Pierre Bourdieu
Key Concepts

Edited by
Michael Grenfell

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Michael Grenfell

Pierre Bourdieu is now regarded as one of the foremost social philosophers of the twentieth century. Born in a small village in the French Pyrenees, his extraordinary academic trajectory took him to the leading academic training schools of Paris. Eventually, he was nominated as "Chair" at the Collège de France, that most prestigious institution which groups together fifty-two leading French academics, philosophers and scientists.

Bourdieu's output was voluminous. Beginning with ethnographies of the Béarn and Algeria, he went on to offer extensive studies of education, culture, art and language. For much of this time, Bourdieu was regarded as a sociologist, and he had a major influence in this academic field. However, his was a very particular type of sociology. His academic training was as a philosopher. It was only after personal experiences "in the field" in Algeria and the Béarn, that he abandoned the traditional academic route of philosophy for sociology. This was in the 1950s, a time when sociology had not yet acquired its contemporary popularity or academic credibility. Certainly, his early works can be read as anthropologically orientated, a perspective he never really lost over the subsequent fifty years of his career.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Bourdieu seemed very much the private academic, sharing the Parisian intellectual world with other leading French writers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Jean-François Lyotard, Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan. Increasingly, however, he became a public figure rivalling the reputations of writers in his immediately proceeding generation – for example, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Later in life, his

interventions in politics became more frequent, firstly, in advising the new Socialist government in France in the 1980s, and later still supporting a number of pressure groups in mounting what he called "acts of resistance" to the dominant political, economic and social trends of the day. At this time, he published further work on the media, painting, economics and gender politics. In 1993, he published *La misère du monde* (*The Weight of the World* 1999a), an extensive series of accounts of "social suffering" across French society. This work became a bestseller and projected Bourdieu into the media limelight. From this point, Bourdieu increasingly offered his theory and practice as a kind of "philosophy for everyman", as a way of coping with contemporary living.

Since his death in 2002, Bourdieu's influence has continued to grow. His own major work and publications are in the areas of Algeria, anthropology, education and culture. However, as noted above, his output covers many other fields: economics, politics, art, philosophy, law, religion, media, language, gender, history, etc., and it is now common to see his work referred to in a wide range of academic disciplines, from geography to theology. This applicability and adaptability is in many ways a measure of the value of Bourdieu's approach to the social sciences. Two features characterize it: first, a particular understanding of the link between theory and practice, and how these should feature in social science research; and secondly, a unique individual set of conceptual terms to be employed in the course of analysis and discussion of findings. These terms, what he called his "thinking tools", emerged in the course of his empirical studies and are used to explain and illuminate the social processes uncovered therein. Bourdieu argued that he never really theorized as such; his starting point was always a particular social phenomenon or practice. Certainly, any study to be undertaken within a Bourdieusian framework must begin with real, empirical data. Nevertheless, his legacy amounts to a Bourdieusian language – a language which can be used to think with.

This book deals with my own selection of his principal terms. Rather than take a thematic approach to discussing Bourdieu, each chapter focuses on one of his particular key concepts; for example, *habitus*, *field*, *capital*, etc. It is important to stress that these should not be seen as being independent entities. Rather, they are all interconnected, making up the structure and conditions of the social contexts Bourdieu studied. To alight on one particular concept is therefore simply to see the world from this perspective. The contributors to this volume have all used Bourdieu in their own work.

They have each responded to the challenge of considering a particular concept and have written about it from their own perspective. The book as a whole covers the following:

- discussion of the definition of each concept: how it is defined by Bourdieu;
- the background and history of each concept;
- which other authors can be connected with the concept, and how their definitions of it differ from Bourdieu's own;
- when and where Bourdieu used the concept and why;
- how the concept developed during his work, as well as links with other disciplines such as anthropology, philosophy, etc.;
- how the concepts might be adapted and applied to other topics in the social sciences and why, as well as the issues arising in doing so.

Whilst the book covers the above framework, individual chapters focus on particular aspects in response to the concept under discussion from the author's own viewpoint. Each chapter can be read as both an elucidation and evaluation of each individual concept. Approaching the concepts in this way offers an opportunity for individual perspectives and responses in interpreting and thinking *with* Bourdieu. It also opens up key questions of relevance and applicability.

The chapters need to be read both individually and together. Individually, they elucidate a particular concept so as to broaden our understanding of it, including the range of dimensions encompassed by it. In this way, we see that these concepts are not simply descriptive terms, but embody a dynamic and epistemology that make them active tools for deployment in the social sciences. At the same time, reading the chapters together uncovers the ways in which the concepts interpenetrate and how together they build up a particular world view. To aid reading, the book is divided into four main parts: "Biography, theory and practice"; "Field theory: beyond subjectivity and objectivity"; "Field mechanisms"; and, "Field conditions".

Part I sets a biographical basis – Bourdieu's life and times – to the book and is entitled: "Biography, theory and practice". In Chapter 1, there is a brief coverage of Bourdieu's own biography, where he grew up and his main professional trajectory. Bourdieu always insisted that his work be set in the times that produced it. There is, therefore, an account of the contemporary events which shaped Bourdieu's life. Finally, Chapter 1 places Bourdieu in the intellectual

tradition of which he was a participant. Crucial to appreciating the provenance and significance of Bourdieu's concepts is an understanding of what he termed his "theory of practice". This issue involves a discussion of the relationship between theory and practice and how they mutually express each other. Chapter 2 extends the biographical perspective on Bourdieu by drawing out further the intellectual issues that shaped his philosophy, both in terms of personal background and intellectual trajectory. Here, we consider how a life experience itself can shape personal perspectives on issues of theory and practice. Chapters 1 and 2 are offered to give a background to Bourdieu's work, both from a personal and socio-historical point of view. They set his work in context and show how it developed over the course of his career, indicating the salient influences – both intellectually and socio-politically.

