An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology

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perceiving and acting subjects, but also to discover that, when it realizes itself in certain social positions, among the dominated in particular, it represents the most radical form of acceptance of the world, the most absolute form of conservatism. This relation of prereflexive acceptance of the world grounded in a fundamental belief in the immediacy of the structures of the *Lebenswelt* represents the ultimate form of conformism. There is no way of adhering to the established order that is more undivided, more complete than this infrapolitical relation of doxic evidence; there is no fuller way of finding natural conditions of existence that would be revolting to somebody socialized under other conditions and who does not grasp them through categories of perception fashioned by this world.[14]

This alone explains a good number of misunderstandings between intellectuals and workers, where the latter take for granted and find acceptable, even "natural," conditions of oppression and exploitation that are sickening to those "on the outside"—which in no way excludes practical forms of resistance and the possibility of a revolt against them (Bourdieu et al. 1963; Bourdieu 1980d and 1981c). But the best illustration of the political import of doxa is arguably the symbolic violence exercised upon women.[15] I think in particular of the sort of socially constituted agoraphobia that leads women to exclude themselves from a whole range of public activities and ceremonies from which they are structurally excluded (in accordance with the dichotomies public/male versus private/female), especially in the realm of formal politics. Or which explains that they can confront these situations, at the cost of an extreme tension, only in proportion to the effort necessary for them to overcome the recognition of their exclusion inscribed deep in their own bodies (see Bourdieu 1990i). Thus, what comes with a narrowly phenomenological or ethnomethodological analysis is the neglect of the historical underpinnings of this relation of immediate fit between subjective and objective structures and the elision of its political significance, that is, depoliticization.

14. The two-way relation (of conditioning on the one hand, of structuring on the other) between a position in a social space and the categories of perception that come with it, and which tend to mirror its structure, is captured by Bourdieu with the notion of "point of view as a view taken from a point" (see Bourdieu 1988e, 1989d and 1988d, on "Flaubert's Point of View"; and 1989a: part 1, pp. 19–81 in particular). It is discussed in some detail below, sec. 4.

15. On the symbolic violence of gender, see Bourdieu 1990i and below, sec. 5.

2 The Unique and the Invariant

Homo Academicus deals exclusively with a particular case at a particular time: French academics in the 1960s. How does one generalize the analyses that you propose in it? For example, can the underlying structure of the French academic universe be found in another country at another time, say the United States in the 1990s?

One of the goals of the book is to show that *the opposition between the universal and the unique, between nomothetic analysis and idiographic description, is a false antinomy*. The relational and analogical mode of reasoning fostered by the concept of field enables us to grasp particularity within generality and generality within particularity, by making it possible to see the French case as a "particular case of the possible," as Bachelard (1949) says. Better, the unique historical properties of the French academic field—its high degree of centralization and institutional unification, its well-delimited barriers to entry—make it a highly propitious terrain for uncovering some of the universal laws that tendentially regulate the functioning of all fields.

One can and must read *Homo Academicus* as a program of research on *any* academic field. In fact, by means of a mere mental experimentation, the American (Japanese, Brazilian, etc.) reader can do the work of transposition and discover, through homological reasoning, a good number of things about his or her own professional universe. Of course, this is no substitute for a thorough scientific study of the American scientific field. I toyed with the idea of doing such a study a few years back; I had begun gathering data and documents during a previous sojourn in the United States. At the time I even thought of putting together a team with some American colleagues to try to cumulate all advantages, those of the theoretical mastery of a comparative model and those of primary familiarity with the universe to be analyzed. I believe that, in the American case, such a project would in some ways be easier, given that there exist series of yearly statistics that are much more elaborate and readily available, on professors, on the various student bodies, and on universities, particularly university hierarchies and rankings of departments. (In the French case I had to build, often from scratch, a whole battery of indicators that had not existed.) I even think that a very worthwhile first pass could be done on the basis of a secondary analysis of data already compiled.

My hypothesis is that we would find the same main oppositions, in

particular that between *academic capital* linked to power over the instruments of reproduction and *intellectual capital* linked to scientific renown, but that this opposition would be expressed in different forms. Would it be more or less pronounced? Is the capacity of an academic power devoid of scientific grounding to perpetuate itself greater in France or in the United States? Only a full study could tell us the answer. Such research could also give an empirical answer to the question (raised periodically, both by the American sociology of the French university system and by the French uses of the American model as an instrument of critique of the French system) of whether this American system that presents itself as more competitive and "meritocratic" is more favorable to scientific autonomy from social forces than the French system.

Does this not also raise the problem of the relation of academics to the powers that be?

Here, too, we would need to have very precise measurements of the relation of American scholars to the various institutions that are part of what I call the "field of power."[16] In France, you have indicators

16. On the notion of field of power, by which Pierre Bourdieu seeks to get away from the substantialist cast of the concept of "ruling class," see Bourdieu 1989a, esp. pp. 373–427; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1991; and below, part 3, sec. 2. A liminary definition is the following: "The field of power is a *field of forces* defined by the structure of the existing balance of forces between forms of power, or between different species of capital. It is also simultaneously a *field of struggles for power among the holders of different forms of power.* It is a space of play and competition in which the social agents and institutions which all possess the determinate quantity of specific capital (economic and cultural capital in particular) sufficient to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields [the economic field, the field of higher civil service or the state, the university field, and the intellectual field] confront one another in strategies aimed at preserving or transforming this balance of forces. . . . This struggle for the imposition of the dominant principle of domination leads, at every moment, to a balance in the sharing of power, that is, to what I call a *division of the work of domination.* It is also a struggle over the legitimate principle of legitimation and for the legitimate mode of reproduction of the foundations of domination. This can take the form of real, physical struggles, (as in "palace revolutions" or wars of religion for instance) or of symbolic confrontations (as in the discussions over the relative ranking of *oratores*, priests, and *bellatores*, knights, in Medieval Europe). . . . The field of power is organized as a chiasmatic structure: the distribution according to the dominant principle of hierarchization (economic capital) is inversely symmetrical to the distribution according to the dominated principle of hierarchization (cultural capital)" (unpublished lecture, "The Field of Power," University of Wisconsin at Madison, April 1989).

such as membership in official administrative commissions, governmental committees, advisory boards, unions, etc. In the United States, I think that one would have to focus on scientific "blue-ribbon" panels, expert reports, and especially on the large philanthropic foundations and institutes of policy research that play a crucial, albeit largely hidden, role in defining the broader directions of research. On this count, my hypothesis would be that the structural ties between the university field and the field of power are stronger in the United States. Of course, one would need to take into consideration another difference: the specificity of the very structure of the American political field, characterized, very cursorily, by federalism, the multiplication of and conflicts between different levels of decision making, the absence of leftist parties and of a strong tradition of oppositional trade unionism, the weak and weakening role of "public intellectuals" (Gans 1989), and so on.

Those who dismiss my analyses on account of their "Frenchness" (every time I visit the United States, there is somebody to tell me that "in the mass culture of America, taste does not differentiate between class positions")[17] fail to see that what is truly important in them is not so much the substantive results themselves as the process through which they are obtained. "Theories" are research programs that call not for "theoretical debate" but for a practical utilization that either refutes or generalizes them or, better, specifies and differentiates their claim to generality. Husserl taught that you must immerse yourself in the particular to find in it the invariant. And Koyré (1966), who had attended Husserl's lectures, showed that Galileo did not have to repeat the experiment of the inclined plane to understand the phenomenon of the fall of bodies. A particular case that is well constructed ceases to be particular.

17. The denial—or denegation—of class distinctions in matters of culture in America has a long and distinguished pedigree, tracing its roots back to Tocqueville and accelerating with the sacralization of upper-class cultural forms at the turn of the century (Levine 1988, DiMaggio 1991b). Thus Daniel Bell (cited in Gans 1975: 6) could safely write in 1970: "Art [as representative of high-class culture] has become increasingly autonomous, making the artist a powerful taste-maker in his own right; the 'social location' of the individual (his social class or other position) no longer determines his life-style and his values. . . . For the majority of the society . . . this general proposition may still hold true. But it is increasingly evident that, for a significant proportion of the population, the relation of social position to cultural style—particularly if one thinks in gross dimensions such as working class, middle class and upper class—no longer holds." DiMaggio and Useem (1978) have effectively put this view to rest.

Another criticism, already raised against *Distinction* by some of your British and American commentators, is that the data are dated.[18]

One of the purposes of the analysis is to uncover *transhistorical invariants*, or sets of relations between structures that persist within a clearly circumscribed but relatively long historical period. In this case, whether the data are five or fifteen years old matters little. Proof is that the main opposition that emerges, within the space of scholarly disciplines, between the college of arts and sciences on the one hand and the schools of law and medicine on the other, is nothing other than the old opposition, already described by Kant in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, between the faculties that depend directly upon temporal powers and owe their authority to a sort of social delegation and the faculties that are self-founded and whose authority is premised upon scientificity (the faculty of sciences being typical of this category).[19]

Yet another proof, perhaps the most solid, of the propositions I put forth in the realm of education, and of the analysis of cultural consumption, is given by the fact that the surveys conducted at great expense every four years by the French Ministry of Culture regularly confirm the findings obtained twenty-five years ago (to the great outrage of that same Ministry) by our surveys of museum attendance, of the practice of photography, or of the fine arts, etc. And hardly a week goes by without the publication of a book or an article showing that the mechanisms of class reproduction that I described in the sixties, against the dominant representation of the time (in particular the enduring myth of America as the paradise of social mobility), are at work in countries as different as the United States, Sweden, and

18. E.g., Hoffman 1986. Jenkins (1986: 105) gives a version of that criticism so extreme as to the verge on the comical when he writes: "The time lag between data collection and publication . . . renders much of the book incomprehensible to all but dedicated cultural archeologists."

19. In his latest book, *La noblesse d'Etat*, Bourdieu (1989a; also Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1987) carries out another experimental verification of the durability of fields by showing that the structure of the field of the French *Grandes écoles*, conceived as a set of objective positional differences and distances among elite graduate schools, and between them and the social positions of power which lead to them and to which they in turn lead, has remained remarkably constant, nearly identical in fact, over the twenty-year period from 1968 to the present, the spectacular proliferation of business schools and continued decline of the university notwithstanding. Likewise for the position and structure of the subfield of the French episcopate in the field of power over the period 1930–1980 (Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1982).

Japan (Bourdieu 1989c).[20] All of this seems to suggest that if France is an exception, as has often been said in reaction to my work, perhaps it is so only insofar as it has been studied in an exceptional, that is, nonconformist manner.

Precisely. Numerous commentators of various persuasions (e.g., Bidet 1979, DiMaggio 1979, Collins 1981a, Jenkins 1982, Sulkunen 1982, Connell 1983, Aronowitz and Giroux 1985, Wacquant 1987, Gartman 1991) have criticized your models for being overly static and "closed," leaving little room for resistance, change, and the irruption of history.[21] *Homo Academicus* gives at least a partial answer to this concern by putting forth an analysis of a political and social rupture, the May '68 protest, which seeks to dissolve the opposition between reproduction and transformation and between structural history and event history.[22]

I willingly concede that my writings may contain arguments and expressions that render plausible the systematic misreadings that they have suffered. (I must also say in all candor that in many cases I find these criticisms strikingly superficial, and cannot help thinking that those who make them have paid more attention to the titles of my books than to the actual analyses they develop.) In addition to the title of my second book on the educational system, *Reproduction*, whose brutal conciseness helped to establish a simplified vision of my vision of history, I think that some formulas born of the will to break with the ideology of the "liberating school" can appear to be inspired by what I call the "functionalism of the worst case."[23] In fact,

20. E.g., Collins 1979, Oakes 1985, Cookson and Persell 1985a and 1985b, Brint and Karabel 1989, Karabel 1986, Weis 1988, and Fine 1991 on the United States; Broady and Palme 1990 on Sweden; Miyajima et al. 1987 on Japan; Rupp and de Lange 1989 on the Netherlands; and for a wider historical and comparative analysis, Detleff, Ringer and Simon 1987.

21. Two representative criticisms: Karabel et Halsey (1977: 33) contend that Bourdieu's "is not, properly speaking, a conflict theory of education at all, for its scheme leaves no room for working-class resistance to the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie"; Giroux (1983: 92) asserts that, for the French sociologist, "working-class domination . . . appears as part of an Orwellian nightmare that is as irreversible as it is unjust."

22. This is acknowledged by Randall Collins (1989: 463), who had previously taken Bourdieu to task for his lack of concern for historical change: "With this analysis, Bourdieu makes a move to shore up a gap in his earlier work . . . [and] has set himself on the path to a more dynamic analysis."

23. Or what Jon Elster (1990: 113) calls an "inverted sociodicy" based on "the assumption that all is for the worst in the worst possible world."

I have repeatedly denounced both this pessimistic functionalism and the dehistoricizing that follows from a strictly structuralist standpoint (e.g., Bourdieu 1968b, 1980b, and 1987a: 56ff.). Similarly, I do not see how relations of domination, whether material or symbolic, could possibly operate without implying, activating resistance. *The dominated, in any social universe, can always exert a certain force,* inasmuch as belonging to a field means by definition that one is capable of producing effects in it (if only to elicit reactions of exclusion on the part of those who occupy its dominant positions).[24]

24. It has become customary, indeed, almost ritual, particularly in educational sociology, to counterpose Bourdieu's "structural reproduction" model (e.g., McLeod 1987, Wexler 1987, Connell 1983: 151) to approaches that highlight—and often celebrate—resistance, struggle and the "creative praxis" of the dominated, a position often said to be exemplified by writers associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies—Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, Paul Corrigan, Paul Willis, John Clarke, etc.—or by some strands of Frankfurt-style Marxism. Foley (1989: 138) notes that Willis "is often celebrated here in America for putting subjectivity, voluntarism, that is, people, the heroic working class, back into class analysis. . . . [He] rescues class analysis from the structural determinism of 'reproduction theorists' such as Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977)."

This opposition misrepresents both Bourdieu's position (as I argued earlier; see also Thapan 1988, and Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes 1990) and his relation to the Birmingham school. First, Bourdieu's heavy emphasis on the "conservative function" of schooling stems from his desire to "twist the stick in the other direction," to use a sentence of Mao Zedong that he is fond of quoting by provocation. It must be understood, that is, against the backdrop of the theoretical climate of the 1960s, a climate suffused with the ideas of achievement, meritocracy, and the "end of ideology" (Bourdieu 1989c). It is deliberately that Bourdieu chooses to emphasize those functions and processes that are least visible and whose efficacy is in large part an effect of their being hidden from view—it might even be argued that this inclination is a self-conscious scientific principle informing all of this work.

Second, active resistance by students can, and often does, objectively collude with the reproduction of class and gender hierarchies, as Willis (1977) demonstrates beautifully in his monograph on the "counter-school culture" of working-class "lads" in a British industrial city (as Berger [1989: 180] puts it, Willis "describes ethnographically the interpenetration of 'habitus' and 'action' that Bourdieu outlines so persuasively in theoretical terms"; also Zolberg 1990: 158). In the end, it is an empirical matter, not a conceptual one, whether resistance manages to overturn existing patterns of domination or not. Bourdieu himself has often expressed surprise, even astonishment, at the degree to which structures of class inequality remain impervious to the individual agency of students—see for example, his analysis of how the cultural and political preferences of students among French elite schools help perpetuate their relative position (Bourdieu 1989a: 225–64). The rigid determinisms he highlights are for him observable facts that he has to report, no matter how much he may dislike them (see below, sec. 6).

The logic of adjustment of dispositions to position allows us to understand how the dominated can exhibit more *submission* (and less resistance and subversion) than those who see them through the eyes, i.e., the habitus, of the dominant or the dominated dominant, that is, less than intellectuals would envision. Having said this, there is no denying that there exist dispositions to resist; and one of the tasks of sociology is precisely to examine under what conditions these dispositions are socially constituted, effectively triggered, and rendered politically efficient.[25] But, when they go in the direction of a sort

Finally, Bourdieu and the Birmingham group have entertained early and cooperative relations that suggest a complementarity rather than an opposition between their works (Eldridge 1990: 170). For example, *The Uses of Literacy,* the classic study of working-class culture by Richard Hoggart (1967), the first director of the Centre, was published in translation (with a long introduction by Jean-Claude Passeron) in Bourdieu's series by Editions de Minuit as early as 1970. In 1977, at Bourdieu's request, Paul Willis published an article in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* summarizing the main findings of his book *Learning to Labour.* Stuart Hall (1977: 28–29) was then also acquainted with, and quite favorably inclined towards, Bourdieu's work (in part thanks to the mediation of Raymond Williams, who had presented his own work to Bourdieu's seminar at the Ecole normale and also published work in *Actes de la recherche* in 1977). Richard Nice, Bourdieu's main translator, worked at the Birmingham CCS in the mid-1970s where he circulated early translations of Bourdieu's key articles (e.g., *Two Bourdieu Texts,* CCCS Stenciled paper no. 46, 1977). In his editorial introduction to the July 1980 issue of *Media, Culture and Society* devoted to Bourdieu's work (vol. 2, no. 3: 208), Garnham points to the "remarkable congruity" of "Bourdieu's enterprise" with the position advocated in the same issue by Corrigan and Willis, seing in it a movement "towards the fulfilment of that promise of a properly materialist theory of culture and of a cultural practice and a politics based on it."

