suggests that ‘history, tradition and identity are all performances, all the result of invested actors who position themselves vis-à-vis others in a complex and unfolding reality not of their own making” (p. 62)

English, Standard English and English Only are all ways of trying to maintain capital.

**Canagarajah**, 2006 “The classroom is a powerful site of policy negotiation. The pedagogies practiced and texts produced in the classroom can reconstruct policies ground up. In fact, the classroom is already a policy site; every time teachers insist on a uniform variety of language or discourse, we are helping reproduce monolingualist ideologies and linguistic hierarchies” (p. 587).

“These changes are encouraging a reconsideration of the native/nonnative distinction between varieties. They compel us to think of English as a plural language that embodies multiple norms and standards. English should be treated as a multinational language, one that belongs to diverse communities and not owned only by the metropolitan communities” (p. 589).

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**Stuart** – pgs. 38 – 68. Especially pgs. 39 – 41

“the problem is not whether economic structures are relevant to racial divisions but how the two are theoretically connected” (p. 42),

**Villanueva.** Villanueva writes from a position with less capital than other positions. For Villanueva, capital resides in the power to effect change. – “Change is possible, I believe. Language used consciously, a matter of rhetoric, is a principal means – perhaps *the* means - by which change can begin to take place” (p. 121).

Villanueva – Consensus and the ability to confront differences

“Collaboration in the traditional classroom tended to turn on matters of correctness, correctness seen in terms of the expectations of the academic community” (p. 113)

**West:** “what Bhabha calls anteriority: a *sense* of pre-giveness, the weight and authority of seeming to preexist, re-created continually in the present”

West, pgs. 13 – 26 – **Critical negotiations** can be a form of capital. West advocates for a new ‘playing field’ for discussions of race – says that the Latin root for the term ‘critical negotiation’ would be to create unease (p. 15) which would further information. SAY WHY HERE This is the same concept at the praxis of shelter where shelter was also preparation for dealing with discrimination in the ‘outside world.’ It is a way of gathering capital by being informed as to what is happening if nothing else. Information as capital turned active – shared information, studies,

**Safe house** – respite from the world but not preparation for it. no real capital gained/sought – Yosso’s student organizations that supported culture – safe houses where students could go and talk about incidences of micro-aggressions.

**Praxis of safety** – respite and preparation, knowledge making, “Yosso’s organizations on steroids” – respite and safe environment to identify micro-aggressions as such – examples of discrimination/racism plus ways of dealing with the next micro-aggression

**PLUS,** strategies for handling situations, knowledge about why the discrimination exists (scholarship), training the world to be sensitive - one bloody person at a time.

Bourdieu – the ability to effect or resist change

West – praxis of safety – a place to develop the ability to confront differences.

Villanueva – Consensus and the ability to confront differences

“Collaboration in the traditional classroom tended to turn on matters of correctness, correctness seen in terms of the expectations of the academic community” (p. 113). How true is this outside academia or is that not our problem? Canagarajah - capital/agency/power can be found in the classroom if we can find the pedagogy that works for all purposes -

**HEGEMONY** (hegemonic): The processes by which dominant culture maintains its dominant position: for example, the use of institutions to formalize power; the employment of a bureaucracy to make power seem abstract (and, therefore, not attached to any one individual); the inculcation of the populace in the ideals of the hegemonic group through education, advertising, publication, etc.; the mobilization of a police force as well as military personnel to subdue opposition – Wikipedia – have to find source.

Descriptions and Definitions:

Capital is power, clout, money, acceptance, approval, reputation, status, etc. It is imbued in the acts of individuals and institutions.

Examples: (need to re-order examples)

Hegemony - (Omi and Winant, 2002, pgs. 129 - 132) "the conditions necessary, in a given society, for the achievement and consolidation of rule" (p. 130).

"to consolidate their hegemony, ruling groups must elaborate and maintain a popular system of ideas and practices - through education, the media, religion, folk wisdom, etc" (p. 130). Hegemony is habitus - both serve the continuation of status quo in power structures. This is a way of seeing capital as 1. how capital works without ethical judgments attached (Bourdieu)- these forms of capital are always imbued with social behavior and supported by economic capital - and 2. capital as the ability to maintain current power structures, there's not much difference here except that the behaviors are not natural behaviors based on the issues

Ownership of English by others (Pennycook, West, Mangelsdorf - Canagarajah) - the fluidity of language offers agency.

Pennycook:

Pennycook – capital is found in authenticity, ownership of language, fluidity of language.

“The perspective I am trying to open up here, then, suggests that ‘history, tradition and identity are all performances, all the result of invested actors who position themselves vis-à-vis others in a complex and unfolding reality not of their own making” (p. 62). Performativity can be an example of how capital is personified. It can also support habitus and performativity.

Praxis of safety vs. safe house provides more power - potential capital

Capital affects race:  
economic  
social

Scholars

Bourdieu's thinking tools - field, habitus and capital -  
Capital is the point of the habitus on the field. Therefore, the term 'capital' is often interchangeable with power. This affects issues of RCT because people of color often work from a less powerful structure

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