Part II is entitled "Field theory: beyond subjectivity and objectivity". As stated above, Bourdieu's primary concern was always to elucidate the practical problems he encountered, and it was in the course of engaging with them that his concepts were developed to explain the phenomena he discovered. Nevertheless, in the course of his career, his approach did grow into a fully fledged methodology or approach that he termed "Field Theory"; and, the concept of "field" certainly became a *leitmotif* for Bourdieu as his methodology developed. With *field*, Bourdieu was able to map objective structural relations. However, he also needed to show how such objectivity was constructed by individual subjectivities, constituted by their *habitus*, a term he borrowed from antiquity. The second part of the book looks at these two principal concepts to his theory: *habitus* (Chapter 3) and *field* (Chapter 4). There is discussion of what each term means and how each was derived. In the Introduction to Part II, we further consider the underlying philosophical issues in Bourdieu's "theory of practice", since only such an understanding can explain the need for these terms. A key theme in the social sciences has indeed been the tension between subjectivity and objectivity: we address the components of this issue and discuss the ways Bourdieu's approach aims to reconcile the oppositions to be found there.

Part III considers the structure and operations of fields under the title "Field mechanisms". Since Bourdieu was a sociologist, one of his main pre-occupations was the structure of social class in society. Chapter 5 addresses what Bourdieu understood by *social class* and the implications this had for other approaches to the topic. Fields partly define themselves in terms of an orthodox way of doing things. Chapter 7 discusses how Bourdieu saw such orthodoxy operating in

fields as *doxa*. Chapter 6 focuses on the main medium of field operations – *capital*. Much of Bourdieu's work demonstrates the way by which we should see *habitus* and *field* as mutually constitutive. However, they can also get out of step with each other. The final chapter in Part III deals with this phenomenon – *hysteresis* – and shows how it occurs in contemporary life.

Part IV of the book takes further the nature of field operations. Here, we consider "field conditions": in other words, what other processes occur within a field to shape social phenomena. Chapter 9, on *interest*, asks questions about the underlying motives and reasons that may be found around the choices and decisions individuals make that constitute their social action. Issues surrounding *conatus* (Chapter 10) take further aspects of individual psychologies and cognition as part of social practice. Chapter 11 in Part IV returns us to another issue at the core of Bourdieu's own practice – *suffering*. Bourdieu increasingly saw his methodology as a way of "liberating" individuals – and society – from the imposing social forces that dominated them. That we live in an age of social tension and friction is unquestionable. Bourdieu saw "social suffering" and "symbolic violence" as inherent features of society. This chapter show how it is so. Bourdieu's method has "reflexivity" at its core. The final chapter in Part IV then addresses what constitutes "reflexivity" for Bourdieu – in what way was his a "reflexive method"? In particular, this chapter shows how such reflexivity is crucial to social scientists in the positions they adopt with regard to their research.

After a final concluding chapter, the book ends with a brief chronology of Bourdieu's life and work as well as full Bibliographic references. In a Postscript to the Conclusion, a sketch of "Methodological principles" is offered. Bourdieu's concepts have no value if they are not used in practice. The Postscript sets out a framework for the essential components of any study in the social sciences that is approached from a Bourdieusian perspective. This coverage is presented in the form of an *aide-memoire* to those seeking to use these concepts in practice.

There were three principal aims in preparing this book. First, to offer a concise coverage of each of Bourdieu's key concepts that may be useful to those embarking on a study of Bourdieu. Parts I and II will be particularly useful for these readers. Secondly, to develop the discussion in such a way that those already familiar with Bourdieu's terms may be encouraged to rethink and reconsider them in their own work. Each of the concepts in Parts III and IV are worthy of in-depth consideration, whilst Parts I and II will draw attention to further

aspects of key terms. Thirdly, to offer what amounts to a worldview from a Bourdieusian perspective; as a way of encouraging others to develop and apply it in their own methods and disciplines. There are then different ways of reading and working with this book. However, whichever approach is adopted primarily by the reader, we hope that the others will also form part of their engagement with it.

Biography, theory and practice

Introduction to Part I

Part I of this book is entitled "Biography, theory and practice" and it comprises two chapters which span these three principal strands in Bourdieu's work. Chapter 1 begins with a brief outline of Bourdieu's life and works and this sets a framework for what follows in the rest of the book. It is emphasized how important it is to read Bourdieu's ideas firstly in terms of the current practical problems and issues of the day before any contemporary use is made of them. A sketch is subsequently offered of the events which surrounded Bourdieu's life and impacted on his thinking. This account includes the social, cultural, historical, political and economic. Bourdieu was active professionally for almost exactly the fifty years of the second half of the twentieth century and this section details some of the salient trends in this time period; in particular, with respect to France. In the next section of this chapter, Bourdieu is located within the intellectual tradition to which he formed a part. This tradition is linked to the eighteenth century Age of Enlightenment and the French *philosophes* which were its key thinkers. As noted, Bourdieu originally trained in philosophy before embracing sociology as the focus for his writing. The section "Bourdieu and the intellectual tradition" begins to unpick the various strands in his theory of practice, with reference to the founding fathers of sociology – Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber – French Catholic intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s, the European tradition of phenomenology, and the leading intellectual figures of his formative years, namely, Jean-Paul Sartre and Claude Lévi-Strauss. The ideas within this background are also contrasted with other writers on the history of the philosophy of science,

such as Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem. These two philosophers were particularly influential on Bourdieu's thinking about the relationship between theory and practice in the social sciences. They also can be seen as contributing to the intellectual climate which gave birth to postmodernism. This link is made as the discussion is brought up to date by contrasting this European tradition with twentieth-century American sociology and writers active within so-called Rational Action Theory.