25. In his analysis of the transformation of marital practices of his home region of Béarn, Bourdieu (1989b: 20–25) shows that it is the relative autonomy and closure of the microcosm of the local peasantry (weak penetration of market relations, geographic isolation reinforced by poor transportation routes, cultural isolation in the absence of modern forms of communication) that permitted and rendered efficacious a form of cultural resistance capable of posing peasant values, not simply as alternate, but as *antagonistic* to the dominant urban culture (see also the analysis of the uses of photography by peasants in Bourdieu et al. 1965). Suaud (1978) offers a detailed historical analysis of the impact of the "opening" (or modernization) of local social spaces upon religious practice and sacerdotal vocations in rural Vendée; Pinçon (1987) depicts the crumbling of working-class traditions with the economic restructuring of a mono-industrial city in Northeastern France. Rogers (1991), by contrast, gives an account of the dialectic of economic transformation and cultural resilience in a French rural community of Aveyron in the postwar era. Bourdieu's work on the Algerian urban (sub)proletariat and peasantry deals in detail with the sociohistorical conditions of cultural resilience and resistance in the context of colonialism (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964, Bour-

of spontaneist populism, theories of resistance (e.g., Giroux 1983, Scott 1990) often forget that the dominated seldom escape the antinomy of domination. For example, to oppose the school system, in the manner of the British working-class "lads" analyzed by Willis (1977), through horseplay, truancy, and delinquency, is to exclude oneself from the school, and, increasingly, to lock oneself into one's condition of dominated. On the contrary, to accept assimilation by adopting school culture amounts to being coopted by the institution. The dominated are very often condemned to such dilemmas, to choices between two solutions which, each from a certain standpoint, are equally bad ones (the same applies, in a sense, to women or to stigmatized minorities).[26]

In the realm of culture, historically and broadly speaking, this translates into an alternative between, on the one hand, the celebration or canonization of "popular culture," whose hyperbolic limit is the *Proletkult* that entraps the working class into its historical being and, on the other, what I call "populi-culture," that is, policies of cultural upgrading aimed at providing the dominated with access to dominant cultural goods or, at least, to a degraded version of this culture (to transform workers into petty bourgeois subscribing to the Bolshoi). This problem is a very vexing and complex one and it is easy to see why debates on this issue so often reveal more about those who

dieu 1979c). See also his analysis of magic as a form of resistance to the monopolization of the means of production and manipulation of religious goods (Bourdieu 1971b).

26. Philippe Bourgois (1989: 629, 627) offers a striking illustration of this antinomy of domination in his study of the "culture of terror" embraced by crack dealers in East Harlem to operate successfully in the flourishing illegal drugs economy. He shows how "the violence, crime, and substance abuse plaguing the inner city can be understood as the manifestations of a 'culture of resistance' to mainstream, white racist, and economically exclusive society. This 'culture of resistance,' however, results in greater oppression and self-destruction. . . . Tragically, it is that very process of struggle against—yet within—the system that exacerbates the trauma" of the contemporary American ghetto. Another analysis of the counterintuitive effects of class resistance is found in Pialoux's (1979) study of the labor market strategies of working-class youth from the stigmatized housing projects of the Parisian "Red Belt." Pialoux demonstrates that resistance to superexploitation and rejection of the cultural and personal indignity involved in traditional factory work leads these youth to accept, even actively seek, degraded forms of temporary work *(travail intérimaire)* that correspond closely to the needs of a growing segment of industrial employers and ends up entrenching their social and economic marginality.

engage in them—about their relation to the school, to culture, and to the "people"—than about their apparent object.[27]

We could say of certain populist exaltations of "popular culture" that they are the "pastorals" of our epoch. As the pastoral according to Empson (1935), they offer a sham inversion of dominant values and produce the fiction of a unity of the social world, thereby confirming the dominated in their subordination and the dominant in their superordination. As an inverted celebration of the principles that undergird social hierarchies, the pastoral confers upon the dominated a nobility based on their adjustment to their condition and on their submission to the established order (think of the cult of *argot* or slang and, more generally, of "popular language," of the *passéiste* extolling of the peasants of old or, in another genre, of the glorifying description of the criminal underground or, today, of the veneration of rap music in certain circles).

Your rejection of the notion of "popular culture"[28] has been denounced by some as elitist or even politically conservative. Where do you stand on this question?

To accuse me, as has sometimes been done, of consecrating the difference between so-called popular culture and "high" culture, in sum, of *ratifying* the superiority of bourgeois culture (or the opposite, depending on whether one purports to be "revolutionary" or conservative) is to ignore the Weberian distinction between a judgment of value and a reference to values (Weber 1949). It amounts to mistaking a reference to values that agents actually effect in objectivity for a

27. In a lecture on "The Uses of 'The People,'" Bourdieu (1987a: 180) argues that discourses on the "popular" cannot be elucidated without recognizing that this notion is first and foremost a stake of struggle in the intellectual field: "The different representations of 'the people' thus appear as so many transformed expressions (according to the censorship and norms of stylization specific to each field) of a fundamental relation to the people which depends on the position occupied in the field of specialists [of cultural production]—and, beyond, in social space—as well as on the trajectory which led to this position." For a critique of the notion of "popular language" (and slang) along these lines, that is, as an intellectual construct, born of scholastic distance, which destroys the very reality it claims to capture, see "Did You Say 'Popular'?" (in Bourdieu 1991e).

28. "The question is not to know whether there is or is not *for me* a 'popular culture.' The question is to know whether there is in reality something which resembles what people put under the label of 'popular culture.' And to this question my answer is no" (Bourdieu 1980b: 15).

value judgment passed by the scientist who studies them. We touch here on one of the great difficulties of sociological discourse. Most discourses on the social world aim at saying, not what the realities under consideration (the state, religion, the school, etc.) *are*, but what they are worth, whether they are good or bad. Any scientific discourse of simple enunciation is strongly liable to be perceived either as ratification or as denunciation. Thus I have been criticized just as often for celebrating dominant culture and its values (at the cost of a radical misunderstanding of the notion of legitimacy) as for glorifying popular lifestyles (based, for instance, on my analysis of dining among the working class).[29] To act as if one had only to reject in discourse the dichotomy of high culture and popular culture that exists in reality to make it vanish is to believe in magic. It is a naive form of utopianism or moralism (Dewey, however laudable his stances in matters of art and education, did not escape this kind of moralism fostered by both his epoch and his national philosophical and political traditions). Irrespective of what *I* think of this dichotomy, it exists in reality in the form of hierarchies inscribed in the objectivity of social mechanisms (such as the sanctions of the academic market) as well as in the subjectivity of schemata of classifications, systems of preferences, and tastes, which everybody knows (in practice) to be themselves hierarchized.[30]

Verbally to deny evaluative dichotomies is to pass a morality off for a politics. The dominated in the artistic and the intellectual fields have always practiced that form of radical chic which consists in rehabilitating socially inferior cultures or the minor genres of legitimate culture (think, for instance, of Cocteau's spirited defense of jazz at the turn of the century). To denounce hierarchy does not get us anywhere. What must be changed are the conditions that make this hierarchy exist, both in reality and in minds. We must—I have never stopped repeating it—work to *universalize in reality the conditions of access* to what the present offers us that is most universal, instead of talking about it.[31]

29. Grignon and Passeron (1989) analyze this twofold temptation of "populism" (the inverted celebration of the autonomy and integrity of popular cultural forms) and "miserabilism" (the reduction of popular culture to a passive side effect of the cultural rule of the dominant class).

30. Lawrence W. Levine's (1988) historical study of the "sacralization" of the fine arts reveals, in the case of the United States, the process whereby the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow culture was progressively instituted in the form of organizations and categories of aesthetic judgment and appreciation. See also DiMaggio 1991b.

You are aware that there are first-degree readings of *Distinction* or *The Love of Art* (Bourdieu 1984a; Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper 1966) that portray sociology as a war machine against culture and the sociologist as the high priest of a Boeotian hatred of art or philosophy.

If I could express myself in such pretentious terms, I would say that this is to mistake the iconologist for the iconoclast. In all sincerity, I cannot deny that a certain iconoclasm of the disenchanted believer could have facilitated the break with primary belief necessary to produce an objectifying analysis of cultural practices (and of philosophical and artistic practices in particular). But spectacular transgressions and aggressive provocations—out of which some artists make artistic "statements"—can still be expressions of a disappointed faith turned against itself. What is sure is that mastery of iconolatrous and iconoclastic pulsions is the primary condition for progress toward knowledge of artistic practice and experience. Much as negative theology, artistic nihilism is still another manner of sacrificing to the cult of the God of Art. (This could be shown very clearly by revealing how, no matter how liberating and enlightening they may seem, the fulgurations and fulminations of Nietzsche against culture and education remain trapped within the limits attached to their social conditions of production, that is, to the position of Nietzsche in social space and, more specifically, within academic space.)

I believe that a definite break with the more naive forms of artistic belief is the necessary condition for the very possibility of constituting art and culture as an object. This explains why the sociology of art

31. Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1990e: 385–86) asks: "What do we do, for instance, when we talk of a 'popular aesthetics' or when we want at all costs to credit the 'people' (*le peuple*), who do not care to have one, with a 'popular culture'? Forgetting to effect the *epochē* of the social conditions of the *epochē* of practical interests that we effect when we pass a pure aesthetic appreciation, we purely and simply *universalize* the particular case in which we are placed or, to speak a bit more roughly, we, in an unconscious and *thoroughly theoretical* manner, grant the economic and social privilege which is the precondition of the pure and universal aesthetic point of view to all men and women. . . . Most of the human works that we are accustomed to treating as universal—law, science, the fine arts, ethics, religion, etc.—cannot be disassociated from the scholastic point of view and from the social and economic conditions which make the latter possible."

will always shock the believers or those pharisees of culture who, as we recently saw both in the United States and in France, rise to the defense of High Culture (or the Great Books, etc.) and who are equally distant from the liberated unself-consciousness of the aristocratic lover as they are from the provocative freedom of the avant-garde artist. Needless to say, if I sometimes happen to feel close to the latter—perhaps by virtue of a homology of position—I do not take up stances in the artistic field properly speaking. (I turned down, a few years ago, a chance to collaborate with conceptual painter Alain de Kérily, who has since made a name for himself in New York, who wanted to exhibit a statistical table excerpted from my book *The Love of Art* along with a recording of a dialogue between the artist and the sociologist.) Thus, even though, as a "lover" of art, I have preferences among painters engaged in the field (which means that I am not indifferent to or, worse still, systematically hostile to art, as some would like to think), I do not intervene in the field but, rather, I take it as an object. I describe the space of positions which constitute it as a field of production of this modern fetish that the work of art is, that is, as a universe objectively oriented toward the *production of belief* in the work of art (Bourdieu 1980a). (Thus the analogy, which has often struck analysts, between the artistic field and the religious field. Nothing is more like a pilgrimage to a holy shrine than one of those trips to Salzburg that tour operators will organize in the thousands for the Year of Mozart.)[32] It is only then that, as I did for the literary field in Flaubert's time or for the artistic field in Manet's (Bourdieu 1983d, 1987j, 1988d, 1987i), I can raise the question of the relation between the space of positions occupied by different producers and the space of works (with their themes, form, style, etc.) which correspond to them.

In short, I observe that position-takings (preferences, taste) closely correspond to positions occupied in the field of production on the side of producers and in social space on the side of consumers. This is to say that all forms of artistic faith, whether blind belief or pharisaic piety, or even the belief freed from the observances of cultural ritualism (to which a scouring sociology can give access), have social conditions of possibility. This strikes a devastating blow to the mystical

32. "The sociology of culture is the sociology of the religion of our time" (Bourdieu 1980b: 197). See especially "High Fashion and High Culture" and "But Who Created the Creators?" in Bourdieu 1980a: 196–206, 207–21; and 1988b.

representation of the artistic "encounter" and to the primary cult of art and the artist, with its holy places, its perfunctory rites, and its routinized devotions. And it is particularly devastating for all those "poor whites" of culture who desperately cling to the last vestiges of difference, that is, humanist culture, Latin, spelling, the classics, the West, and so on. But what can I do about it? All I can wish for is that iconoclastic critique, which can use the weapons of sociological analysis, will be able to promote an artistic experience shorn of ritualism and exhibitionism.

So your work is not a "blanket condemnation of the aesthetic as a mere class signal and as conspicuous consumption" (Jameson 1990: 132; also Bürger 1990, Garnham 1986), and it does not sentence us to a leveling relativism.

Of course not. The artistic field is the site of an objectively oriented and cumulative process engendering works which, from purification to purification, from refinement to refinement, reach levels of accomplishment that decisively set them apart from forms of artistic expression that are not the product of such a history. (I have an unpublished postface to *Distinction* where I tackle the problem of cultural relativism. I took it out of the book because I thought: I have effected a critical questioning of aesthetic belief, of the fetishism of art shared; and now, at the very end, I give them an escape? The God of Art is dead and I am going to resuscitate him?)

Durkheim (1965) raises this question in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* when he asks: is there not something universal about culture? Yes, ascesis. Everywhere culture is constructed against nature, that is, through effort, exercise, suffering; all human societies put culture above nature. Thus if we can say that avant-garde paintings are superior to the lithographs of suburban shopping malls, it is because the latter are a product without history (or the product of a negative history, that of the divulgence of the high art of the preceding epoch), whereas the former are accessible only on condition of mastering the relatively cumulative history of previous artistic production, that is, the endless series of refusals and transcendences necessary to reach the present—as, for instance, with poetry as antipoetry or antipoetics.

It is in this sense that we can say that "high" art is more universal. But, as I noted, the conditions of appropriation of this universal art are not universally allocated. I showed in *The Love of Art* that access to

"high" art is not a question of virtue or individual gift but of (class) learning and cultural inheritance.[33] The universality of the aesthetes is the product of privilege, for they have a monopoly over the universal. We may concede that Kant's aesthetics is true, but only as a phenomenology of the aesthetic experience of those who are the product of *scholē*, leisure, distance from economic necessity, and practical urgency. To know this leads to a cultural politics that is just as opposed to the "absolutism" of the knights of Culture constituted as the preserve of a happy few (Bloom) as it is to the relativism of those who, forgetting to include in their theory and practice differences inscribed in reality, merely ratify and accept the fact of the cultural dispossession of the majority: an ethical or political program aimed at universalizing the conditions of access to what the present offers us as most universal (see Bourdieu 1990e).

But what could the social bases of such a cultural policy be, and can we reasonably expect those who have a monopoly over the universal to work to undermine their own privilege?

This is indeed one of the major contradictions of any cultural policy. We could go on and on enumerating the strategies of bad faith through which the privileged of culture tend to perpetuate their monopoly, very often under the appearance of sacrificing it—whether it be verbal deplorations of cultural dispossession (nowadays imputed to the alleged bankruptcy of the school system) or the rehabilitations, as spectacular as they are inefficacious, aimed at universalizing cultural exigencies without universalizing the conditions that make them attainable.

Reflexive vigilance must be exercised with special force whenever we deal with culture, art, or science, to say nothing of philosophy and sociology: so many objects of direct interest to thinkers and scientists, in which they are deeply invested. It is especially necessary, in these cases, to break with spontaneous representations in currency in the intellectual world. It behooves the sociology of culture, of art, of science, of philosophy, in sum, of all cultural works that claim universality, to accomplish the rupture, no matter how painful it may be for the one who effects it as well as for others, with the scholarly doxa and with all the "professional" ideologies of the professionals of thought. This is the reason I gave these objects the privileged place, the kind of absolute priority they occupy in my work.

33. "The sociologist establishes, theoretically and experimentally, that . . . in its learned form, aesthetic pleasure presupposes learning and, in this particular case, learning by familiarization and exercise, so that this pleasure, an artificial product of art and artifice, which is experienced or is meant to be experienced as if it were natural, is in reality a cultivated pleasure" (Bourdieu and Darbel 1966: 162).

***Homo Academicus* is not only an exercise in methodical reflexivity. In it, you also tackle the problem of historical crisis, the question of whether social science can account, if only partially, for what may at first glance appear to be a contingent conjuncture, a singular event or series of events, and you confront the more general question of the relations between social structure and historical change.**

In *Homo Academicus* I try to account, as completely as possible, for the crisis of May '68 and, at the same time, to put forth some of the elements of an invariant model of crises or revolutions. In the course of the analysis of this specific event, I discovered a number of properties that seem to me to be quite general. First I show that the crisis internal to the university was the product of the meeting of two partial crises provoked by separate, autonomous evolutions. On the one hand we have a crisis among the faculty triggered by the effects of the rapid and massive swelling of its ranks and by the resulting tensions between its dominant and subordinate categories: full professors, and assistant professors and teaching assistants. On the other hand, we find a crisis of the student body due to a whole range of factors, including the overproduction of graduates, the devaluation of credentials, changes in gender relations, etc. These partial, local crises converged, providing a base for conjunctural alliances. The crisis then spread along lines that were very determinate, toward instances of symbolic production in particular (radio and television stations, the church, and so on), that is, in all those universes in which there was an incipient conflict between the established holders of the legitimacy of discourse and the new contenders.

Thus I have never overlooked the contradictions and the conflicts of which the academic field is the site and which are at the very root of the ongoing changes through which it perpetuates itself—and remains more unchanged than may appear at first sight. The very notion of field implies that we transcend the conventional opposition between structure and history, conservation and transformation, for the relations of power which form the structure provide the under-

pinnings of both resistance to domination and resistance to subversion, as we can clearly see in May 1968. Circularity is only apparent here, and one need only enter into the detail of a particular historical conjuncture to see how struggles that only an analysis of positions in the structure can elucidate account for the transformation of this structure.

More generally, could you clarify the place of history in your thinking?