Chapter 2 builds on the first chapter and further develops the connections between Bourdieu's biography and his theory of practice. It begins with Bourdieu's own home background and the possible congruities between his domestic experience and the ideas which would influence him. This experience is developed in terms of his early work on education and the kind of approach he was beginning to adopt. The essential elements of Marxist and phenomenological science are stressed. This coverage builds to a discussion of Bourdieu's founding methodological statement of 1968 – *Le métier de sociologue* (*The Craft of Sociology* 1991b). The centrality of Bachelard's work to Bourdieu's own thinking is also emphasized with reference to the "three degree of monitoring" necessary to a truly "practical theory of social practices". Chapter 2 therefore offers a philosophical background against which the detail of the Introduction to Part II can be read. It can also be read as an epistemological warning to those who might reify the concepts which follow as concrete entities, or metaphorical narratives, rather than approaching them as necessary tools to understanding the practical logic of fields.

Biography of Bourdieu

Michael Grenfell

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to offer an outline of Bourdieu's biography. There are various issues to consider. For much of his life, Bourdieu was against biography, both in terms of his own personal life details and, in fact, biographical studies in general. In an article published in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (Bourdieu 1986b), he writes of "*l'illusion biographique*".[1] Here, he sets out his major objections to conventional biographies. He takes exception to the accounts of people's lives as constructed by historians and ethnographers, not to mention sociologists. He sets himself against these "lives" for their constructed coherence and the implied objective and subjective intentions behind the action of individuals involved. He sees this tendency revealed in the very language used by biographers: "already", "from that moment", "from his youngest age", "always". Briefly, Bourdieu objects to tidy chronologies of lives lived in a sort of pre-ordered, if not preordained, manner.

Bourdieu spent most of his life avoiding reference to his personal life and, even now, we only have the most basic information (see Grenfell 2004b for a fuller account). However, there is a paradox. As we shall see, Bourdieu's reflexive approach was predicated on the sociologist "objectifying" the process of their objectification. Central to this method was the need to apply the same epistemological concepts to the "knowing subjects" themselves as to the "object" of research. How to operate such an approach then becomes a crucial question, and biography must feature in this undertaking. Bourdieu

claimed that, indeed, he had developed this aspect of his method, but that it did not necessitate the disclosure of his personal life details. Later in this book (Chapter 12), we shall see how this might be possible (see also Grenfell 2004b: ch. 7). Nevertheless, at the very end of his career, Bourdieu seemingly became more open to questions about the way his work was shaped by his own life experience. Indeed, at his final lecture at the *Collège de France* (February 2001) Bourdieu talked about the way his work was a kind of "auto-socio-analysis", as a way of making sense of the social forces which had shaped his life trajectory. His final posthumously published book is entitled *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse* [*Outline for a Self-analysis*] (2004a); although even here the first page of it states "this is not an autobiography". The self-analysis offered is very much in terms of his socio-historical positioning within the academic field. With these points in mind, this chapter considers Bourdieu's biography from three directions. First, an account of what is known about Bourdieu's life events is presented. This includes family background and career trajectory. Secondly, this "biography" is set in the historical context of contemporary France. Here, the socio-historical background to Bourdieu's life is considered. Thirdly, Bourdieu's own work is placed within a history of ideas, both within France and beyond. Bourdieu often made a plea that his readers should keep in mind the "socio-genesis" of his work (1993e). In other words, how his ideas were shaped by the salient social and intellectual trends of the times within which they were produced. By adopting this three-fold approach to Bourdieu's biography, the intention is to go some way to establish such a framework for reading each of the concepts set out in this book.

Bourdieu – a life

Bourdieu was born on 1 August 1930 in a tiny village – Denguin – in the Béarn region of the French Pyrénées-Atlantiques. Life appears to have been very much that of the traditional rural peasant. Bourdieu's father never completed his own schooling, although his mother continued her education to the age of sixteen. The language spoken in the home was Gascon, a now dead regional language. The family were evidently of modest economic means: his father's background was that of an itinerant sharecropper, although later he was employed by the French Post Office as a *petit-fonctionnaire* cum postman. Bourdieu went to the local elementary school before

passing to the *lycée* in Pau, the town which was sufficiently far from Denguin to warrant Bourdieu attending as a boarder. Bourdieu obviously showed academic talent as he passed an entrance examination to attend the *lycée Louis Le Grand* in Paris, which was celebrated as one of the principal preparatory schools for students aspiring to attend the elite Parisian training schools – the so-called *Grandes Écoles*. In due course, Bourdieu passed the *concours* for the *École Normale Supérieure* (ENS) which he entered in 1951, graduating in 1955 with a degree in philosophy. The ENS has long been reputed as the incubator of the French intelligentsia. Both Sartre and de Beauvoir were former students; Derrida was a fellow student in Bourdieu's time there.

After graduating, Bourdieu taught for one year in the *lycée de Moulins*. However, later in 1955, Bourdieu went to Algeria to complete his military service. At this time, Algerians were engaged in a cruel and bloody war of independence against their French colonialists. After some time away from the capital, Bourdieu was posted to Algiers where he undertook "administrative" duties in the General Government which, significantly, also held a well-stocked library (see Grenfell 2006 for further discussion of Bourdieu's early work and life experiences). Later still, Bourdieu taught in the *faculté de lettres* at the University of Algiers. These experiences were clearly formative ones, at one and the same time challenging and inspiring. The first of Bourdieu's principal publications addressed the Algerian situation and its consequences: *Sociologie de L'Algérie* (1958), *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie* (1963), *Le déracinement, la crise de l'agriculture traditionelle en Algérie* (1964).

Bourdieu returned to France in 1960 when he was appointed as an assistant to the leading French intellectual Raymond Aron. He took up teaching in the University of Lille (1961–4) before being nominated as Director of Studies at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* (a precursor to the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* – EHESS). Subsequently, he was named as director of the *Centre de Sociologie Européenne*, which had previously been founded by Aron. His work during these initial years at the Centre focused on three principal areas: education – *Les héritiers* (1964) (*The Inheritors*, Bourdieu & Passeron 1979b), *La reproduction* (1970) (*Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a); art and culture – *Un art moyen* (1964) (*Photography: A Middle-brow Art*, Bourdieu *et al.* 1990a), *L'amour de l'art* (1966) (*The Love of Art*, Bourdieu *et al.* 1990b); and methodology – *Le métier de sociologue* (1968) (*The Craft of Sociology*, Bourdieu *et al.* 1991b),

Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique (1972) (*Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu 1977b).

We know little of Bourdieu's personal life save that in November 1962 he married Marie-Claire Brizzard, with whom he subsequently had three sons (Jérôme, Emmanuel and Laurent).

In 1964, he took over editorship of *Le Sens Common*, a series owned by one of the principal publishing houses in France, *Les Éditions de Minuit*. Under his editorship, the company released translations of key academic texts in the social sciences; for example, those of the art historian, Erwin Panofsky and the American sociologist, Erving Goffman. The *Minuit* publishing house later provided an outlet for many of Bourdieu's principal books. In 1975, he founded the *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, a journal which acted as a vehicle for Bourdieu's shorter articles as well as those of his collaborators. In 1981, he was elected as Chair in Sociology at the *Collège de France*, an august institution which groups just fifty-two elective members of French leading academics. He was awarded the gold medal of the CNRS – the French national research centre – in the same year. These two events established his academic status and standing as successful and prestigious. The 1980s similarly marked a period of prolific output with major book publications on: cultural life – *La distinction* (1979) (*Distinction* 1984); academia and state training schools – *Homo Academicus* (1988a [1984]), *La noblesse d'état* (1989) (*The State Nobility* 1996b); further methodological and philosophical statements – *Le sens pratique* (1980) (*The Logic of Practice* 1990c, itself a reworking of his Algerian studies), *Questions de sociologie* (1980) (*Sociology in Question* 1993a), *Leçon sur une leçon* (1982a) (his inaugural lecture at the *Collège de France*), *Choses dites* (1987) (*In Other Words* 1994d), *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger* (1988) (The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger 1991c); and language – *Ce que parler veut dire* (1982b).

In 1984 and 1988, Bourdieu joined committees set up by the Socialist government under François Mitterand to review the future direction and curriculum of the French education system (see Bourdieu & Salgas 1985a and Bourdieu 1992b [1989]). This involvement with state politics lasted the decade. However, in 1993, he published *La misère du monde* (*The Weight of the World* 1999a), a series of personal accounts of social suffering in France; suffering brought about, for the most, part by neo-liberal economic policy that the Socialist government were then adopting. This theme was also the subject of *Les structures sociales de l'économie* (2000c) (*The Social*

Structures of the Economy 2005); in particular, with respect to the French housing market. In the 1990s, Bourdieu developed a much more prominent public profile. He appeared on television and the radio, something he has eschewed in the past, and was a frequent participant at the meetings of social assemblies, strikers, and other pressure groups. Bourdieu's prolific output continued with further major statements on: methodology and philosophy – *Réponses* (1992) (*An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* 1992a), *Raisons pratiques* (1994) (*Practical Reason* 1998c), *Méditations pascaliennes* (1997) (*Pascalian Meditations* 2000a), *Science de la science et réflexivité* (2001) (*Science of Science and Reflexivity* 2004b); and the art field – *Les règles de l'art* (1992) (*The Rules of Art* 1996a). However, Bourdieu also published a series of shorter polemical texts aimed at a more general public. These included attacks on the modern media – *Sur la télévision* (1996) (*On Television and Journalism* 1998b), as well as collections dealing with neo-liberal economics and their consequences – *Contre-feux* (1998) (*Acts of Resistance* 1998a) – and the European labour movement – *Contre-feux 2* (2001).

Bourdieu retired from the *Collège de France* in 2001 and died of cancer on 23 January the following year.

Bourdieu and contemporary France

This section addresses the background to Bourdieu's life. It is easy to see Bourdieu as essentially a theorist. The image of the Parisian intellectual does seem to suggest someone detached from the real world. However, this picture is very different from reality, especially for Bourdieu. In fact, Bourdieu claimed never to theorize for the sake of it (1989d: 50) and almost all of his work can be seen as a response to an actual practical context. What preoccupied Bourdieu was a mission to explain the social, political and cultural practices that surrounded him; in brief, to "restore to people the meaning of their actions" (1962b: 109). These actions need to be placed against a background of social and historical events.

Bourdieu was born in 1930, the last decade of the French Third Republic. If we look back, we see the glory days of the *belle époque* in the distance, itself a period born out of the trauma and humiliations of nearly a century of war and revolution for France as it struggled to establish a nation state following the great revolution of 1789. The *belle époque*, with its artistic gaiety and growing self-confidence, had been brought to an end by the trauma of the First

World War with all that it entailed at the level of politics and economics, not to mention national pride. The 1930s in France were marked by economic crisis, political corruption and a growing sense that Third Republic institutions no longer provided what France required. The eventual outbreak of war and the consequent collaboration of the Vichy government with their Nazi invaders – and its return to traditional values of work, family and country – did little to offer an alternative to a country that seemed exhausted by the events of the previous 150 years.

How much all this affected Bourdieu is a moot point. We know next to nothing about his childhood experiences, aside from a few reflections on his time as a boarder at the *lycée* in Pau. In the 1930s, France remained an essentially traditional, agricultural country. What industry there was could be found in the north and around centres such as Lyon. Other provincial towns, for example Toulouse, remained regional in outlook. For those living in the country regions such as the south-west where Bourdieu grew up, life remained very much that of isolated rural communities. Visits to the nearest towns were comparatively rare and life was inward looking. The Second World War did much to overturn this old world. Besides its dual experience of collaboration and resistance, the aftermath of the war gave France a fresh opportunity to remake and remodel itself in preparation for the new world. War had brought groups of men and women from all walks of life together in resistance movements. Whatever divided them in terms of social and professional background, they were united in opposition to a common enemy. Intellectuals met and planned with factory workers and farmers. The war also banished, once and for all, the reactionary voices of the past with their nostalgia for the *ancien régime* and its return to God and Monarch. At the time of Liberation, France was ready to begin again, led by many of those who had risked their lives in routing the German invaders.