Obviously, this is an immensely complex question and I can only answer it in the most general terms.[34] Suffice it to say that *the separation of sociology and history is a disastrous division,* and one totally devoid of epistemological justification: all sociology should be historical and all history sociological. In point of fact, one of the functions of the theory of fields that I propose is to make the opposition between reproduction and transformation, statics and dynamics, or structure and history, vanish. As I tried to demonstrate empirically in my research on the French literary field in Flaubert's time and on the artistic field around Manet's time (Bourdieu 1983d, 1987i, 1987j, 1988d), we cannot grasp the dynamics of a field if not by a synchronic analysis of its structure and, simultaneously, we cannot grasp this structure without a historical, that is, genetic analysis of its constitution and of the tensions that exist between positions in it, as well as between this field and other fields, and especially the field of power.

The artificiality of the distinction between history and sociology is most evident at the highest level of the discipline: I think that great historians are also great sociologists (and often vice versa). But, for various reasons, they feel less bound than sociologists to forge concepts, to construct models, or to produce more or less pretentious theoretical or metatheoretical discourses, and they can bury under elegant narratives the compromises that often go hand in hand with discretion. On the other hand, in the present state of the social sciences, I think that, too often, the kind of "macrohistory" that many sociologists practice when they tackle processes of rationalization, bureaucratization, modernization, and so on, continues to function as one of the last refuges of a thinly veiled social philosophy. There are of course many exceptions, and fortunately their number has

34. See Bourdieu and Chartier 1989, Bourdieu, Chartier and Darnton 1985, and Bourdieu 1980d for elements of a more extended reply.

grown in recent years. I have in mind here works, such as that of Charles Tilly (1990) on the formation of European states, that managed to escape the trap of the more or less openly functionalist evolutionism implied by a unidimensional framework, and have paved the way for a genuinely genetic sociology by a theoretically guided use of the comparative method. What we need, in effect, is a form of structural history that is rarely practiced, which finds in each successive state of the structure under examination both the product of previous struggles to maintain or to transform this structure, and the principle, via the contradictions, the tensions, and the relations of force which constitute it, of subsequent transformations.

The intrusion of pure historical events, such as May '68 or any other great historical break, becomes understandable only when we reconstruct the plurality of "independent causal series" of which Cournot (1912) spoke to characterize chance *(le hasard),* that is, the different and relatively autonomous historical concatenations that are put together in each universe, and whose collision determines the singularity of historical happenings. But here I will refer you to the analysis of May 1968 that I develop in the last chapter of *Homo Academicus* and which contains the embryo of a theory of symbolic revolution that I am presently developing.

There are numerous affinities between your work, particularly your historical studies on the French artistic field in late-nineteenth-century France, and that of several major cultural and social historians. I think here immediately of people such as Norbert Elias, E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, William H. Sewell, Moshe Lewin, Alain Corbin, or even Charles Tilly—and I could name many others.[35] These historians share a focus on enduring processes of constitution of mental, cultural, and sociopolitical structures: categories of conduct, appreciation, and feeling, cultural expressions, forms of collective action, and social groupings. These concerns are also central to your own research, if on a different scale. Why have you not made these intellectual kinships more visible? The absence of an open rapprochement with history is all the

35. See, for example, Elias 1978b, 1983; E. P. Thompson 1963; Sewell 1980, 1987; Lewin 1985; Corbin 1986, 1990; and Tilly 1986. One could also add Nathalie Zemon Davis 1975; Lynn Hunt 1984; and Fritz Ringer (1990, 1991), who recently proposed a recasting of intellectual history in terms of Bourdieu's concept of field (see the rejoinders to his programmatic essay by Jay [1990] and Lemert [1990]). The convergence between Bourdieu's theory of practice and historical sociology broadly conceived is noted by Philip Abrams (1982).

more puzzling when one considers that much of the research published in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* is historical in the strongest sense of the term, and also that many, if not most, of your close colleagues and friends are themselves historians (e.g., Roger Chartier, Robert Darnton, Louis Marin, Joan Scott, and Carl Schorske).[36]

Perhaps the bombast with which some sociologists have seemingly "discovered" history in recent years has discouraged me from highlighting the convergences and affinities that exist, and have existed for a long time.[37] It is true that I have a deep-seated suspicion of the great tendential laws that have flourished in Marxism and its macroscopic rivals (structural-functionalism, developmentalism, historism, etc.). Among the professional reflexes I try to inculcate is defiance toward superficial and careless comparisons between two states of a given social system (as, for instance, with the question of the "democratization" of higher education), because such comparisons so easily lead to normative judgments and teleological reasoning. Besides the teleological fallacy, there is also the tendency to pass description off as explanation. In short, there is a whole range of things that make me feel ill at ease.

Now, the problematic of Elias, for instance, is certainly one with which I have a great deal of intellectual sympathy, because it is indeed based on the historical psychosociology of an actual grand historical process, the constitution of a state which progressively monopolizes first physical violence and second—this is what I want to add with my current work on the genesis of the state—symbolic violence.[38] This is not the place to discuss everything that separates me from Elias beyond our agreement on a small number of fundamental principles, most often derived from Durkheim or Weber, which are, in my eyes, constitutive of sociological thinking. But I must at least mention

36. The intellectual affinities are evident upon reading Chartier 1988a, Darnton 1984, Marin 1988, Schorske 1981, and Scott 1988, all of whom have published articles in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (as have E. P. Thompson, Eric J. Hobsbawm, Norbert Elias, and Moshe Lewin before them). See also the partial parallels with the "New Cultural History" (Hunt 1989); the exchange between Bourdieu, Chartier, and Darnton (1985) touches on several of the more significant differences between Bourdieu and the latter.

37. For instance, in 1975, Bourdieu (1980b: 251–63) gave a concluding address entitled "Strikes and Political Action" to a conference on European social history organized by the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, in which Hobsbawm, Thompson, and Tilly participated.

38. See Bourdieu 1989a, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1991 and below, sec. 5.

what my work on the emergence of the state has led me to discover: that, just like Weber before him, Elias always fails to ask who benefits and who suffers from the monopoly of the state over legitimate violence, and to raise the question (addressed in *La noblesse d'Etat* [Bourdieu 1989a]) of the domination wielded *through* the state.

Elias is also more sensitive than I am to continuity. Historical analysis of long-term trends is always liable to hide critical breaks. Take the example of the program of historical research on sports that Elias outlines in his well-known "Essay on Sport and Violence."[39] By sketching a continuous genealogy running from the games of Antiquity to the Olympic Games of today, this piece carries the danger of masking the fundamental ruptures introduced, among other things, by the rise of educational systems, English colleges and boarding schools, etc., and by the subsequent constitution of a relatively autonomous "space of sports."[40] There is nothing in common between ritual games such as the medieval *soule* and American football. We find the same problem when we study artists or intellectuals: we use the same word, "artist," the same lexicon of aesthetic expression, creation, creator, etc., to speak of Piero della Francesca or of Pissaro and Munch. But in fact there are extraordinary discontinuities and a con-

39. This long article was first published in French in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (no. 6, November 1976) and subsequently reprinted in a shorter version in Elias and Dunning (1986: 150–74).

40. "The Space of Sports" is the topic of two recent issues of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (79 and 80, September and November 1989), which include articles on tennis, golf, and squash; the significance and uses of soccer in Brazil, in a small mining town of France, and inside the automobile firm Peugeot; the historical separation of the two games of rugby in Great Britain; the social evolution of sky-diving; the struggle over sports among the nobility at the turn of the century; boxing in black Chicago; and the symbolism of the 1936 Olympic games in Berlin. Bourdieu is virtually alone among major sociologists—Elias being the other one—to have written seriously on sports (see Bourdieu 1978c, 1988f, and in *Distinction*) and he has exerted a strong influence on physical educationalists, as MacAloon's (1988) "A Prefatory Note to Pierre Bourdieu's 'Program for a Sociology of Sport'" indicates (for instance, the study of the social roots, organization, and meaning of rugby in Southern France by Pociello [1981], a physical education specialist, owes much to Bourdieu's theoretical direction). This interest in sport—a minor sociological topic by any measure of the hierarchy of scientific objects—is related to the centrality that Bourdieu accords the body in his theory and to the fact that it offers what Merton (1987) calls a "strategic research site" for uncovering the logic of "practical sense" (as well as an "opportunistic research site [Riemer 1977]: Bourdieu was a noted rugby player in his youth).

tinuous genesis of discontinuity. When we retrospectively project the concept of artist before the 1880s, we commit absolutely fantastic anachronisms: we overlook the genesis, not of the character of the artist or the writer, but of the *space* in which this character can exist as such.

And the same is true of politics. We take the risk of formidable historical fallacies when we fail, as do some historians who, today, take a fancy to "political philosophy," to pose the question of the social genesis of the political field (Bourdieu 1981a) and of the very notions that political philosophy eternalizes by treating them as transhistorical essences. What I just said about the words "art" and "artist" would apply to notions such as "democracy" and "public opinion" (see Bourdieu 1979e, Bourdieu and Champagne 1989, Champagne 1990). Paradoxically, historians often condemn themselves to anachronism because of their ahistorical, or dehistoricized, usage of the concepts they employ to think the societies of the past. They forget that these *concepts* and the reality they capture are themselves the product of a historical construction: the very history to which they apply these concepts has in fact invented, created them, oftentimes at the cost of an immense—and largely forgotten—historical work.[41]

3 The Logic of Fields

The notion of field is, together with those of habitus and capital, the central organizing concept of your work, which includes studies of the fields of artists and intellectuals, class lifestyles, *Grandes écoles*, science, religion, the field of power, of law, of housing construction, and so on.[42] You use the notion of field in a highly

41. This fruitful tension between history and sociology encouraged by Bourdieu is particularly well illustrated by the historical research of his colleagues and collaborators Christophe Charle (1987, 1990, 1991), Dario Gamboni (1989), Alain Viala (1985) and Victor Karady, who has undertaken an ambitious long-term project in the historical sociology of Hungary and other Eastern European countries (see Karady 1985, Don and Karady 1989, Karady and Mitter 1990). On the question of historical discontinuity and the temporal rootedness of conceptual categories or *épistémés*, there are many parallels between Bourdieu and Foucault, some of which can be traced directly back to their common training in the history of science and medicine under Canguilhem (Bourdieu 1988e: 779). The major differences are rooted in Bourdieu's historicizing of reason via the notion of field.

42. On the intellectual and artistic field, see Bourdieu 1971a, 1975b, 1975c, 1983a, 1983d, 1988a; on the space of classes and class lifestyles, Bourdieu 1978b, 1984a, 1987b; on cultural goods, Bourdieu 1980h, 1985d, and Bourdieu and Delsaut 1975; on the religious field, Bourdieu 1971b, 1987h, Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1982; on the scientific field Bourdieu 1981d, 1987e, 1990e; on the juridical field and the field of power, Bourdieu 1981a, 1986c, 1987g, 1989a, and Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1978, 1982, 1987; the field of private housing construction is explored in Bourdieu et al. 1987 and in the articles that make up the March 1990 issue of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*.

Others studies of fields conducted at the Center for European Sociology include, *inter alia*, the fields of comic books (Boltanski 1975) and of children's book publishing (Chamboredon and Fabiani 1977), the field of the French university and intellectuals at the turn of the century (Charle 1983 and 1990, Karady 1983, Fabiani 1989), the field of power under the Third Republic (Charle 1987), and the fields of religion (Grignon 1977), the arts and sciences in the classical age (Heinich 1987), seventeenth-century literature (Viala 1985), the management of the "elderly" (Lenoir 1978), peasant trade-unionism (Maresca 1983), social work (Verdès-Leroux 1976, 1978), political representation (Champagne 1988, 1990), and feminist studies in France (Lagrave 1990).

43. This book (whose translation was for years blocked for obscure copyright reasons and has just been published by Walter de Gruyter) is essential to an understanding of Bourdieu's sociological epistemology. It consists of a dense exposition of the foundational principles of "applied rationalism" in the social sciences, and of a selection of texts (by historians and philosophers of science, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Mauss, and other sociologists) that illustrate key arguments. Each comprises three parts which theorize the three stages that Bourdieu, following French epistemologist Gaston Bachelard, considers central to the production of sociological knowledge and that he encapsulates in the following formula: "Facts are conquered [through rupture with common sense], constructed, confirmed *(les faits sont conquis, construits, constatés)*" (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1973: 24). A worthwhile critical introduction to Bachelard's philosophy can be found in Tiles 1984; see MacAllester 1991 for a selection of texts.

44. For examples of criticisms of Bourdieu for the lack of closure or rigor of his concepts, see DiMaggio 1979: 1467, Swartz 1981: 346–48, Lamont and Larreau 1988: 155–58.

technical and precise sense that is perhaps partly hidden behind its commonsense meaning. Could you explicate where the notion comes from (for Americans, it is likely to evoke the "field theory" of Kurt Lewin) and what its meaning and theoretical purposes are?

I do not like professorial definitions much, so let me begin with a brief aside on their usage. I could refer here to *Le métier de sociologue* (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1973), which is a didactic, almost scholastic, book,[43] but a book which nevertheless contains a number of theoretical and methododological principles that would make people understand that many of the gaps or shortcomings for which I am sometimes reproached are in fact conscious refusals and deliberate choices. For instance, the use of *open concepts*[44] is a way of rejecting

positivism—but this is a ready-made phrase. It is, to be more precise, a permanent reminder that concepts have no definition other than systemic ones, and are designed to be *put to work empirically in systematic fashion*. Such notions as habitus, field, and capital can be defined, but only within the theoretical system they constitute, not in isolation.[45]

This also answers another question that is often put to me in the United States: why do I not propose any "laws of the middle range"? I think that this would first of all be a way of satisfying a positivistic expectation, of the kind represented in earlier times by a book by Berelson and Steiner (1964) which was a compilation of small, partial laws established by the social sciences. This kind of positivistic gratification is something that science must deny itself. Science admits only systems of laws (Duhem showed this long ago for physics, and Quine has since developed this fundamental idea).[46] And what is true of concepts is true of relations, which acquire their meaning only within a system of relations. Similarly, if I make extensive use of correspondence analysis, in preference to multivariate regression for instance, it is because correspondance analysis is a relational technique of data analysis whose philosophy corresponds exactly to what, in my view, the reality of the social world is. It is a technique which "thinks" in terms of relation, as I try to do precisely with the notion of field.[47]

To think in terms of field is to *think relationally*.[48] The relational

45. The distinction between relational or "systemic concepts" (rooted in a theoretical problematics of the object) and "operational concepts," defined in terms of the pragmatic requirements and constraints of empirical measurement, is elaborated in Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron 1973: 53–54.

46. The now famous "Duhem-Quine hypothesis" states that science is a complex network that faces the test of empirical experience as a whole: evidence impinges not on any particular proposition or concept but on the entire net they form.

47. The technique of correspondence analysis is a variant of factor analysis developed by the school of "French Data Analysis" (J. P. Benzécri, Rouanet, Tabard, Lebart, Cibois), which has elaborated tools for a relational use of statistics that are increasingly being employed by social scientists in France, the Netherlands, and Japan in particular. Two useful and accessible presentations in English are Greenacre 1984 and Lebart et al. 1984; correspondence analysis has recently been included on standard computer packages by SAS and BMDP.

48. Bourdieu (1982a: 41–42, my translation) explains: "To think in terms of field demands a conversion of the whole ordinary vision of the social world which fastens only on visible things: the individual, this *ens realissimum* to which we are attached by a sort of primordial ideological interest; the group, which is only in appearance defined solely by the temporary or durable relations, formal or informal, between its members; and

(rather than more narrowly "structuralist") mode of thinking is, as Cassirer (1923) demonstrated in *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff*, the hallmark of modern science, and one could show that it lies behind scientific enterprises apparently as different as those of the Russian formalist Tynianov,[49] of the social psychologist Kurt Lewin, of Norbert Elias, and of the pioneers of structuralism in anthropology, linguistics and history, from Sapir and Jakobson to Dumézil and Lévi-Strauss. (If you check, you will find that both Lewin and Elias draw explicitly on Cassirer, as I do, to move beyond the Aristotelian substantialism that spontaneously impregnates social thinking.) I could twist Hegel's famous formula and say that *the real is the relational:* what exist in the social world are relations—not interactions between agents or intersubjective ties between individuals, but objective relations which exist "independently of individual consciousness and will," as Marx said.

In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation *(situs)* in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.).

In highly differentiated societies, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms, i.e., spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are *specific and irreducible* to those that regulate other fields. For instance, the artistic field, or the religious field, or the economic field all follow specific logics: while the artistic field has constituted itself by rejecting

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even relations understood as *interactions*, that is, as intersubjective, actually activated connections. In fact, just as the Newtonian theory of gravitation could only be constructed against Cartesian realism which wanted to recognize no mode of action other than collision, direct contact, the notion of field presupposes a break with the realist representation which leads us to reduce the effect of the *environment* to the effect of direct action as actualized during an interaction."

49. Jurii Tynianov (1894–1943) was, with Roman Jakobson and Vladimir Propp, a leading member of the Russian Formalist school which advocated a structuralist approach to the study of literature and language.

or reversing the law of material profit (Bourdieu 1983d), the economic field has emerged, historically, through the creation of a universe within which, as we commonly say, "business is business," where the enchanted relations of friendship and love are in principle excluded.

You often use the analogy of a "game" to give a first intuitive grasp of what you understand by field.