Two key themes of the immediate postwar period in France were political representation and economic planning. The first of these was enshrined in creating the Fourth Republic with its aim to include all those who had taken part in preparing the way for a new France. However, France did not stand immune from influences in the world at large. With the advent of the Cold War, there were tremendous tensions between the right and left of international politics which were reflected on the home front. Political representation between those on the left and right of French politics – with its two very different world views – eventually led to political instability and

intransigence. The fall of the Fourth Republic was conditional on the rise of a much more centrist, presidential system of politics, in this case, designed and ruled by the hero of the war years, Charles de Gaulle. His version of politics left him as director of most of the key workings of government. This way of working suited the highly interventionist series of economic *Plans* that were set up during the 1950s and 1960s to make sure that France built a commercial and industrial base worthy of the modern world. This was also a period of rural exodus as more and more French people left the country and rural communities in order to find work and a new life in the rapidly expanding urban towns and cities. Education was seen as a key component of this process: student numbers expanded rapidly, and universities diversified away from traditional to more vocational and contemporary disciplines. On the international stage, France became embroiled in a fierce war of independence in Algeria, which itself involved issues of national pride in the aftermath of French experiences from the 1940s. Such uprisings as those in Algeria again stimulated reactionary forces who regarded the letting go of the French colonies as an insult to national pride and principle, whilst others sought to free France from the imperial legacy. De Gaulle eventually acted to bring about this separation when independence was granted to Algeria, as part of a broader international process of decolonalization.

For Bourdieu, these were formative years. In a very real sense, it was the experience in Algeria that precipitated his move from philosophy to sociology. In Algeria, he saw traditional society in opposition to the modern world, and the consequences it had for the individuals involved (see Bourdieu 1958; 1961; 1962a; 1962c; 1963; 1964; 1979a). He also noticed a similar juxtaposition, albeit it in a vastly different cultural context, in his home region of the Béarn, where modern living invaded and shaped local practices more and more (see Bourdieu 1962b; 1972a; 1989c). His experience of schooling had very much brought home his own social position: as a rural boarder in the *lycée* he was forced to wear a grey smock whilst the day pupils arrived in the latest attire. The latter also made fun of his Gascon accent (see Bourdieu 2002a). Education was a double-edged sword: it highlighted one's idiosyncrasies; at the same time, it offered the means to escape one's immediate surrounding. It is therefore unsurprising if Bourdieu chose education and culture as the principal themes for his first studies in the 1960s (Bourdieu 1977a [1970]; 1979b [1964]; 1990a [1965]; 1990b [1966]). Behind these works lie two implicit questions: is school a democratizing agent? – in other

words, can everyone succeed in it? – and, what does education and culture offer to the average French man and woman at a personal level?

Education also lay at the heart of the next internal crisis to hit France, which, in 1968, was brought to its knees by a series of strikes. These began in universities and involved both students and lecturers. However, they quickly spread across the whole country and soon drew in workers in commerce and industry. Many took to the streets. Barricades were constructed – riot police were called in. Many spoke of *revolution*.

The root cause for these troubles can be found in the social, economic and political. As a result of post-war renewal, France had achieved impressive levels of growth and investment. Its process of modernization had been rapid and successful. Yet, such speed of recovery cannot take place without resultant tensions and strains. Many of the French work-force were now better off. Nevertheless, many were housed in poor public HLMs (*Habitations à loyer modéré*), where facilities seemed to subordinate social well-being to economic output. The level of centralization, and thus lack of participation and consultation, was also endemic. Bluntly, the French became dissatisfied with being told what to do. Finally, the explosion of communications and culture of the 1960s had led to a new spirit of independence and resistance; most noticeably expressed, of course, in the youth culture. By 1968, a new student population had the education and leisure to question their leaders. Participation, consultation and *autogestion* became the slogans of a movement that sought to open up the structures of society to greater involvement from a wider variety of occupations and backgrounds (see Grenfell 2007, for a longer discussion of Bourdieu and the context of education). Bourdieu was later to write about 1968 at the "critical moment" in *Homo Academicus* (1988a [1984]). At the time, he visited many of the university faculties and spoke at the "open assemblies" that were set up there, often as lock-in communities.

Data collected in the 1960s also furnished him with analyses which were to be included in *Distinction* (1984 [1979]) and *The State Nobility* (1996b [1989]), each dealing respectively with taste and culture, and the French system of elite training schools. Greater participation was indeed granted in the wake of 1968. De Gaulle was no longer at the centre stage of politics, leaving the arena for more reformist presidents such as Pompidou and Giscard D'Estaing. The 1970s were subsequent years of consolidation and liberalization for the French, albeit in ways which preserved the traditional structures

of economy and state. Not until 1981, and the advent of the first Socialist government of the Fifth Republic, did France opt for a real alternative.

A culture of change had been growing for some years, so it was no surprise when France voted first for François Mitterand and then a left-wing majority in Parliament. At this time, the Communist Party was still a significant force in French politics, so the Left could only win by forming an alliance. Under the popular Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, subsequent policy was radical and aimed at traditional social reform and support for workers, while hoping to achieve balance between the business world and the aspirations of the trade unions, which were still a significant force in France. However, this proved impossible as polarization between moderate and militant supporters of the Left and factions of the Patronat and the Right led to a breakdown in consensus at the heart of the French political establishment. As financial insecurity deepened into a full crisis of confidence in the French Bourse, the government was forced to undertake a *volte-face*: key ministers were replaced or resigned, and France introduced a programme of economic liberalization in line with those being pursued in the United Kingdom and the USA under Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.

These were years of growing political involvement for Bourdieu. It is clear that Bourdieu personally shared the enthusiasm and excitement of the new Left government. As mentioned above, he sat on two major governmental committees charged with developing plans for educational reform. 1981 also saw the suppression of the Polish Solidarity trade union movement by General Jaruzelski, backed by the Soviet Union. Bourdieu was active in mobilizing French intellectuals and personalities in opposition to what was occurring in Poland (see Bourdieu 1985c). We can also assume he shared the sense of disappointment, if not betrayal, as the Socialist government apparently abandoned their principles and embraced policies of social liberalization and free market economics. Certainly, opposition to such politics is apparent everywhere in Bourdieu's work and activities in the 1990s. *The Weight of the World* (1999a [1993]) is in fact a collection of first-hand "witness" accounts of the victims of neo-liberal economics as they affected students, retired people, farmers, trade unionists, judges, immigrants, and workers in general. The *Contrefeux* volumes also stem from this overt criticism of the principles of the predominant politics of the day (Bourdieu 1998a; 2001b). During the last decade of his life, Bourdieu became a key public supporter of numerous minority groups in their opposition to government

policies (see for example, Bourdieu 1992d; 1992e; 1993d; 1993e; 1994b; 1994c; 1995a; 1996c; 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 2000c; 2000d; 2000f; 2000g; 2000h). Such was his profile in the year following his death that, in rallies organized by public sector unions against public welfare reforms, one could see placards with the words "Remember Pierre Bourdieu". In 1995, Bourdieu had declared himself fighting against "the destruction of a civilisation" (1998a), under threat from neo-liberalism, a position he held firmly until his death.

Bourdieu and the intellectual tradition

In this section, Bourdieu is placed within the intellectual tradition of which he formed a part. Of course, there is no one intellectual tradition, and we can make the currents that influenced Bourdieu as wide or as narrow as we wish. Bourdieu was active on the intellectual world stage and imbibed or reacted against something of each of the main strands to be found there. Nevertheless, it is important to situate Bourdieu in terms of the principal components of intellectual traditions most apparent in his conceptual tools.

The French intellectual tradition of the past 250 years is a particularly rich one. The eighteenth century Age of Enlightenment provided the bed rock for all subsequent European thought with its key *philosophes* and men of letters. And, indeed, there is something of the radical reformist outlook that Bourdieu shares with writers such as Montesquieu, Tocqueville and Voltaire. Rousseau's quasi-romantic view of the "noble savage" and the subsequent inequalities brought about by socialized man is similar, in spirit at least, to Bourdieu's account of the almost inevitability of social differentiation, and hence, symbolic violence. Auguste Comte (1798–1857) was the first to coin the word "sociology", and with it the belief that social laws could be treated as natural laws – a principle which Bourdieu also adopted in his work.

The other "founding fathers" of sociology were Marx, Weber and Durkheim and, of course, it is again possible to see reflections of each of these in Bourdieu's own work. Marx (1818–83) was the nineteenth century anti-capitalist prophet of revolution and the author of the Communist Manifesto. However, he was also the radical philosopher of dialectic materialism, as well as the social historian of class change. Weber's (1864–1920) work very much complemented this critique of the modern world with his analyses of the way ideas themselves could shape human action: for example, the role that the

protestant work ethic played in the advance of capitalism. He also wrote about traditional and modern society, and the way that rationality itself developed and according to which underlying characteristics. Finally, Durkheim (1858–1917) investigated the way different social organizations had given rise to distinct moral forces which had consequences for the way men and women thought and behaved. He juxtaposed, in a way that Bourdieu subsequently did, traditional and modern society and explored the human consequences of the contemporary world. It is possible to show how Bourdieu took something from each of these key figures in sociology (see Grenfell 2007: chs 3 and 4). However, more pertinent here is the immediate intellectual climate which surrounded Bourdieu in his formative years.

Despite the writers of the Enlightenment, French philosophy in the century or so following the Great Revolution of 1789, for the most part, remained set within the traditions founded by the classical world. The founding of a republican, secular state and successive revolutions had never entirely expunged Catholic thinking among French intellectuals. Some of this thinking was avowedly traditional. However, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the first third of the twentieth, a new breed of modernist Catholic intellectuals arose, for example, the poet and essayist Charles Péguy (1873–1914). These writers were inspired by religious beliefs but, taking a lead from various social missions in rural and urban milieux, were also keen to explore the social activism of the Catholic faith. "Tout commence en mystique and finit en politique", Péguy famously declared. By the 1930s, a veritable intellectual movement of catholic intellectuals – the so-called "non-conformists" – had been formed who were active in commentating on the events of the day; most noticeably, economic crisis, the Spanish Civil War, and the rise of communism and fascism (see Loubet del Bayle 1969). Such events polarized the intellectual class; some embracing fascism and others communism in the face of what was seen as both a crisis in capitalism and a moral decay which acted as both cause and effect.

As a child in the 1930s, Bourdieu could have hardly been influenced by such writers at the time. Nevertheless, by the time of his intellectual coming of age – the late 1940s and 1950s – their effects could still be felt. For example, Emmanuel Mounier was a leading figure among the non-conformists. He developed a brand of social catholicism distilled into his philosophy of Personalism. Personalism can be seen as founded on religious aims of developing the soul, but as part of a Christian engagement in the social world, not simply

through prayer and worship. Indeed, Mounier was influenced by the existential tradition and quoted writers such as Søren Kierkegaard and Karl Jaspers extensively.