We can indeed, with caution, compare a field to a game *(jeu)* although, unlike the latter, a field is not the product of a deliberate act of creation, and it follows rules or, better, regularities,[50] that are not explicit and codified. Thus we have *stakes (enjeux)* which are for the most part the product of the competition between players. We have an *investment in the game, illusio* (from *ludus*, the game): players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief *(doxa)* in the game and its stakes; they grant these a recognition that escapes questioning. Players agree, by the mere fact of playing, and not by way of a "contract," that the game is worth playing, that it is "worth the candle," and this *collusion* is the very basis of their competition. We also have *trump cards*, that is, master cards whose force varies depending on the game: just as the relative value of cards changes with each game, the hierarchy of the different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) varies across the various fields. In other words, there are cards that are valid, efficacious in all fields—these are the fundamental species of capital—but their relative value as trump cards is determined by each field and even by the successive states of the same field.

This is so because, at bottom, the value of a species of capital (e.g., knowledge of Greek or of integral calculus) hinges on the existence of a game, of a field in which this competency can be employed: a species of capital is what is efficacious in a given field, both as a weapon and as a stake of struggle, that which allows its possessors to wield a power, an influence, and thus to *exist*, in the field under consideration, instead of being considered a negligible quantity. In empirical work, it is one and the same thing to determine what the field is, where its limits lie, etc., and to determine what species of capital are

50. On the difference between rules and regularities and the equivocations of structuralism between those two terms, see Bourdieu 1986a, and 1990a: 30–41.

active in it, within what limits, and so on. (We see here how the notions of capital and field are tightly interconnected.)

At each moment, it is the state of the relations of force between players that defines the structure of the field. We can picture each player as having in front of her a pile of tokens of different colors, each color corresponding to a given species of capital she holds, so that her *relative force in the game*, her *position* in the space of play, and also her *strategic orientation toward the game*, what we call in French her "game," the moves that she makes, more or less risky or cautious, subversive or conservative, depend both on the total number of tokens and on the composition of the piles of tokens she retains, that is, on the volume and structure of her capital. Two individuals endowed with an equivalent overall capital can differ, in their position as well as in their stances ("position-takings"), in that one holds a lot of economic capital and little cultural capital while the other has little economic capital and large cultural assets. To be more precise, the strategies of a "player" and everything that defines his "game" are a function not only of the volume and structure of his capital *at the moment under consideration* and of the game chances (Huygens spoke of *lusiones*, again from *ludus*, to designate objective probabilities) they guarantee him, but also of the *evolution over time* of the volume and structure of this capital, that is, of his social trajectory and of the dispositions (habitus) constituted in the prolonged relation to a definite distribution of objective chances.

But this is not all: players can play to increase or to conserve their capital, their number of tokens, in conformity with the tacit rules of the game and the prerequisites of the reproduction of the game and its stakes; but they can also get in it to transform, partially or completely, the immanent rules of the game. They can, for instance, work to change the relative value of tokens of different colors, the exchange rate between various species of capital, through strategies aimed at discrediting the form of capital upon which the force of their opponents rests (e.g., economic capital) and to valorize the species of capital they preferentially possess (e.g., juridical capital).[51] A good number of struggles within the field of power are of this type, notably

51. For an illustration of the growing conflict between juridical and economic capital involved in the rise of new legal professions (notably "bankruptcy experts") at the intersection of the two fields, see Dezalay 1989.

those aimed at seizing power over the state, that is, over the economic and political resources that enable the state to wield a power over all games and over the rules that regulate them.

This analogy displays the links between the core concepts of your theory, but it does not tell us how one determines the existence of a field and its boundaries.

The question of the limits of the field is a very difficult one, if only because it is *always at stake in the field itself* and therefore admits of no *a priori* answer. Participants in a field, say, economic firms, high fashion designers, or novelists, constantly work to differentiate themselves from their closest rivals in order to reduce competition and to establish a monopoly over a particular subsector of the field. (I should immediately correct this sentence for its teleological bias, the very bias attributed to me by those who construe my analysis of cultural practices as based on a search for distinction. There is a production *of* difference which is in no way the product of a *search for* difference. There are many agents—I think for instance of Gustave Flaubert—for whom to exist in a given field consists *eo ipso* in differing, in being different, in asserting one's difference, oftentimes because they are endowed with properties such that they should not be there, they should have been eliminated at the entrance to the field.) Their efforts to impose this or that criterion of competency, of membership, may be more or less successful in various conjunctures. Thus the boundaries of the field can only be determined by an empirical investigation. Only rarely do they take the form of juridical frontiers (e.g., *numerus clausus*), even though they are always marked by more or less institutionalized "barriers to entry."

We may think of a field as a space within which an effect of field is exercised, so that what happens to any object that traverses this space cannot be explained solely by the intrinsic properties of the object in question. The limits of the field are situated at the point where the effects of the field cease. Therefore, you must try by various means to measure in each case the point at which these statistically detectable effects decline. In the work of empirical research the construction of a field is not effected by an act of imposition. For instance, I seriously doubt that the ensemble of cultural associations (choirs, theater groups, reading clubs, etc.) of a given American state or of a French region form a field. By contrast, the work of Jerry Karabel (1984) suggests that major American universities are linked by objective relations such that the structure of these (material and symbolic) relations has effects within each of them. Similarly for newspapers: Michael Schudson (1978) shows that you cannot understand the emergence of the modern idea of "objectivity" in journalism if you do not see that it arose in newspapers concerned with standards of respectability, as that which distinguishes "news" from the mere "stories" of tabloids. It is only by studying each of these universes that you can assess how concretely they are constituted, where they stop, who gets in and who does not, and whether at all they form a field.

What are the motor causes of the functioning and transformation of a field?

The principle of the dynamics of a field lies in the form of its structure and, in particular, in the distance, the gaps, the asymmetries between the various specific forces that confront one another. The forces that are active in the field—and thus selected by the analyst as pertinent because they produce the most relevant differences—are those which define the specific capital. *A capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field.* It confers a power over the field, over the materialized or embodied instruments of production or reproduction whose distribution constitutes the very structure of the field, and over the regularities and the rules which define the ordinary functioning of the field, and thereby over the profits engendered in it.

As a space of potential and active forces, the field is also a *field of struggles* aimed at preserving or transforming the configuration of these forces. Furthermore, the field as a structure of objective relations between positions of force undergirds and guides the strategies whereby the occupants of these positions seek, individually or collectively, to safeguard or improve their position and to impose the principle of hierarchization most favorable to their own products. The strategies of agents depend on their position in the field, that is, in the distribution of the specific capital, and on the perception that they have of the field depending on the point of view they take *on* the field as a view taken from a point *in* the field.[52]

52. Bourdieu takes pains to emphasize the discontinuity between a social field and a magnetic field, and therefore between sociology and a reductionistic "social physics": "Sociology is not a chapter of mechanics and social fields are fields of forces but also fields of struggles to transform or preserve these fields of forces. And the relation, practical or reflective, that agents entertain with the game is part and parcel of the game and may be at the basis of its transformation" (Bourdieu 1982a: 46, my translation).

What difference is there between a field and an apparatus or a system as theorized by Luhmann for instance?

An essential difference: struggles, and thus historicity! I am very much against the notion of apparatus, which for me is the Trojan horse of "pessimistic functionalism": an apparatus is an infernal machine, programmed to accomplish certain purposes no matter what, when, or where.[53] (This fantasy of the conspiracy, the idea that an evil will is responsible for everything that happens in the social world, haunts critical social thought.) The school system, the state, the church, political parties, or unions are not apparatuses but fields. In a field, agents and institutions constantly struggle, according to the regularities and the rules constitutive of this space of play (and, in given conjunctures, over those rules themselves), with various degrees of strength and therefore diverse probabilities of success, to appropriate the specific products at stake in the game. Those who dominate in a given field are in a position to make it function to their advantage but they must always contend with the resistance, the claims, the contention, "political" or otherwise, of the dominated.

Now, under certain historical conditions, which must be examined empirically, a field may start to function as an apparatus.[54] When the dominant manage to crush and annul the resistance and the reactions of the dominated, when all movements go exclusively from the top down, the effects of domination are such that the struggle and the dialectic that are constitutive of the field cease. There is history only as long as people revolt, resist, act. Total institutions—asylums, prisons, concentration camps—or dictatorial states are attempts to institute an end to history. Thus apparatuses represent a limiting case, what we may consider to be a pathological state of fields. But it is a limit that is never actually reached, even under the most repressive "totalitarian" regimes.[55]

53. "As a game structured in a loose and weakly formalized fashion, a field is not an *apparatus* obeying the quasi-mechanical logic of a *discipline* capable of converting all action into mere *execution*" (Bourdieu 1990b: 88). See Bourdieu 1987g: 210–12 for a brief critique of the Althusserian concept of "legal apparatus."

54. For historical examples of the opposite evolution, from apparatus to field, see Fabiani (1989: chap. 3) on French philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century, and Bourdieu (1987i) on the birth of impressionist painting.

55. The notion of apparatus also makes it possible to elude the question of the production of social agents who can operate in them and make them operate, a question that cannot be dodged by a field analysis insofar as "a field can function only if it finds individuals socially predisposed to behave as responsible agents, to risk their money, their time, sometimes their honor or their life, to pursue the games and to obtain the profits it proposes" (Bourdieu 1982a: 46; see also Bourdieu's [1987i] analysis of the historical genesis of the artistic field as the "institutionalization of anomie" in aesthetic matters).

The fictitious character of the notion of apparatus is further emphasized by Bourdieu (1988i) in his critique of the notion of "totalitarianism" as developed by French political theorists such as Lefort and Castoriadis, following Hannah Arendt. For Bourdieu, the very concept of "totalitarianism" is what Kenneth Burke would call a "terministic screen" which has masked the reality, however repressed, of ongoing social contention in Soviet-type societies, just as, in the case of the court society under the absolute monarchy of Louix XIV, "the appearance of an apparatus, in fact, conceals a field of struggles in which the holder of 'absolute power' himself must participate" (Bourdieu 1981c: 307). At the same time, Bourdieu (1981a) has highlighted opposite tendencies in the functioning of the political field, where a range of factors related to the lack of cultural capital among the dominated classes tend to foster the concentration of political capital and therefore a drift of leftist parties toward an apparatus-like functioning. For an analysis of the French Communist Party that critically assesses tendencies and countertendencies toward "totalization" and of the social fabrication of members fit to carry them out, see Verdès-Leroux 1981 and Pudal 1988, 1989.

As for systems theory, it is true that it has a number of surface similarities with field theory. One could easily retranslate the concepts of "self-referentiality" or "self-organization" by what I put under the notion of autonomy; in both cases, indeed, the process of differentiation and autonomization plays a pivotal role. But the differences between the two theories are nonetheless radical. For one thing, the notion of field excludes functionalism and organicism: the products of a given field may be systematic without being products of a system, and especially of a system characterized by common functions, internal cohesion, and self-regulation—so many postulates of systems theory that must be rejected. If it is true that, in the literary or artistic field, for instance, one may treat the stances constitutive of a space of possibles as a system, they form a system of differences, of distinctive and antagonistic properties which do not develop out of their own internal motion (as the principle of self-referentiality implies) but via conflicts internal to the field of production. The field is the locus of relations of force—and not only of meaning—and of struggles aimed at transforming it, and therefore of endless change. The coherence that may be observed in a given state of the field, its apparent orientation toward a common function (in the case of the French *Grandes écoles*, to reproduce the structure of the field of power; see Bourdieu

1989a) are born of conflict and competition, not of some kind of immanent self-development of the structure.[56]

A second major difference is that a field does not have parts, components. Every subfield has its own logic, rules and regularities, and each stage in the division of a field (say the field of literary production) entails a genuine qualitative leap (as, for instance, when you move down from the level of the literary field to that of the subfield of novel or theater).[57] Every field constitutes a potentially open space of play whose boundaries are *dynamic borders* which are the stake of struggles within the field itself. A field is a game devoid of inventor and much more fluid and complex than any game that one might ever design. But to see fully everything that separates the concepts of field and system one must put them to work and compare them via the empirical objects they produce.[58]

Briefly, how does one carry out the study of a field and what are the necessary steps in this type of analysis?

An analysis in terms of field involves three necessary and internally connected moments (Bourdieu 1971d). First, one must analyze the position of the field vis-à-vis the field of power. In the case of artists and writers (Bourdieu 1983d), we find that the literary field is contained within the field of power where it occupies a dominated position. (In common and much less adequate parlance: artists and writers, or intellectuals more generally, are a "dominated fraction of the dominant

56. The necessity expressed in the structure and functioning of a field is "the product of a historical process of progressive collective creation which obeys neither a plan nor an obscure immanent Reason without being for that abandoned to chance" (Bourdieu 1989a: 326). Luhmann's conception of law as a system is briefly discussed in Bourdieu 1987g: 212; for a methodical comparison of Bourdieu and Luhmann, see Cornelia Bohn's (1991) *Habitus und Kontext*.

57. The concept of field can be used at different levels of aggregation: the university (Bourdieu 1988a), the totality of disciplines or the faculty of the human sciences; in the housing economy (Bourdieu 1990c), the market made up of all home-builders or the individual construction firm "considered as a relatively autonomous unit."

58. Contrast, for instance, the way in which Bourdieu (1990b, 1990c, 1990d; Bourdieu and Christin 1990) conceptualizes the internal dynamics of the industrial sector of single-family home production in France as an economic field and its interface with other fields (notably the bureaucratic field, i.e., the state) with Luhmann's (1982) and Parsons and Smelser's (1956) abstract theorization of the boundaries between the economy and other formal subsystems.

class.") Second, one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field in the site. And, third, one must analyze the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find in a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favorable opportunity to become actualized.

The field of positions is methodologically inseparable from the field of stances or position-takings *(prises de position)*, i.e., the structured system of practices and expressions of agents. Both spaces, that of objective positions and that of stances, must be analyzed together, treated as "two translations of the same sentence" as Spinoza put it. It remains, nevertheless, that, in a situation of equilibrium, *the space of positions tends to command the space of position-takings*. Artistic revolutions, for instance, are the result of transformations of the relations of power constitutive of the space of artistic positions that are themselves made possible by the meeting of the subversive intentions of a fraction of producers with the expectations of a fraction of the audience, thus by a transformation of the relations between the intellectual field and the field of power (Bourdieu 1987i). And what is true of the artistic field applies to other fields: one can observe the same "fit" between positions within the academic field on the eve of May 1968 and the political stances taken by the various protagonists of these events, as I show in *Homo Academicus*, or between the objective position of banks in the economic field and the advertising and personnel management strategies they deploy, etc.

In other words, the field is a critical mediation between the practices of those who partake of it and the surrounding social and economic conditions.

First, the external determinations that bear on agents situated in a given field (intellectuals, artists, politicians, or construction companies) never apply to them directly, but affect them only through the specific mediation of the specific forms and forces of the field, after having undergone a *re-structuring* that is all the more important the more autonomous the field, that is, the more it is capable of imposing its specific logic, the cumulative product of its particular history. Second, we can observe a whole range of structural and functional *homologies* between the field of philosophy, the political field, the literary

field, etc., and the structure of social space (or class structure): each has its dominant and its dominated, its struggles for usurpation and exclusion, its mechanisms of reproduction, and so on. But every one of these characteristics takes a specific, irreducible form in each field (a homology may be defined as a resemblance within a difference). Thus, being contained within the field of power, the struggles that go on in the philosophical field, for instance, are always overdetermined, and tend to function in a double logic. They have political effects and fulfill political functions by virtue of the homology of position that obtains between such and such a philosophical contender and such and such a political or social group in the totality of the social field.[59]

A third general property of fields is that they are *systems of relations that are independent of the populations which these relations define.* When I talk of the intellectual field, I know very well that in this field I will find "particles" (let me pretend for a moment that we are dealing with a physical field) that are under the sway of forces of attraction, of repulsion, and so on, as in a magnetic field. Having said this, as soon as I speak of a field, my attention fastens on the primacy of this system

59. "The specifically ideological function of the field of cultural production is performed quasi-automatically on the basis of the homology of structure between the field of cultural production, organized around the opposition between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and the field of struggles between the classes, for the maintenance or subversion of the symbolic order. . . . The homology between the two fields causes the struggles for the specific objectives at stake in the autonomous field to produce *euphemized* forms of the ideological struggles between the classes" (Bourdieu 1979b: 82, translation modified).

At the core of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic domination is the notion that ideological legitimation (or "naturalization") of class inequality operates via a correspondence which is effected only between systems. It does not require that cultural producers intentionally endeavor to mask or to serve the interests of the dominant—indeed, the function of "sociodicy" of culture is more effectively fulfilled when the opposite is true. It is only by genuinely pursuing their specific interest as specialists in symbolic production that intellectuals *also* legitimate a class position: "Ideologies owe their structure and their most specific functions to the social conditions of their production and circulation, i.e., to the functions they fulfill *first for the specialists* competing for the monopoly of the competence in question (religious, artistic, etc.), and *secondarily and incidentally* for the non-specialists" (Bourdieu 1979b: 81–82, my emphasis).

For analyses of how the homology with the structure of class relations obtains and with what effects, see Bourdieu and Delsaut 1975 on high fashion, Bourdieu 1980a on tastes in theater and art, Bourdieu 1988b on philosophy and Bourdieu 1989a on elite professional schools.

of objective relations over the particles themselves. And we could say, following the formula of a famous German physicist, that the individual, like the electron, is an *Ausgeburt des Felds:* he or she is in a sense an emanation of the field. This or that particular intellectual, this or that artist, exists *as such* only because there is an intellectual or an artistic field. (This is very important to help solve the perennial question that historians of art have raised time and again, namely, at what point do we move from the craftsman to the artist? This is a question which, posed in this fashion, is almost meaningless, since this transition is made progressively, along with the constitution of an artistic field within which something like an artist can come to exist.)[60]

The notion of field reminds us that the true object of social science is not the individual, even though one cannot construct a field if not through individuals, since the information necessary for statistical analysis is generally attached to individuals or institutions. It is the field which is primary and must be the focus of the research operations. This does not imply that individuals are mere "illusions," that they do not exist: they exist as *agents*—and not as biological individuals, actors, or subjects—who are socially constituted as active and acting in the field under consideration by the fact that they possess the necessary properties to be effective, to produce effects, in this field. And it is knowledge of the field itself in which they evolve that allows us best to grasp the roots of their singularity, their *point of view* or position (in a field) from which their particular vision of the world (and of the field itself) is constructed.

This is because, at every moment, there is something like an "admission fee" that each field imposes and which defines eligibility for participation, thereby selecting certain agents over others.

People are at once founded and legitimized to enter the field by their possessing a definite configuration of properties. One of the goals of research is to identify these active properties, these efficient charac-

60. Bourdieu's analysis of the historical formation of the artistic field in late nineteenth-century France and of the correlative "invention" of the modern artist is the centerpiece of a forthcoming book entitled *The Economics of Cultural Goods.* For preliminary sketches, see Bourdieu 1971a, 1971c, 1971d, 1983d, 1988d. A concise statement of his sociology of aesthetics and art is Bourdieu 1987d; several of these articles are contained in Bourdieu forthcoming c.

teristics, that is, these forms of *specific capital*. There is thus a sort of hermeneutic circle: in order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of specific capital that operate within it, and to construct the forms of specific capital one must know the specific logic of the field. There is an endless to and fro movement in the research process that is quite lengthy and arduous.[61]

To say that the structure of the field—note that I am progressively building a *working* definition of the concept—is defined by the structure of the distribution of the specific forms of capital that are active in it means that when my knowledge of forms of capital is sound I can differentiate everything that there is to differentiate. For example, and this is one of the principles that guided my work on intellectuals, one cannot be satisfied with an explanatory model incapable of differentiating people—or, better, positions—who ordinary intuition in the specific universe tells us are quite different. In such a case, one should search for what variables have been omitted which permit us to differentiate. (Parenthesis: ordinary intuition is quite respectable; only, one must be sure to introduce intuitions into the analysis in a conscious and reasoned manner and to control their validity empirically,[62] whereas many sociologists use them unconsciously, as when they build the kind of dualistic typologies that I criticize at the beginning of *Homo Academicus*, such as "universal" vs. "parochial" intellectuals.) Here intuition raises questions: "Where does the difference come from?"

One last and critical point: *social agents are not "particles"* that are mechanically pushed and pulled about by external forces. They are, rather, bearers of capitals and, depending on their trajectory and on the position they occupy in the field by virtue of their endowment (volume and structure) in capital, they have a propensity to orient

61. For a detailed illustration of this "hermeneutic circle," through which the population of relevant individuals or institutions and the efficient assets or forms of capital are mutually specified, see Bourdieu's study of the reform of governmental housing policy in France in the mid-1970s (Bourdieu and Christin 1990, esp. 70–81).

62. "Far from being, as certain 'initiatory' representatives of the 'epistemological break' would have us believe, a sort of simultaneously inaugural and terminal act, the renunciation of first-hand intuition is the end product of a long dialectical process in which intuition, formulated in an empirical operation, analyses and verifies or falsifies itself, engendering new hypotheses, gradually more firmly based, which will be transcended in their turn, thanks to the problems, failures and expectations which they bring to light" (Bourdieu 1988a: 7).

themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution. Things are of course much more complicated, but I think that this is a general proposition that applies to social space as a whole, although it does not imply that all small capital holders are necessarily revolutionaries and all big capital holders are automatically conservatives.

Let us grant that the social universe, at least in advanced societies, is made up of a number of differentiated fields that have both invariant properties (this justifies the project of a general theory of fields) and varying properties rooted in their specific logic and history (which requires a genetic and comparative analysis of each of them). How do these diverse fields relate to one another? What is the nature of their articulation and their differential weight?

The question of the interrelation of different fields is an extremely complex one. It is a question that I would normally not answer because it is too difficult, and I risk saying things that are relatively simple and might thereby reawaken modes of analysis phrased in terms of "instance" and "articulation," that allowed some Marxists to give rhetorical solutions to problems that only empirical analysis can tackle. I believe indeed that there are *no transhistoric laws of the relations between fields*, that we must investigate each historical case separately. Obviously, in advanced capitalist societies, it would be difficult to maintain that the economic field does not exercise especially powerful determinations. But should we for that reason admit the postulate of its (universal) "determination in the last instance"? An example from my research on the artistic field will, I believe, suggest how complicated this question is.

When we study this question historically, we observe that a process began with the Quattrocento which led the artistic field to acquire its true autonomy in the nineteenth century. From then on, artists are no longer subjected to the demands and commands of sponsors and patrons, they are freed from the state and from academies, etc. Most of them begin to produce for their own restricted market in which a sort of deferred economy operates (Bourdieu 1983d, 1987i). Everything would lead us to believe that we are dealing with an irreversible and irresistible movement toward autonomy, and that art and artists have once and for all achieved their freedom from external forces. Now, what do we observe today? A return of patronage, of direct dependency, of the state, of the most brutal forms of cen-

sorship, and suddenly the idea of a linear and indefinite process of autonomization is reopened. Look at what happened to a painter such as Hans Haacke who uses artistic tools to question interferences with the autonomy of artistic creation.[63] He exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum a painting displaying the origins of the financial resources of the Guggenheim family. Now, the Director of the Museum had no alternative other than to resign or be dismissed by his funders, or to ridicule himself in the eyes of artists by refusing to exhibit the painting. This artist gave a function back to art and immediately he ran into trouble. Thus we discover that the autonomy acquired by artists, originally dependent for both the content and the form of their work, implied a submission to necessity: artists had made a virtue out of necessity by arrogating to themselves the absolute mastery of the form, but at the cost of a no less absolute renunciation of function. As soon as they want to fulfill a function other than that assigned to them by the artistic field, i.e., the function which consists in exercising no social function ("art for art's sake"), they rediscover the limits of their autonomy.

This is only one example, but it has the merit of reminding us that relations between fields—the artistic and the economic field in this case—are not defined once and for all, even in the most general tendencies of their evolution. The notion of field does not provide ready-made answers to all possible queries, in the manner of the grand concepts of "theoreticist theory" which claims to explain everything and in the right order. Rather, its major virtue, at least in my eyes, is that it promotes a mode of construction that has to be rethought anew every time. It forces us to *raise* questions: about the limits of the universe under investigation, how it is "articulated," to what and to what degree, etc. It offers a coherent system of recurrent questions that saves us from the theoretical vacuum of positivist empiricism and from the empirical void of theoreticist discourse.

In a recent issue of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (March 1990) devoted to the "Economy of Housing," that is, the set of social spaces that have to be taken into account to understand the production and circulation of this peculiar economic good that the single-family home is, you have been led to analyze the genesis of

63. The sociological significance of Haacke's work is underlined by Howard Becker and John Walton (1986).

state policies which, in this case, enter directly in the determination of the functioning of an economic market. In so doing, you have begun to outline a theory of the state as a sort of meta-field.[64]

Indeed, it seems to me that, when you take a close look at what goes on inside what we call the "state," you immediately annul most of the *scholastic* problems that scholars, armchair Marxists and other speculative sociologists, keep raising about the state, that quasi-metaphysical notion that must be exploded in order to "go to the things themselves," as Edmund Husserl said in a different context. I think for instance of the consecrated theoretical alternative between "correspondence" (or dependance) and "autonomy." This alternative presupposes that the state is a well-defined, clearly bounded and unitary reality which stands in a relation of externality with outside forces that are themselves clearly identified and defined (for instance, in the case of Germany, on which so much ink has been spilled because of the famous *Sonderweg*, the traditional landed aristocracy of the Junkers, or the wealthy industrial bourgeoisie, or, in the case of England, the urban entrepreneurial bourgeoisie and the country gentry). In fact, what we encounter, concretely, is an ensemble of administrative or bureaucratic fields (they often take the empirical form of commissions, bureaus and boards) within which agents and categories of agents, governmental and nongovernmental, struggle over this peculiar form of authority consisting of the power to *rule* via legislation, regulations, administrative measures (subsidies, authorizations, restrictions, etc.), in short, everything that we normally put under the rubric of state policy as a particular sphere of practices related, in this case, to the production and consumption of housing.

The state, then, if you insist on keeping this designation, would be

64. The analysis of the structuring role of the state in the economics of housing is found in Bourdieu 1990b, and Bourdieu and Christin 1990. Bourdieu was first led to address the question of the state frontally in *La noblesse d'Etat*, when he came to the conclusion that the "contemporary technocracy" are the "structural (and sometimes genealogical) inheritors" of the *noblesse de robe* which "created itself [as a corporate body] by creating the state," and formulated the hypothesis that "the state nobility . . . and educational credentials are born of complementary and correlative inventions" (Bourdieu 1989a: 544, 540). Bourdieu's course at the Collège de France in 1988–91 has been devoted to this topic, in the form of an investigation of the genesis and effects of the modern state understood as the organizational expression of the concentration of symbolic power, or "public trove of material and symbolic resources guaranteeing private appropriations" (Bourdieu 1989a: 540).

the ensemble of fields that are the site of struggles in which what is at stake is—to build on Max Weber's famed formulation—the *monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence,*[65] i.e., the power to constitute and to impose as *universal* and *universally applicable* within a given "nation," that is, within the boundaries of a given territory, a common set of coercive norms. As I showed in the case of state housing policy in France between 1970 and 1980, these fields are the locus of a constant confrontation between forces belonging both to the private sector (banks and bankers, construction and architectural firms, etc.) and to the public sector (ministries, administrative divisions within these ministries, and the *grands corps d'Etat* who staff them),[66] that is, sub-universes themselves organized as fields that are both united by and divided over internal cleavages and external oppositions. The notion of "state" makes sense only as a convenient stenographic label—but, for that matter, a very dangerous one—for these spaces of *objective relations* between *positions* of power (assuming different forms) that can take the form of more or less stable networks (of alliance, cooperation, clientelism, mutual service, etc.) and which manifest themselves in phenomenally diverse interactions ranging from open conflict to more or less hidden collusion.

As soon as you examine in detail how "private" agents or organizations (say, banks interested in the passing of certain regulations likely to boost the diffusion of given kinds of housing loans), which are themselves in competition with one another, work to orient "state" policy in each of their domains of economic or cultural activity (the same processes can be observed in the case of an educational reform), how they form coalitions and ties with other bureaucratic agents

65. For developments, see Bourdieu 1989a: part 5, and Bourdieu and Wacquant 1991: 100: "The state is in the final analysis the great fount of symbolic power which accomplishes acts of consecration, such as the granting of a degree, an identity card or a certificate—so many acts through which the authorized holders of an authority assert that a person is what she is, publicly establish what she is and what she has to be. It is the state, as the reserve bank of consecration, that vouchsafes these official acts and the agents who effect them and, in a sense, carries them out via the agency of its legitimate representatives. This is why I distorted and generalized Max Weber's famous words to say that *the state is the holder of a monopololy, not only over legitimate physical violence, but over legitimate symbolic violence* as well."

66. The *grands corps* are corporate bodies made up of graduates of the country's top *Grandes écoles* which traditionally reserve for themselves certain upper-level administrative positions within the French state. (On *Grandes écoles*, see p. 231, n. 22.)

whose preference for a given type of measure they share, how they confront yet other organizational entities with their own interests and resources (e.g., the properly bureaucratic capital of management of regulations), you cannot but jettison all speculations about correspondence and autonomy. To be truthful, I feel closer, on this count, to the analyses of Edward Laumann (Laumann and Knoke 1988), though I differ from him in other respects, than to those of Nicos Poulantzas (1973) or Theda Skocpol (1979), to cite two names emblematic of traditional positions on correspondence and autonomy. By this, I mean to point out also that, in such matters as elsewhere, the "armchair Marxists," those materialists without materials, whom I ceaselessly opposed at the time of their apogee in the 1960s, have done much to help the perpetuation of scholastic issues.

More generally, this illustrates what makes for much of the difficulty of my position in the sociological field. On the one hand, I can appear very close to the "Grand Theoreticians" (especially the structuralists) insofar as I insist on structural configurations that cannot be reduced to the interactions and practices through which they express themselves. At the same time, I feel a kinship and a solidarity with researchers who "put their noses to the ground" (particularly symbolic interactionists, and all those who, through participant observation or statistical analysis, work to uncover and to debunk the empirical realities that Grand Theoreticians ignore because they look down upon social reality from such heights), even though I cannot agree with the philosophy of the social world which often undergirds their interest in the minutiae of daily practices and which, in this case, is in fact imposed upon them by this "close-up view" and by the theoretical myopia or the blindness to objective structures, to relations of force that are not immediately perceivable, that this view encourages.

What, then, would separate your analysis of the state as a set of partially overlapping bureaucratic fields from Laumann and Knoke's (1988) notion of the "organizational state" or from network theory more broadly?

I could recall here the distinction I established, against Max Weber in particular, between structure and interaction or between a structural relation which operates in a permanent and invisible fashion, and an effective relation, a relation actualized in and by a particular exchange (see Bourdieu 1971b, 1971e, 1987h). In fact, the structure of a field,

understood as a space of objective relations between positions defined by their rank in the distribution of competing powers or species of capital, is different from the more or less lasting networks through which it manifests itself. It is this structure that determines the possibility or the impossibility (or, to be more precise, the greater or lesser probability) of observing the establishment of linkages that express and sustain the existence of networks. The task of science is to uncover the structure of the distribution of species of capital which tends to determine the structure of individual or collective stances taken, through the interests and dispositions it conditions. In network analysis, the study of these underlying structures has been sacrificed to the analysis of the particular linkages (between agents or institutions) and flows (of information, resources, services, etc.) through which they become visible—no doubt because uncovering the structure requires that one put to work a relational mode of thinking that is more difficult to translate into quantitative and formalized data, save by way of correspondence analysis.

I could pursue this argument by drawing on the research I have been conducting over the past few years on the historical genesis of the state. I could argue, to simplify greatly, that there has occurred, since the construction of the dynastic state and, later, of the bureaucratic state, a long-term process of concentration of different species of power, or capital, leading, in a first stage, to private monopolization—by the king—of a public authority at once external and superior to all private authorities (lords, bourgeoisie, etc.). The concentration of these different species of capital—economic (thanks to taxation), military, cultural, juridical and, more generally, symbolic—goes hand in hand with the rise and consolidation of the various corresponding fields. The result of this process is the emergence of a specific capital, *properly statist capital*, born of their cumulation, which allows the state to wield a power over the different fields and over the various forms of capital that circulate in them. This kind of *meta-capital* capable of exercising a power over other species of power, and particularly over their rate of exchange (and thereby over the balance of power between their respective holders), defines the specific power of the state. It follows that the construction of the state goes hand in hand with the constitution of the field of power understood as the space of play in which holders of various forms of capital struggle *in particular* for power over the state, that is, over the statist capital that grants power

over the different species of capital and over their reproduction (via the school system in particular).

4 Interest, Habitus, Rationality

Your use of the notion of interest has often called forth the charge of "economism."[67] What theoretical role does interest play in your method of analysis?

The notion of interest imposed itself upon me as an instrument of rupture with a philosophical anthropology, a naive conception of human conduct that was dominant when I started working in the social sciences. I have often quoted a remark of Weber about law which says that social agents obey a rule only insofar as their interest in following it outweighs their interest in overlooking it. This sound materialist principle reminds us that, before claiming to describe the rules according to which people act, we should ask what makes those rules operative in the first place.

Thus, building upon Weber, who utilized an economic model to uncover the specific interests of the great protagonists of the religious game, priests, prophets, and sorcerers (Bourdieu 1971b, 1987h), I introduced the notion of interest into my analysis of cultural producers in reaction to the dominant vision of the intellectual universe, to question the ideology of the *freischwebende Intelligenz*. I much prefer to use the term *illusio*, since I always speak of specific interest, of interests that are both presupposed and produced by the functioning of historically delimited fields. Paradoxically, the term interest has brought forth the knee-jerk accusation of economism.[68] In fact, the

67. E.g., Paradeise 1981, Caillé 1981 and 1987a, Richer 1983, Adair 1984, Kot and Lautier 1984, Rancière 1984: 24, Joppke 1986, Sahlins 1989: 25. Thus Fiske (1991: 238) lumps Gary Becker and Bourdieu together as defenders of "the selfish rationality assumption" that constitutes one of his four models of social relations. The opposite interpretation is vigorously defended by Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes (1990: 4–6), Thompson (1991) and Ostrow (1990: 117), among others, who commend Bourdieu for his rejection of economism.

68. Bourdieu's opposition to economism is clear from his first ethnographic pieces on the sense of honor among the Kabyles (Bourdieu 1965 and 1979d). It is argued at great length in *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* and in *The Logic of Practice*: "Economism is a form of ethnocentrism. Treating precapitalist economies, in Marx's phrase, 'as the Fathers of the Church treated the religions that preceded Christianity,' it applies to them categories, methods (economic accounting, for instance), or concepts (such as the notions of interest, investment, or capital, etc.) that are the historical product of

notion as I use it is the means of a deliberate and provisional reductionism that allows me to import the materialist mode of questioning into the cultural sphere from which it was expelled, historically, when the modern view of art was invented and the field of cultural production won its autonomy (Bourdieu 1987d), and in which it is therefore particularly offensive.