But, Catholic writers were not alone in being touched by existentialist thinking; and indeed, the leading writer in France – Sartre (1905–80) – was also an existentialist, but very much of an atheistic persuasion. Sartre had written important works in the 1930s, and expressed himself both as a writer of plays and fiction as well as books on philosophy. However, it was the war years that crystalized his reputation as a writer of world significance. Sartre was also influenced by the German founders of existentialism and, in particular, took his lead from its twentieth-century successors – Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl – in key texts such as *Being and Nothingness* (1943). In the climate of war, where decisions of life or death were a daily event for a large proportion of the French population, a philosophy of freedom as choice might seem appealing, and so it was. Moreover, it connected with social trends of emancipation; for example, in the case of the position of women in society through the work of Sartre's partner, de Beauvoir (1908–80) who, in *The Second Sex* (1949), offered a clarion call for a nascent feminist movement.

Existentialism, whether of its religious or atheistic varieties, offered a kind of "philosophy of man" which stressed individuality and subjectivity. However, countervailing "objectivist" trends were also present in post-war France, most noticeably through the work of the French anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1908–). Lévi-Strauss had spent some time with native communities during the 1930s and 1940s and had developed a version of anthropology which saw culture as a form of transmission of structural rules that governed practice; indeed, he argued that some of these, for example the incest taboo or the totem, were practically innate.

These two figures were leading intellectuals in France at the time of Bourdieu's academic coming of age. However, to catch up with Bourdieu in the 1950s, further currents need to be added to the intellectual mix that surrounded him. Besides existentialism and structural anthropology, phenomenology – a science of "getting back to things in themselves" – had become an important philosophical approach in France via its principal French exponent Maurice Merleau-Ponty, with whom Bourdieu studied. Furthermore, as the 1950s progressed, intellectual thought itself took more political intensity, most predominantly driven by events in the Soviet Union and its activities in Hungary, among others. Sartre himself embraced

Communism and declared himself on the side of the "freedom fighters" in the colonies.

It is important to see Bourdieu as separate and distinct from the generation of the intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s. For him, academic philosophy was "not very impressive" (1986a: 36). At the same time, existentialism was for him an "insipid humanism" (*ibid*.). In fact, Bourdieu published an early article in *L'Esprit*, the journal founded by Mounier, but it is easy to empathize with his own expressed questioning of why he did so when one thinks of its Christian roots, something that Bourdieu hardly identified with in his public life. Clearly, anthropology was important for him. His first publication was, in effect, an anthropology of Algeria. However, much of this should be read "against" Lévi-Strauss, as Bourdieu emphasizes the social construction of culture and the strategies individuals adopt to advance themselves and their families, rather than innate structural rules of practice in a Lévi-Straussian sense. Bourdieu was also undertaking a phenomenology of the affective life when he was plunged into the Algerian conflict. As stated above, the effect was dramatic. He turned away from philosophy and embraced sociology, a subject which at that time had little academic status and was not even taught extensively at universities – a situation that was certainly to change during the 1960s. However, Bourdieu's brand of sociology was still very philosophical. By his own account, his personal intellectual mentors had been Bachelard (1884–1962) and Canguilhem (1904–95) both of whom were philosophers of the history of science. For Bachelard, and Bourdieu after him, truth is not so much an absolute expression of things in themselves, or science as systematized knowledge, as sets of relations which are partly determined by the conditions of their realization. Moreover, what we express is always a *representation*, it is not the thing itself. To proceed scientifically is to "conquer" scientific facts, often in opposition to conventional ways of viewing the world, rather than through discovery. Canguilhem succeeded Bachelard at the Sorbonne. His concern was similarly to examine the ways in which issues of "truth" and "falsity" were constructed rather than account for known facts. Basically, there is no ultimate reality, only ways of seeing it.

The relativity of reality was also behind another major thrust in postwar French intellectual thinking – postmodernism. Postmodernism takes us all the way back to the turn of the century and the French founding father of modern-day linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). De Saussure conjectured that the words

which signify things are in fact arbitrary – the *signifier* and the *signified* were not one and the same – a discovery that led to the "linguistic turn" in contemporary philosophy. For French writers like Foucault (1926–84), whose doctorate was examined by Canguilhem and who supported Bourdieu in his election to the *Collège de France* (not to mention joining with Bourdieu in opposition to the events in Poland referred to above), and for Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), who was a fellow pupil and student with Bourdieu in the 1940s and 1950s, the philosophy of man *was* the philosophy of language. All human "discourse" could be "deconstructed" in terms which were analogous to language.

Bourdieu steered a course away from postmodernism, which he considered "dangerous" in its way of destroying concepts that had been hard won in the course of human development: for example, the state, the welfare state, society, truth, etc. His own route was to develop a philosophical language – *key concepts* – that would act as an antidote to everyday language and thus the way it occulted the social processes that had produced it. The 1960s did indeed see the explosion of sociology at an international level, and with it a much higher profile for Bourdieu. The expansion in sociological thinking led to a synthesis of the approaches of its key founding fathers – Marx, Weber and Durkheim. For example, in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1971) Berger and Luckmann developed an epistemology around which Marxist concepts of superstructure and infrastructure, Weberian rationality and Durkheimian theories of knowledge coalesced in a dialectic of "the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality" – language which Bourdieu himself adopted for a certain period. Mostly, however, Bourdieu was intent on thinking "Marx against Marx", "Weber against Weber" and "Durkheim against Durkheim" to come up with a "realist third way" (2004b: 200). Later, Bourdieu would also critique developments in American sociology, mostly noticeably its predilection for statistical analyses and Rational Action Theory (RAT), with its predictive ambitions to define how individuals will react (see Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 124–6). For Bourdieu, statistics should complement our understanding of the social world, they should not be used to "crush methodological rivals". And, contra RAT, human beings are only ever disposed to act in a certain way, as conditional on the field in which they find themselves. In this way, to paraphrase Bourdieu's own words, his own epistemology and consequent method attempted to integrate the "objectivity" of statistics within a European tradition of "subjectivity". It sought to