To understand the notion of interest, it is necessary to see that it is opposed not only to that of disinterestedness or gratuitousness but also to that of *indifference*. To be indifferent is to be unmoved by the game: like Buridan's donkey, this game makes no difference to me. Indifference is an axiological state, an ethical state of nonpreference as well as a state of knowledge in which I am not capable of differentiating the stakes proposed. Such was the goal of the Stoics: to reach a state of ataraxy (*ataraxia* means the fact of not being troubled). *Illusio* is the very opposite of ataraxy: it is to be invested, taken in and by the game. To be interested is to accord a given social game that what happens in it matters, that its stakes are important (another word with the same root as interest) and worth pursuing.[69]

This is to say that the concept of interest, as I construe it, is totally disjoint from the transhistorical and universal interest of utilitarian theory. It would be easy to show that Adam Smith's self-interest is nothing more than an unconscious universalization of the form of interest engendered and required by a capitalist economy. Far from being an anthropological invariant, interest is a *historical arbitrary*,[70] a historical construction that can be known only through historical analysis, *ex post*, through empirical observation, and not deduced *a*

capitalism, and which therefore induce a radical transformation of their object, similar to the historical transformation from which they arose" (Bourdieu 1990a: 113, translation modified, and passim; see also Bourdieu 1986b: 252–53).

69. "What, for a 'well-socialized' Kabyle, is a matter of life and death, a crucial stake, might leave *indifferent* an agent lacking the principles of differentiation which enable him to make the difference and to be taken in by the games of honor" (Bourdieu 1987e: 7).

70. This is one of the conclusions of Mauss's inquiry into the logic of gift giving: "If some equivalent motivation actuates Trobiander or American chiefs and Adaman clan members, or actuated generous Hindus and the Germanic or Celtic nobles of yesteryear to make gifts or expenses, it is not the cold rationale of the trader, the banker or the capitalist. In these civilizations, one is *interested, but in a manner other than during our times*" (Mauss 1950a: 270–71, my emphasis). Bourdieu is seconded by Hirschman (1987) in this revisionist interpretation of the notion of interest.

priori from some fictitious—and so evidently ethnocentric—conception of "Man."

This implies that there are as many "interests" as there are fields, that each field simultaneously presupposes and generates a specific form of interest incommensurable with those that have currency elsewhere.

Precisely. Each field calls forth and gives life to a specific form of interest, a specific *illusio*, as tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game and as practical mastery of its rules. Furthermore, this specific interest implied by one's participation in the game differentiates itself according to the position occupied in the game (dominant vs. dominated or orthodox vs. heretic) and with the trajectory that leads each participant to this position. Anthropology and comparative history show that the properly social magic of institutions can constitute just about anything as an interest, and as a realistic interest, i.e., as an investment (in the double meaning that the word has in economics and in psychoanalysis) that is objectively paid back by a specific "economy."

Beyond interest and investment, you have borrowed from economic language several other concepts, such as market, profit and capital (e.g., Bourdieu 1985d, 1986b), which evoke the economic mode of reasoning. Moreover, both your earliest and your latest research have been squarely in the realm of economic sociology. Your very first work on Algerian peasants and workers sought, among other things, to explain the differential emergence of a rational, calculative disposition towards the economy—the habitus of homo œconomicus—among various fractions of the Algerian proletariat, and the social and economic consequences of the failure of the urban subproletariat to master such dispositions objectively required by the capitalist economy thrust upon them by French colonialism. In your recent book-length study of the economics of single-family home production and consumption in France analyzed as a field, you investigate the social genesis of the system of preferences and strategies of buyers, on the one hand, and the organization and dynamics of the space of suppliers (housing construction firms) and products on the other. And you find that the state—or what you call the bureaucratic field—plays a crucial role in both, and especially in structuring their encounter: the market is a sociopolitical construction that results from the refraction, at various territorial levels of the "bureaucratic field," of the claims and desiderata of a range of social and economic agents

unequally equipped to obtain consideration of their interests.[71] What sets your theoretical approach apart from an "economic approach to human behavior" à la Gary Becker (1976)?

The only thing I share with economic orthodoxy (by this I mean the multistranded and diverse stream that dominates today's economic science, which, we must not forget, is itself a highly differentiated field) are a number of words. Take the notion of investment. By investment I mean the propensity to act that is born of the relation between a field and a system of dispositions adjusted to the game it proposes, a sense of the game and of its stakes that implies at once an *inclination* and an *ability* to play the game, both of which are socially and historically constituted rather than universally given. The general theory of the economy of fields that emerges progressively from generalization to generalization (I am presently working on a book in which I attempt to isolate, at a more formal level, the general properties of fields) enables us to describe and to identify the *specific form* taken by the most general mechanisms and concepts such as capital, investment, interest, within each field, and thus to avoid all kinds of reductionisms, beginning with economism, which recognizes nothing but material interest and the deliberate search for the maximization of monetary profit.

A general science of the economy of practices that does not artificially limit itself to those practices that are socially recognized as economic must endeavor to grasp capital, that "energy of social physics" (Bourdieu 1990a: 122), in all of its different forms, and to uncover the laws that regulate their conversion from one into another.[72] I have

71. There exist obvious and large zones of overlap and convergence between Bourdieu's older and newer work in that area and the concerns of the "New Economic Sociology" (e.g., Swedberg, Himmelstrand, and Brulin 1987; Zelizer 1988; Zukin and DiMaggio 1990; Granovetter 1985 and 1990), although neither seems to have connected with the other yet (but see DiMaggio 1990, and Powell and DiMaggio 1991).

Bourdieu's economic sociology of Algeria is found in Bourdieu 1962a, 1964, 1973a, 1979c; Bourdieu et al. 1963; and Bourdieu and Sayad 1964. For the study of the housing economy in France, see Bourdieu 1990b, 1990c, 1990d; Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1990; Bourdieu and Christin 1990.

72. Bourdieu (1986b: 241) defines capital thus: "Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied, form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor." For an interesting critical discussion of Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital, see Grossetti 1986.

shown that *capital presents itself under three fundamental species* (each with its own subtypes), namely, economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital (Bourdieu 1986b). To these we must add symbolic capital, which is the form that one or another of these species takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that *recognize* its specific logic or, if you prefer, misrecognize the arbitrariness of its possession and accumulation.[73] I shall not dwell on the notion of economic capital. I have analyzed the peculiarity of cultural capital, which we should in fact call *informational capital* to give the notion its full generality, and which itself exists in three forms, embodied, objectified, or institutionalized.[74] Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Acknowledging that capital can take a variety of forms is indispensable to explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies. For example, to account for the shape of social space in old social democratic nations such as Sweden or in Soviet-type societies, one must take into consideration this peculiar form of social capital constituted by political capital which has the capacity to yield considerable profits and privileges, in a manner similar to economic capital in other social fields, by operating a "patrimonialization" of collective resources (through unions and the Labor party in the one case, the Communist party in the other).

Orthodox economics overlooks the fact that practices may have principles other than mechanical causes or the conscious intention to maximize one's utility and yet obey an immanent economic logic. *Practices form an economy,* that is, follow an immanent reason that cannot be restricted to economic reason, for the economy of practices may be defined by reference to a wide range of functions and ends. To reduce the universe of forms of conduct to mechanical reaction or

73. The notion of symbolic capital is one of the more complex ones developed by Pierre Bourdieu, and his whole work may be read as a hunt for its varied forms and effects. See Bourdieu 1972: 227–43; 1977a: 171–83; 1990a: 112–21; 1989a: part 5; and 1991e for successive elaborations.

74. The acquisition, transmission, conversion, and social effects of these three forms of cultural capital is extensively illustrated in the varied articles that make up the October 1989 issue of *Sociologie et Sociétés* devoted to "Culture as Capital." See in particular de Saint Martin's (1989b) analysis of the dynamics of gender and cultural capital in the determination of "intellectual vocations."

purposive action is to make it it impossible to shed light on all those practices that are *reasonable* without being the product of a reasoned purpose and, even less, of conscious computation.

Thus my theory owes nothing, despite appearances, to the transfer of the economic approach. And I hope one day to be able to demonstrate fully that, far from being the founding model, economic theory (and rational action theory which is its sociological derivative) is probably best seen as a particular instance, historically dated and situated, of the theory of fields.

You have clarified the concepts of field and of capital. There is a third central category which constitutes a theoretical bridge between them by providing the mechanism that "propels" definite agents, endowed with certain valences of capital, to take up this or that strategy, subversion or conservation—or, one might add, indifference, exit from the game. If I understand you correctly, the notion of habitus is the conceptual linchpin by which you rearticulate the apparently economic notions of capital, market, interest, etc., into a model of action radically discontinuous with that of economics.[75]

I have explained the meaning and function of the concept of habitus so often that I hesitate to return to it once more, lest I only repeat myself and simplify without necessarily clarifying things. . . All I want to say here is that the main purpose of this notion is to break with the intellectualist (and intellectualocentric) philosophy of action represented in particular by the theory of homo œconomicus as rational agent, which rational choice theory has recently brought back in fashion at the very time when a good number of economists have repudiated it (often without saying so or realizing it fully). It is to account for the actual logic of practice—an expression in itself oxymoronic since the hallmark of practice is to be "logical," to have a logic without having logic as its principle—that I have put forth a theory of practice as the product of a *practical sense*, of a socially constituted "sense of

75. On the development and successive reworkings of the concept of habitus in Bourdieu's work, see Bourdieu 1967a, 1967b, 1971c, 1972, 1977a, 1980d, 1984a, 1990a: chap. 3, 1986c, and 1985c, which provides a condensed recapitulation of its history and functions. Again, to grasp adequately the aims and meaning of the concept, one must focus on its uses, that is, see how Bourdieu invokes it in the course of concrete empirical analyses and with what *analytical effects*. There seems to be a drift, over time, from a more mentalist to a more corporeal emphasis, perhaps partly due to the heavier influence of the linguistic model of structuralism in Bourdieu's earlier work.

the game" (Bourdieu 1977a, 1990a). I wanted initially to account for practice in its humblest forms—rituals, matrimonial choices, the mundane economic conduct of everyday life, etc.—by escaping both the objectivism of action understood as a mechanical reaction "without an agent" and the subjectivism which portrays action as the deliberate pursuit of a conscious intention, the free project of a conscience positing its own ends and maximizing its utility through rational computation.

A second major function of the notion of habitus, of which I must also say that it designates first and foremost a posture (or, if you wish, a scientific habitus), that is, a definite manner of constructing and understanding practice in its specific "logic" (including temporal), is to break with another opposition that is no less deadly and no doubt considerably more difficult to overcome: against positivistic materialism, the theory of practice as practice posits that objects of knowledge are *constructed*, and not passively recorded; against intellectualist idealism it reminds us that the principle of this construction is found in the socially constituted system of structured and structuring dispositions acquired in practice and constantly aimed at practical functions. Following the program suggested by Marx in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, it aims at making possible a materialist theory of knowledge that does not abandon to idealism the notion that all knowledge, be it mundane or scholarly, presupposes a work of construction.[76] But it emphasizes that this work has nothing in common with intellectual work, that it consists of an activity of practical construction, even of practical reflection, that ordinary notions of thought, consciousness, knowledge prevent us from adequately thinking. I believe that all those who used this old concept or similar ones before me, from Hegel's *ethos*, to Husserl's *Habitualität*, to Mauss's *hexis*, were inspired (without always knowing it explicitly) by a theoretical intention akin to mine, which is to escape from under the philosophy of the subject without doing away with the agent (Bourdieu 1985c), as well as from under the phi-

76. Marx's third thesis *Ad Feuerbach*, with which Bourdieu (1977a: vi) opens the *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, reads as follows: "The principal defect of all materialism up to now—including that of Feuerbach—is that the external object, reality, the sensible world, is grasped in the form of an *object or an intuition;* but not as *concrete human activity*, as *practice*, in a subjective way. This is why the active aspect was developed by idealism, in opposition to materialism—but only in an abstract way, since idealism naturally does not know real concrete activity as such."

losophy of the structure but without forgetting to take into account the effects it wields upon and through the agent. But the paradox is that most commentators completely overlook the significant difference between my usage of this notion and the totality of previous usages (Héran 1987)—I said habitus so as *not* to say habit—that is, the generative (if not creative) capacity inscribed in the system of dispositions as an *art*, in the strongest sense of practical mastery, and in particular as an *ars inveniendi*. In short, they keep to a mechanistic vision of a notion constructed *against mechanism*.

Some authors, such as Victor Kestenbaum (1977) and James Ostrow (1990), have drawn parallels between your theory of habitus and the philosophical tradition of American pragmatism, and John Dewey in particular. Do you recognize yourself in this portrayal?

I came across these studies very recently and they stimulated me to take a closer look at Dewey's philosophy, of which I had only very partial and superficial knowledge. Indeed, the affinities and convergences are quite striking, and I believe I understand what their basis is: my effort to react against the deep-seated intellectualism characteristic of all European philosophies (with the rare exceptions of Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty) determined me, unwittingly, to move very close to philosophical currents that the European tradition of "depth" and obscurity is inclined to treat as foils, negative reference points.

At bottom and in short—I cannot consider here all the relevant commonalities and differences—I would say that the theory of practical sense presents many similarities with theories, such as Dewey's, that grant a central role to the notion of habit, understood as an active and creative relation to the world, and reject all the conceptual dualisms upon which nearly all post-Cartesian philosophies are based: subject and object, internal and external, material and spiritual, individual and social, and so on.[77]

77. Dewey (1958: 104) writes in *Art as Experience*: "Through habits formed in intercourse with the world, we also in-habit the world. It becomes a home, and the home is part of our every experience." His definition of "mind" as the "active and eager background which lies in wait and engages whatever comes its way" has obvious kinship with Bourdieu's habitus.

Such a conception of social action puts you in frontal opposition to this wide, if heterogeneous, current that has gained strength across the social sciences in recent years under the label of rational action theory or rational choice theory (Elster 1986, Coleman 1990b; see Wacquant and Calhoun 1989 for a critical survey).

A typical instance of the scholastic fallacy—of the ordinary error of professionals of logic, namely, that which consists in "taking the things of logic for the logic of things," as Marx said of Hegel—rational action theory (RAT) puts the mind of the scientist who conceptualizes practice in the place of the socially constituted practical sense of the agent. The actor, as it construes him or her, is nothing other than the imaginary projection of the knowing subject *(sujet connaissant)* into the acting subject *(sujet agissant)*, a sort of monster with the head of the thinker thinking his practice in reflexive and logical fashion mounted on the body of a man of action engaged in action. RAT recognizes nothing but the "rational responses" to potential or actual opportunities of an agent who is both indeterminate and interchangeable. Its "imaginary anthropology" seeks to found action, whether "economic" or not, on the intentional choice of an actor who is himself or herself economically and socially unconditioned. This narrow, economistic conception of the "rationality" of practices ignores the individual and collective *history* of agents through which the structures of preference that inhabit them are constituted in a complex temporal dialectic with the objective structures that produced them and which they tend to reproduce.

Isn't one of the purposes of the notion of habitus, which some critics (e.g., Jenkins 1982) have made into the conceptual hub of a philosophy of history allegedly aimed

There has recently been a resurgence of interest in the notion of habit and in its neglect or denigration in social theory (see, for example, Perinbanayagam 1985, Camic 1986, Baldwin 1988, and Connerton 1989: esp. 22–30, 84–95, and the discussion of "inscribing" and "incorporating" practices in chap. 3), in part in reaction to the overly "rationalist models of cognition and decision-making" that have come to dominate American social science (Collins 1981b: 985). Dewey and Mead are the authors most frequently "rediscovered" for their early formulation of a sociology of action based on habit; the critical relevance of Merleau-Ponty's work on the corporeality of the preobjective, nonthetic contact between world and subject is brought out by Ostrow (1990) and Schmidt (1985, esp. chaps. 3 and 4). It will be interesting to see whether this view gains strength in America and connects with Bourdieu.

at negating history, precisely to remind us of the historicity of the economic agent, of the historical genesis of her aspirations and preferences?

Human action is not an instantaneous reaction to immediate stimuli, and the slightest "reaction" of an individual to another is pregnant with the whole history of these persons and of their relationship. To explain this, I could mention the chapter of *Mimesis* entitled "The Brown Stocking," in which Erich Auerbach (1953) evokes a passage of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, and the representations or, better, the repercussions that a minor external event triggers in Mrs. Ramsay's consciousness. This event, trying on a stocking, is but a point of departure which, though it is not wholly fortuitous, takes value only through the indirect reactions it sets off. One sees well, in this case, that knowledge of stimuli does not enable us to understand much of the resonances and echoes they elicit unless one has some idea of the habitus that selects and amplifies them with the whole history with which it is itself pregnant.

This means that one can genuinely understand practices (including economic practices) only on condition of elucidating the economic and social conditions of production and actualization of the habitus that provides their dynamic principle.

By converting the immanent law of the economy into a universal and universally realized norm of adequate practice, RAT forgets—and hides—the fact that the "rational," or, better, reasonable, habitus which is the precondition of an adequate economic practice is the product of a particular economic condition, defined by the possession of the minimum economic and cultural capital necessary actually to perceive and seize the "potential opportunities" formally offered to all. All the capacities and dispositions it liberally grants to its abstract "actor"—the art of estimating and taking chances, the ability to anticipate through a kind of practical induction, the capacity to bet on the possible against the probable for a measured risk, the propensity to invest, access to economic information, etc.—can only be acquired under definite social and economic conditions. They are in fact always a function of one's power in, and over, the specific economy.[78]

78. Bourdieu (1979c: 68 and passim) shows in *Algeria 1960* that Algerian subproletarians could not reach the "threshold of modernity" which constituted the boundary between them and the stable working class, and beneath which the formation of the "rational habitus" demanded by a rationalized (capitalist) economy was impossible, so long as their "entire occupational existence was placed under the rule of the arbitrary" imposed by permanent insecurity and extreme deprivation (further exacerbated, in this case, by the cultural shock created by the disappearance of the assurances and supports formerly guaranteed by peasant society). In the absence of a minimum distance from economic necessity, agents cannot develop the temporal dispositions necessary for conceiving the possibility of a future pregnant with options and inviting meaningful decisions (a jobless man from the city of Constantine sums this up well: "When you are not sure of today, how can you be sure of tomorrow?").

Because it must postulate *ex nihilo* the existence of a universal, preconstituted interest, RAT is thoroughly oblivious to the social genesis of historically varying forms of interests.

Moreover, the theory of habitus explains why the finalism of rational choice theory, although anthropologically false, may appear empirically sound. Individualistic finalism, which conceives action as determined by conscious aiming at explicitly posed goals, is indeed a well-founded illusion: the sense of the game which implies an anticipated adjustment of habitus to the necessities and probabilities inscribed in the field does present itself under the appearance of a successful "aiming at" a future. Likewise, the structural affinity of habituses belonging to the same class is capable of generating practices that are convergent and objectively orchestrated outside of any collective "intention" or consciousness, let alone "conspiracy." In this fashion it explains many phenomena of quasi teleology which can be observed in the social world, such as those forms of collective action or reaction that pose such insuperable dilemmas to RAT.[79]

The efforts of the proponents of one or another version of rational action theory remind me of Tycho Brahé trying to salvage the Ptolemaic paradigm after Copernicus. It is amusing to see them go back and forth, sometimes from one page to the next, between a mechanism that explains action by the direct efficacy of causes (such as market constraints) and a finalism which, in its pure form, wants to see nothing but the choices of a pure mind commanding a perfect will or which, in its more temperate forms, makes room for choices under

79. The most famous of these dilemmas is that of the "free rider" (Olson 1965). Bourdieu dissolves this problem by showing that "the objective homogenizing of group or class habitus which results from the homogeneity of conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized outside of any strategic computation and outside of any conscious reference to a norm, and to be mutually adjusted *in the absence of any direct interaction* and, a fortiori, of any explicit co-ordination" (Bourdieu 1990a: 58, translation modified).

constraints—as with "bounded rationality," "irrational rationality," "weakness of the will," etc., the variations are endless. The unfortunate hero of this untenable paradigm is arguably Jon Elster (1984b) who, the same causes producing the same effects, repeats Sartre's analyses of bad faith and oath in *Ulysses and the Sirens.*[80]

Doesn't the notion of habitus also have the function of sidestepping the alternative between the individual and society, and thus between methodological individualism and holism?

To speak of habitus is to assert that the individual, and even the personal, the subjective, is social, collective. Habitus is a socialized subjectivity. This is where I part for instance with Herbert Simon and his notion of "bounded rationality" (Simon 1955; March 1978). Rationality is bounded not only because the available information is curtailed, and because the human mind is generically limited and does not have the means of fully figuring out all situations, especially in the urgency of action, but also because the human mind is *socially* bounded, socially structured. The individual is always, whether he likes it or not, trapped—save to the extent that he becomes aware of it—"within the limits of his brain," as Marx said, that is, within the limits of the system of categories he owes to his upbringing and training. (I notice that I have never cited Marx as often as I do nowadays, that is, at a time when he has been made the scapegoat of all the ills of the social world—no doubt an expression of the same rebellious dispositions that inclined me to cite Weber at the time when the Marxist orthodoxy was trying to ostracize his work. . .)

The proper object of social science, then, is neither the individual, this *ens realissimum* naively crowned as the paramount, rock-bottom reality by all "methodological individualists," nor groups as concrete sets of individuals sharing a similar location in social space, but the *relation between two realizations of historical action,* in bodies and in things. It is the double and obscure relation between habitus, i.e., the durable and transposable systems of schemata of perception, appreciation, and action that result from the institution of the social in the body (or in biological individuals), and fields, i.e., systems of objective relations which are the product of the institution of the social in things or in mechanisms that have the quasi reality of physical objects; and, of course, of everything that is born of this relation, that is, social practices and representations, or fields as they present themselves in the form of realities perceived and appreciated.

80. See Bourdieu (1990a: 42–51) for a thorough critique of Sartrean phenomenology and Elster's rational choice theory along these lines. Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1990e: 384) writes: "The rational calculator that the advocates of Rational Action Theory portray as the principle of human practices is no less absurd . . . than the *angelus rector,* the far-seeing pilot to which some pre-Newtonian thinkers attributed the regulated movement of the planets."

What is the nature of this "double and obscure relation" (you speak somewhere of an "ontological correspondence") between habitus and field, and how does it work itself out more precisely?

The relation between habitus and field operates in two ways. On one side, it is a relation of *conditioning:* the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field (or of a set of intersecting fields, the extent of their intersection or discrepancy being at the root of a divided or even torn habitus). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or *cognitive construction.* Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy. Two things follow. First, the relation of knowledge depends on the relation of conditioning that precedes it and fashions the structures of habitus. Second, social science is necessarily a "knowledge of a knowledge" and must make room for a sociologically grounded phenomenology of the primary experience of the field or, to be more precise, of the invariants and variations of the relation between different types of fields and different types of habitus.

Human existence, or habitus as the social made body, is this thing of the world for which there are things. As Pascal more or less put it, *le monde me comprend mais je le comprends* (in short, "the world encompasses me but I understand it"). Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a "fish in water": it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted.[81] I could, to make sure that I am well understood, explicate Pascal's for-

81. "Habitus never practically masters its field of action more than when it is fully inhabited by the field of forces because its structures are the product of this field" (Bourdieu 1989a: 327).

mula: the world encompasses me *(me comprend)* but I comprehend it *(je le comprends)* precisely *because* it comprises me. It is because this world has produced me, because it has produced the categories of thought that I apply to it, that it appears to me as self-evident. In the relation between habitus and field, history enters into a relation with itself: a genuine ontological complicity, as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty suggested, obtains between the agent (who is neither a subject or a consciousness, nor the mere executant of a role, the support of a structure or actualization of a function) and the social world (which is never a mere "thing," even if it must be constructed as such in the objectivist phase of research).[82] This relation of practical knowledge is not that between a subject and an object constituted as such and perceived as a problem. Habitus being the social embodied, it is "at home" in the field it inhabits, it perceives it immediately as endowed with meaning and interest. The practical knowledge it procures may be described by analogy with Aristotle's *phronesis* or, better, with the *orthē doxa* of which Plato talks in *Meno:* just as the "right opinion" "falls right," in a sense, without knowing how or why, likewise the coincidence between dispositions and position, between the "sense of the game" and the game, explains that the agent does what he or she "has to do" without posing it explicitly as a goal, below the level of calculation and even consciousness, beneath discourse and representation.

But it seems to me that this analysis should lead you to forsake the idiom of strategy entirely, yet the latter is central to your work (Bourdieu 1986a).

Indeed, far from being posited as such in an explicit, conscious project, the strategies suggested by habitus as a "feel for the game"

82. "The relationship to the social world is not the mechanical causality between a 'milieu' and a consciousness, but rather a sort of ontological complicity. When the same history inhabits both habitus and habitat, both dispositions and position, the king and his court, the employer and his firm, the bishop and his see, history in a sense communicates with itself, is reflected in its own image. History as 'subject' discovers itself in history as 'object'; it recognizes itself in 'antepredicative,' 'passive syntheses,' structures that are structured prior to any structuring operation or any linguistic expression. The doxic relation to the native world, a quasi-ontological commitment flowing from practical experience, is a relationship of belonging and possessing in which a body, appropriated by history, absolutely and immediately appropriates things inhabited by the same history" (Bourdieu 1981c: 306, translation modified).

aim, on the mode of "protension" so well characterized by Husserl (1982) in *Ideen,* towards the "objective potentialities" immediately given in the immediate present. And one may wonder, as you do, whether we should then talk of "strategy" at all. It is true that the word is strongly associated with the intellectualist and subjectivist tradition which, from Descartes to Sartre, has dominated modern Western philosophy, and which is now again on the upswing with RAT, a theory so well suited to satisfy the spiritualist *point d'honneur* of intellectuals. This is not a reason, however, not to use it with a totally different theoretical intention, to designate the objectively oriented lines of action which social agents continually construct in and through practice.[83]

Paradoxically, then, the very cases in which the immediate agreement between habitus and field obtains are the ones most likely to lead one to contest the reality of habitus and to doubt its scientific utility.

To give this paradox its full weight, one could even say that the theory of habitus may allow you to cumulate explanation by *vis dormitiva* (why does someone make petty-bourgeois choices? Because he has a petty bourgeois habitus!) and *ad hoc* explanation. I do not deny that some users of the concept may have succumbed to one or the other of these dangers, or to both, but I would be ready to dare my critics to find one such instance in my writings—and not only because I have been keenly aware of this danger all along. In reality, every time it is confronted with objective conditions identical with or similar to those of which it is the product, habitus is perfectly "adapted" to the field without any conscious search for purposive adaptation, and one could say that the effect of habitus is then redundant with the effect of field. In such a case, the notion can seem less indispensible, but it still has the virtue of pushing aside interpretations in terms of "rational choice" that the "reasonable" character of the situation seems to warrant.

Habitus is what you have to posit to account for the fact that, without being rational, social agents are *reasonable*—and this is what

83. "The problem of the conscious or unconscious character of strategies, thus of the good faith or cynicism of agents which is of such great interest to petty-bourgeois moralism" becomes "nonsensical" (Bourdieu 1990d: 37, note 3) once it is recognized that it is the encounter of habitus with the peculiar conjuncture of the field that drives them.

makes sociology possible. People are not fools; they are are much less bizarre or deluded than we would spontaneously believe precisely because they have internalized, through a protracted and multisided process of conditioning, the objective chances they face. They know how to "read" the future that fits them, which is made for them and for which they are made (by opposition to everything that the expression "this is not for the likes of us" designates), through practical anticipations that grasp, at the very surface of the present, what unquestionably imposes itself as that which "has" to be done or said (and which will retrospectively appear as the "only" thing to do or say).

But there are also cases of discrepancy between habitus and field in which conduct remains unintelligible unless you bring into the picture habitus and its specific inertia, its hysteresis. The situation I observed in Algeria, in which peasants endowed with a precapitalist habitus were suddenly uprooted and forcibly thrown into a capitalist cosmos (Bourdieu 1979a) is one illustration. Another example is given by historical conjunctures of a revolutionary nature in which changes in objective structures are so swift that agents whose mental structures have been molded by these prior structures become obsolete and act inopportunely *(à contre-temps)* and at cross purposes; they think in a void, so to speak, in the manner of those older people of whom we may justly say that they are "out of sync." In short, the ongoing dialectic of subjective hopes and objective chances, which is at work throughout the social world, can yield a variety of outcomes ranging for perfect mutual fit (when people come to desire that to which they are objectively destined) to radical disjunction (as with the Don Quixote effect dear to Marx).[84]

84. The internalization of objective chances in the form of subjective hopes and mental schemata plays a key role in Bourdieu's analysis of social strategies, whether it be in schools, in labor and marriage markets, in science, or in politics (see Bourdieu 1974a, 1979b, 1977b, for major statements). Since it has often been misconstrued as implying that agents' expectations necessarily and mechanically replicate their objective opportunities (e.g., Swartz 1977: 554; McLeod 1987), it is useful to quote Bourdieu's strong rejection of this view at some length: "The tendency to persevere in their being that groups owe, among other reasons, to the fact that the agents who compose them are endowed with durable dispositions capable of surviving the economic and social conditions of their own production, can be at the basis of *maladjustment as well as adjustment, of revolt as well as resignation*. It suffices to evoke other possible forms of the relation between dispositions and conditions to see in the anticipated adjustment of habitus to objective conditions a 'particular case of the possible' and *to avoid unconsciously universalizing the model of the quasi-circular relation of near-perfect reproduction* which is completely valid only in the case where the conditions of production of habitus are identical or homologous to its conditions of functioning" (Bourdieu 1990a: 62–63, translation modified and emphasis added). Similar statements can be gleaned from earlier writings, for example, Bourdieu 1974a, on the "Causality of the Probable."

Another reason why we cannot do without the notion of habitus is that it alone allows us to take into account, and to account for, the constancy of dispositions, tastes, preferences, which gives so much trouble to neomarginalist economics (many economists of consumer behavior have observed that the structure and level of expenses are not affected by short term variations in income and that consumption outlays display a high degree of inertia owing to the fact that they strongly depend on prior consumption patterns). However, the virtue, at once heuristic and explanatory, of the concept is never seen better than in the case of practices that are often studied separately either by the same science, such as marital behavior and fertility, or by different sciences, as with the linguistic hypercorrection, low fertility, and strong propensity to save of the upwardly mobile fractions of the petty bourgeoisie (see Bourdieu 1984a: chap. 6).

In brief, the theory of habitus not only has the merit (forgive me but I feel called upon to defend it) of better accounting for the actual logic of actual practices (especially economic practices) than rational choice theory, which destroys them, pure and simple. It also offers a matrix of hypotheses which have received numerous empirical verifications, and not in my work alone.

Does the theory of habitus rule out strategic choice and conscious deliberation as one possible modality of action?

Not at all. The immediate fit between habitus and field is only one modality of action, if the most prevalent one ("We are empirical," said Leibniz, by which he meant practical, "in three quarters of our actions"). The lines of action suggested by habitus may very well be accompanied by a strategic calculation of costs and benefits, which tends to carry out at a conscious level the operations that habitus carries out in its own way. Times of crises, in which the routine adjustment of subjective and objective structures is brutally disrupted, constitute a class of circumstances when indeed "rational choice" may take over, at least among those agents who are in a position to be rational.

Does the introduction of the mediating concept of habitus really free us from the "iron cage" of structuralism? To many of your readers, the notion seems to remain overly deterministic: if habitus, as the "strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations," results from the incorporation of the durable objective structures of the world, if the improvisation it regulates is itself "regulated" by those structures (Bourdieu 1977a), where does the element of innovation and agency come from?[85]

Before I answer this question, I would like to invite you to ask yourself why this notion, in a sense very banal (everyone will readily grant that social beings are at least partly the product of social conditionings), has triggered such reactions of hostility, if not rage, among some intellectuals, and even among sociologists. What is it about it that is so *shocking*? The answer is, I think, that it collides head on with the illusion of (intellectual) mastery of oneself that is so deeply ingrained in intellectuals. To the three "narcissistic wounds" evoked by Freud, those visited upon humanity by Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud himself, one should add that which sociology inflicts upon us, especially when it applies to "creators." Sartre, of whom I have often said that he has given intellectuals their "professional ideology" or, better, to speak like Weber, the "theodicy of their own privilege," elaborated the most accomplished version of the founding myth of the uncreated creator with his notion of "original project" (Bourdieu

85. Again, the notion of habitus is one which interpreters and critics of Bourdieu hardly agree upon. For Gartman (1991), Giroux (1982), and Jenkins (1982), among others, habitus reinforces determinism under the appearance of relaxing it. Giroux (1983: 90) contends that "its definition and use constitute a conceptual straight-jacket that provides no room for modification or escape. Thus the notion of habitus smothers the possibility for social change and collapses into a mode of management ideology." On the contrary, according to Harker (1984), Miller and Branson (1987: 217–18), Thapan (1988), Schiltz (1982: 729), Harker et al. (1990: 10–12) and Sulkunen (1982), it is a mediating, and not a structural, concept which introduces a degree of free play, creativity, and unpredictability in social action. Fox (1985: 199) expresses this interpretation thus: "habitus portrays social life and cultural meaning as a constantly developing practice, akin to the conception of culture as always in the making." Sahlins (1985: 29, 51, 53), Powell and DiMaggio (1991), and Calhoun (1982: 232–33) find both dimensions to be present in the concept. According to Ansart (1990: 40), it is the notion of habitus that allows Bourdieu to break out of the structuralist paradigm by developing an active conception of social conduct, a view shared by Lemert (1990: 299): "habitus is the most powerful idea from which Bourdieu generates a theory of structures unique for its sensitivity to the riddle upon which theories of structure most often falter: How does agency survive the constraining power of structuring?"

1971a), which is to the notion of habitus as the myth of genesis is to the theory of evolution. (The "original project" is, as you recall, this sort of free and conscious act of self-creation whereby a creator assigns to himself his life's designs, and that Sartre [1981–91] situated toward the end of childhood in his study of Flaubert.) The notion of habitus provokes exasperation, even desperation, I believe, because it threatens the very idea that "creators" (especially aspiring ones) have of themselves, of their identity, of their "singularity." Indeed, only the (experienced) seriousness of this stake can explain the fact that so many fine minds reacted not to what I wrote but to what they thought they had read.

Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. Being the product of history, it is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures.[86] It is durable but not eternal! Having said this, I must immediately add that there is a probability, inscribed in the social destiny associated with definite social conditions, that experiences will confirm habitus, because most people are statistically bound to encounter circumstances that tend to agree with those that originally fashioned their habitus.

In truth, the problem of the genesis of the socialized biological individual, of the social conditions of formation and acquisition of the generative preference structures that constitute habitus as the social embodied, is an extremely complex question. I think that, for logical reasons, there is a *relative irreversibility* to this process: all the external stimuli and conditioning experiences are, at every moment, perceived through categories already constructed by prior experiences. From that follows an inevitable priority of originary experiences and consequently a *relative* closure of the system of dispositions that constitute habitus.[87] (Aging, for instance, may be conceived as the increasing

86. Aside from the effects of certain social trajectories, habitus can also be transformed via socio-analysis, i.e., via an awakening of consciousness and a form of "self-work" that enables the individual to get a handle on his or her dispositions, as Bourdieu suggests below. The possibility and efficacy of this kind of self-analysis is itself determined in part by the original structures of the habitus in question, in part by the objective conditions under which the awakening of self-consciousness takes place (see, for instance, the "anti-institutional" disposition of French philosophers touched upon above in sec. 1).

87. "The very logic of its genesis explains that habitus is a chronologically ordered series of structures in which a structure of a given rank-order specifies the structures of

closure of these structures: the mental and bodily schemata of a person who ages become more and more rigid, less and less responsive to external solicitations.) Moreover, everything leads me to believe that certain basic structures, such as the opposition male/female, are organized extremely early on. Recent research in developmental psychology by Eleanor Maccoby (1988) reveals that girls and boys learn in nursery school, before age three, how to behave differently with a boy or a girl, and what to expect of each: blows from the one and kisses from the other. If we hold, as I do, that the principle of gender opposition plays a very fundamental role, for instance in politics (all the major political oppositions are overlaid with sexual connotations), if we hold that the bodily schemata of perception of the division of sexual labor and of the sexual division of labor are constitutive of the perception of the social world (Bourdieu 1977d),[88] then we must admit that, to some extent, primary social experiences have a disproportionate weight.

lower rank-order (i.e., genetically anterior) and structures the structures of higher ranking through the structuring action it exercises upon the structured experiences generative of these structures. Thus, for instance, the habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences . . . ; the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences . . . and so on, from restructuring to restructuring" (Bourdieu 1972: 188, my translation).

88. From the first, gender oppositions have been at the very heart of Pierre Bourdieu's thinking (he once half-facetiously confessed that "it was women who 'taught' [him] sociology"). He wrote extensively on this topic at the start of his career. His first major articles, based upon research in his home region of Béarn and in Algeria, concern "The Relation Between the Sexes in Peasant Society" (Bourdieu 1962c), "Bachelorhood and the Condition of Peasants" (Bourdieu 1962b), and the ethos of masculinity that underpins "The Sentiment of Honor in Kabyle Society" (Bourdieu 1965). His famous "The Berber House, or the World Reversed" (written in 1968 and reprinted in Bourdieu 1979c) revolves around the male/female oppositions that structure Kabyle cosmogony and domestic ritual practices. Discussion of sexual differences and categorizations abound in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* and *Distinction*. Yet, since the early 1960s, Bourdieu had never launched a frontal attack on the issue. This is remedied in the recent article entitled "Male Domination," in which Bourdieu (1990i) argues that gender domination constitutes the paradigm of all domination and is perhaps its most persistent form. It is at once the most arbitrary and the most misrecognized dimension of domination because it operates essentially via the deep, yet immediate, agreement of embodied schemata of vision of the world with the existing structures of that world, an agreement whose original roots go back thousands of years and can be found in the exclusion of women from the games of symbolic capital. See the discussion in sec. 5, below.

But I would also like to dispel another difficulty. Habitus reveals itself—remember that it consists of a system of dispositions, that is, of virtualities, potentialities, eventualities—only in reference to a definite situation. It is only *in the relation to* certain structures that habitus produces given discourses or practices. (Here you can see the absurdity of reducing my analyses of cultural heredity to a direct and mechanical relation between the occupation of the father and that of the son.) We must think of it as a sort of spring that needs a trigger and, depending upon the stimuli and structure of the field, the very same habitus will generate different, even opposite, outcomes. I could take here an example from my work on bishops (Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1982). Bishops live to be very old, and when I interviewed them in synchrony I found myself talking with men ranging anywhere from 35 to 80 years of age, that is, to people who had become bishops in 1936, 1945, and 1980, and who had therefore been constituted in very different states of the religious field. The sons of nobles who, in the 1930s, would have been bishops in Meaux, and would have asked the worshipers of their parish to kiss their ring in a quasi-feudal aristocratic tradition, are today "red bishops" in Saint Denis,[89] that is, radical clergymen active in the defense of the downtrodden. The same aristocratic habitus of highness, distance, and separation from the "middle," the "petty," the average, i.e., from the middle classes and the petty bourgeois, and thereby from the banal, the trivial, the commonplace, can produce diametrically opposed conducts due to the transformation of the situation in which they operate.

You thus reject the deterministic schema sometimes attributed to you with the formula "structures produce habitus, which determine practices, which reproduce structures" (Bidet 1979: 203; also Jenkins 1982, Gorder 1980, Giroux 1982: 7), that is, the idea that position in the structure directly determines social strategy. In truth, the determinations attached to a given position always operate through the multilayered filter of dispositions acquired and active over the social and biographical trajectory of the agent, as well as through the structural history of this position in social space.

Circular and mechanical models of this kind are precisely what the notion of habitus is designed to help us destroy (Bourdieu 1980d, 1988c, 1990a). At the same time, I can understand such misinterpreta-

89. Meaux is a traditionalist provincial town in a small religious district whose bishop is generally of noble descent. Saint Denis is an archetypal working-class suburb north of Paris and a historic stronghold of the Communist party.

tions: insofar as dispositions themselves are socially determined, one could say that I am in a sense hyperdeterminist. It is true that analyses that take into account both effects of position and effects of disposition can be perceived as formidably deterministic. The notion of habitus accounts for the fact that social agents are neither particles of matter determined by external causes, nor little monads guided solely by internal reasons, executing a sort of perfectly rational internal program of action. Social agents are the *product of history*, of the history of the whole social field and of the accumulated experience of a path within the specific subfield. Thus, for example, in order to understand what professor A or B will do in a given conjuncture (say, May '68) or in any ordinary academic situation, we must know what position she occupies in academic space but also how she got there and from what original point in social space, for the way in which one accedes to a position is inscribed in habitus. To put it differently, social agents will *actively* determine, on the basis of these socially and historically constituted categories of perception and appreciation, the situation that determines them. One can even say that *social agents are determined only to the extent that they determine themselves*. But the categories of perception and appreciation which provide the principle of this (self-) determination are themselves largely determined by the social and economic conditions of their constitution.

This being said, one can utilize such analyses precisely to step back and gain distance from dispositions. The Stoics used to say that what depends upon us is not the first move but only the second one. It is difficult to control the first inclination of habitus, but reflexive analysis, which teaches that we are the ones who endow the situation with part of the potency it has over us, allows us to alter our perception of the situation and thereby our reaction to it. It enables us to monitor, up to a certain point, some of the determinisms that operate through the relation of immediate complicity between position and dispositions.

At bottom, determinisms operate to their full only by the help of unconsciousness, with the complicity of the unconscious.[90] For determinism to exert itself unchecked, dispositions must be abandonned to their free play. This means that agents become something like "subjects" only to the extent that they consciously master the relation they entertain with their dispositions. They can deliberately let them "act" or they can on the contrary inhibit them by virtue of consciousness. Or, following a strategy that seventeenth-century philosophers advised, they can pit one disposition against another: Leibniz argued that one cannot fight passion with reason, as Descartes claimed, but only with "slanted wills" *(volontés obliques)*, i.e., with the help of other passions. But this work of management of one's dispositions, of habitus as the unchosen principle of all "choices," is possible only with the support of explicit clarification. Failing an analysis of such subtle determinations that work themselves out through dispositions, one becomes accessory to the unconsciousness of the action of dispositions, which is itself the accomplice of determinism.

Substituting the constructed relation between habitus and field for the apparent relation between the "actor" and the "structure" is also a means of bringing time to the core of social analysis.[91] And it reveals, *in contrario*, the shortcomings of the detemporalized conception of action that informs both structural and rational-choice views of action.

90. "The 'unconscious' . . . is indeed never but the forgetting of history that history itself produces by turning the objective structures it itself engenders into those quasi natures that habituses are" (Bourdieu 1990a: 56, translation modified). Put differently: "As long as the principles which orient practices are left in a state of unconscious, the interactions of ordinary existence are, according to Marx's expression, 'relations between men mediated by things': the structure of the distribution of economic and cultural capital and the principles of perception and appreciation which are its transfigured form interpose themselves between the one who judges and the one who is judged, in the form of the unconscious of the 'subject' of the judgment" (Bourdieu 1989a: 13, my translation).

91. Bourdieu's interest in time is a long-standing one, going back to his days as a student of philosophy in the 1950s when he undertook a systematic reading of Husserl and Heidegger. Much of his early anthropological research in Algeria deals with the contrasted social structuring and uses of time in the capitalist and the traditional sectors of the Algerian economy. Several of his earlier publications, for instance, "The Obsession of Unemployment Among Algerian Workers" (Bourdieu 1962d), "The Algerian Subproletariate" (Bourdieu 1973a, originally published in 1962), and "The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant Toward Time" (Bourdieu 1964) explore the dialectic of "Economic Structures and Temporal Structures" (to recall the subtitle of the first and longest essay in *Algeria 1960*, Bourdieu 1979c). It is in good part by restoring the temporality of practice that Bourdieu breaks with the structuralist paradigm. Time is also at the center of Bourdieu's analysis in that it is built into his conceptualization of social space. The model of the structure of social space put forth in *Distinction* is a three-dimensional one: in addition to the volume and structure of capital possessed by social agents, it takes into account the evolution over time of these two properties.

The relation between habitus and field as *two modes of existence of history* allows us to found a theory of time that breaks simultaneously with two opposed philosophies of time: on the one hand the metaphysical vision which treats time as a reality in itself, independent of the agent (as in the metaphor of the river) and, on the other hand, a philosophy of consciousness. Far from being a condition *a priori* and transcendent to historicity, time is what practical activity produces in the very act whereby it produces itself. Because practice is the product of a habitus that is itself the product of the em-bodiment of the immanent regularities and tendencies of the world, it contains within itself an anticipation of these tendencies and regularities, that is, a nonthetic reference to a future inscribed in the immediacy of the present. Time is engendered in the actualization of the act, or the thought, which is by definition presentification and de-presentification, that is, the "passing" of time according to common sense.[92]

We have seen how practice need not—except by way of exception—explicitly constitute the future as such, as in a project or a plan posited through a conscious and deliberate act of will. Practical activity, insofar as it is *makes sense*, as it is *sensée*, reasonable, that is, engendered by a habitus adjusted to the immanent tendencies of the field, is an act of temporalization through which the agent transcends the immediate present via practical mobilization of the past and practical anticipation of the future inscribed in the present in a state of objective potentiality. Because it implies a practical reference to the future implied in the past of which it is the product, habitus temporalizes itself in the very act through which it is realized. This analysis obviously demands considerable elaboration and differentiation. All I want to suggest here is that we can see how the theory of practice condensed in the notions of field and habitus allows us to do away with the metaphysical representation of time and history as realities in themselves, external and anterior to practice, without for all that embracing the philosophy of consciousness which underpins the vision of temporality found in Husserl or in rational action theory.[93]

92. As Merleau-Ponty (1962: 239–40) writes: "In every focusing moment my body unites present, past and future, it secretes time. . . . My body takes possession of time; it brings into existence a past and a future for a present, it is not a thing, but creates time instead of submitting to it."

93. "To reintroduce uncertainty is to reintroduce time, with its rhythm, its orientation, and its irreversibility, substituting the dialectic of *strategies* for the mechanics of the *model*, but without falling over into the imaginary anthropology of the theories of the 'rational actor'" (Bourdieu 1990a: 99, translation modified; see also Bourdieu 1986a).

Your reflection on time has led you to embrace a radical historicism, founded upon the identification of (social) being with history (or time).

Habitus, as a structuring and structured structure, engages in practices and in thoughts practical schemata of perception issued out of the embodiment—through socialization, ontogenesis—of social structures, themselves issued out of the historical work of succeeding generations—phylogenesis. Asserting this *double historicity of mental structures* is what distinguishes the praxeology I propose from the efforts to construct a universal pragmatics in the manner of Apel and Habermas. (It differs from the latter also in that it rejects the reductionist and coarse distinction between instrumental and communicative action, a distinction which is completely inoperative in the case of precapitalist societies and never fully accomplished even in the most differentiated societies. To realize that, it suffices to analyze institutions typical of the capitalist world such as business gifts or public relations.) Praxeology is a universal anthropology which takes into account the historicity, and thus the relativity, of cognitive structures, while recording the fact that agents *universally* put to work such historical structures.

This double historicity of habitus is what allows you to provide an anthropological foundation for the actual logic of social reproduction.

Far from being the automatic product of a mechanical process, the reproduction of social order accomplishes itself only through the strategies and practices via which agents temporalize themselves and make the time of the world (which does not prevent them from often experiencing it as a transcendent reality upon which they have no control, as with waiting, impatience, uncertainty, etc.). For instance, we know that social collectives such as bureaucracies have built-in propensities to perpetuate their being, something akin to a memory or a loyalty that is nothing other than the "sum" of routines and conducts of agents who, relying on their know-how *(métier)*, their habitus, engender (within the limits of the constraints inscribed in the relations of force constitutive of the field of which they partake and of the struggles which oppose them) lines of action adapted to the situation such as their habitus inclines them to perceive it, thus tailor made

(without being designed as such) to reproduce the structure of which their habitus is the product.

The tendency toward self-reproduction of the structure is realized only when it enrolls the collaboration of agents who have internalized its specific necessity in the form of habitus and who are *active producers* even when they consciously or unconsciously contribute to reproduction. Having internalized the immanent law of the structure in the form of habitus, they realize its necessity in the very spontaneous movement of their existence. But what is necessary to reproduce the structure is still a historical action, accomplished by true *agents*. In sum, the theory of habitus aims at excluding the "subjects" (which are always possible as a kind of limiting ideal case) dear to the tradition of philosophies of consciousness without annihilating agents to the benefit of a hypostatized structure, even though these agents are the product of this structure and continually make and remake this structure, which they may even radically tranform under definite structural conditions.

But I am not very satisfied with this answer because I am keenly aware that, despite the qualifications I have attached to it, verbally and mentally (nobody hears the latter, but a good reader, one careful to apply the "principle of charity," should append them on his or her own), I am still inclined or drawn to simplifications which, I fear, are the inescapable counterpart of "theoretical talk." In truth, the most adequate reply to all the questions you have put to me on this matter, particularly on the logic of social reproduction, is for me contained in the five hundred pages of *La noblesse d'Etat* (1989a), that is to say, in the whole set of empirical and theoretical analyses which alone can articulate in its full complexity the system of relations between mental structures and social structures, habitus and fields, and unravel their immanent dynamics.

5 Language, Gender, and Symbolic Violence

In *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu 1982b, 1991e),[94] you develop a sweeping critique of structural linguistics, or what one might call the "pure" study of language.

94. Much as *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* and *Outline of a Theory of Practice* differ substantially in content and organization, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu 1991e) and *Ce que parler veut dire* (literally "What Speaking Means," Bourdieu 1982b) are almost different books, even though the former is, formally, the translation of the latter. The English-language book, as constructed by John B. Thompson, includes several additional pivotal essays that make explicit the intimate connection between Bourdieu's sociological linguistics and his theory of the political field and of the politics of group formation. All quotes in this section are my translation from the French book.

You put forth an alternative model which, to simplify greatly, makes language an instrument or a medium of power relations, rather than a mere means of communication, that must be studied within the interactional *and* structural contexts of its production and circulation. Could you summarize the gist of this critique?

What characterizes "pure" linguistics is the primacy it accords to the synchronic, structural, or internal perspective over the historical, social, economic, or external determinations of language. I have sought, especially in *The Logic of Practice* and *Ce que parler veut dire* (Bourdieu 1990a: 30–41, and 1982b: 13–98, respectively), to draw attention to the relation to the object and to the theory of practice implicit in this perspective. The Saussurian point of view is that of the "impartial spectator" who seeks understanding as an end in itself and thus leads to impute this "hermeneutic intention" to social agents, to construe it as the principle of their practices. It takes up the posture of the grammarian, whose purpose is to study and codify language, as opposed to that of the orator who seeks to act in and upon the world through the performative power of the word. Those who treat it as an *object* of analysis rather than use it to think and to speak with are led to constitute language as a *logos*, in opposition to a *praxis*, as a "dead letter" without practical purpose or no purpose other than that of being interpreted, in the manner of the work of art.

This typically scholastic opposition is a product of the scholarly apperception and situation—another instance of the scholastic fallacy we encountered earlier. This scholarly bracketing neutralizes the functions implied in the ordinary usage of language. Language, according to Saussure, or in the hermeneutic tradition, is treated as an instrument of intellection and an object of analysis, a dead language (written and foreign as Bakhtin points out), a self-contained system completely severed from its real uses and denuded from its practical and *political* functions (as in Fodor's and Katz's pure semantics). The illusion of autonomy of the "purely" linguistic order which is asserted by the privilege granted to the internal logic of language, at the expense of the social conditions and correlates of its social usage, opens the way to all subsequent theories which proceed as if the theoretical