combine Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Perhaps most importantly, this "epistemological third way" was aimed at reinstating a Marxist philosophy of practice without the political rhetoric and propaganda of communism. This synthesis was very much against the use that had been made of these founding fathers of sociology by grand theorists such as the American Talcott Parsons. It was also distinct from the conventional sociology of Raymond Aron, France's leading sociologist at the time. Finally, it also went beyond the European tradition of phenomenology present in the work of Alfred Schutz and Merleau-Ponty.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a particular kind of biography of Pierre Bourdieu. In the first part, it set out the empirical details of his life: its major events and his principal publications. The second part then described the socio-historical background to Bourdieu's life, in particular with regard to the history of contemporary France. Finally, the third part gave an account of the intellectual climate that surrounded Bourdieu and showed where and how he positioned himself in it. Each of these "levels" of biography are, of course co-terminus – from the personal and subjective to the social and objective. Each needs to be understood – apprehended, to use a word often employed by Bourdieu – in terms of the other, and used as a background against which we should read the accounts of the key concepts that follow.

Note

1 Please read the note at the beginning of the Bibliography. This sets out the approach I have used for citing Bourdieu in the text.

Theory of Practice[1]

Derek Robbins

Introduction

Inevitably, central to this chapter is Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu 1977b) which is a translation and revision of *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique: Précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle* (originally published in 1972). Before coming to an assessment of the "theory" which Bourdieu advanced in these two texts, however, there is the need to interpret some aspects of his social and intellectual trajectory in the first forty years of his life (1930–70). This chapter will also consider the importance of *Le métier de sociologue* (originally published in 1968), translated as *The Craft of Sociology* (Bourdieu *et al.* 1991b) and comment on the relationship between Bourdieu's thinking and that of Bachelard, Althusser and Habermas among others.

Social and intellectual trajectory

As if reaffirming his normal reluctance to divulge details of his upbringing, it was only late on in his posthumously published *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse* (Bourdieu 2004a) that Bourdieu finally articulated an account of his origins, devoting several pages to a description of both of his parents. As outlined in Chapter 1, we know that his father was the son of a "*métayer*" – a farmer holding land on condition that half the produce is given to the landlord – who, at the age of about thirty, when Bourdieu was born, became a

postman, and then the postmaster, in a small village about twenty kilometres south of Pau in the Béarn in the direction of the omni-present barrier of the Pyrenees dominating the sky-line. Bourdieu talks of his childhood experience as the "transfuge fils de transfuge" (Bourdieu 2004a: 109). His father seemed to be a "transfuge" – an apostate, deserter, or betrayer of his class origins – because he had renounced farm work and manual labour. According to Bourdieu, his father was separated from his own father and brother, both of whom remained in farm work, although his father would go to give a hand (literally "donner des coups de main") (Bourdieu 2004a: 111) at busy farm periods during his own holidays. Bourdieu suggests that his father showed signs of suffering from this social separation.

Bourdieu's father could be said to be a "transfuge" in that he had become socially mobile, but Bourdieu recalled that his father voted on the Left and was a trade-unionist in an essentially conservative rural community. His father admired Robespierre, Jean Jaurès, Léon Blum and Edouard Herriot – figures who Bourdieu describes as, "incarnations of the scholarly and republican ideal which he wanted to make me share" (Bourdieu 2004a: 112). Roderick Kedward (2005), in *La Vie en bleu: France and the French since 1900*, takes Jaurès as the archetype for the twentieth century of the socialist re-publican tradition which, in his narrative, he represents as struggling for ideological survival in French politics and society through to Mitterrand and beyond. Kedward says of Jaurès that "Reason, justice and humanism had their most eloquent secular defender in the Socialist deputy Jean Jaurès" (Kedward 2005: 13) and he proceeds to quote a speech given by Jaurès in Albi in South-West France in 1903 in which, "Jaurès put forward a confident vision of a vast republican venture in social co-operation, which would 'reconcile freedom with the rule of law' and would enable people to 'fight for their rights without tearing each other apart' "[2] (Kedward 2005: 13). There is a slight ambiguity in Bourdieu's comment that figures such as Jaurès embodied the ideal that his father wanted to make him share ("voulait me faire partager") because it is not clear whether he is saying that his father wanted him to share the ideal or to partici-pate in its implementation, partake of its opportunities and benefits. There is a sense in which Bourdieu felt himself to have been a double *transfuge*, betraying the egalitarian ideals of a socially mobile father, precisely because the actuality of his education betrayed the hopes which had been invested in the schooling system by Jaurès and followers like his father.

In spite of the attempts to reform the schooling system made in the late 1930s by Jean Zay as Minister of Education in Léon Blum's Socialist government, the interruption caused by the war (and Zay's assassination by the *milice* in 1944) meant that the structure of educational institutions remained largely as described by E. Goblot in 1930 in *La Barrière et le niveau* (the text of a *normalien* cited by Bourdieu in 1971a): when he said that the main function of the baccalaureate – which could only be obtained within lycées – was "to create a gap difficult to cross and to unite on the level of equality to all who cross" (Goblot 1930: 128; quoted in Talbott 1969: 18).

For Bourdieu, therefore, education was experienced as a mechanism for consolidating social separation. This separation was reinforced by the language of instruction which was French as opposed to the Béarnais dialect familiar to Bourdieu from his home environment.[3] In *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse* Bourdieu recalled in graphic detail his time at school as a period of incarceration, contained within a huge, seventeenth-century classical building with long corridors and no refuges for privacy (Bourdieu 2004a: 117). It was a regimented existence and, in his recollection, Bourdieu had recourse to Goffman's notion of "total institutions" to suggest comparison with other asylums, such as prisons or psychiatric hospitals (Bourdieu 2004a: 119). The pedagogy and the curriculum were of a piece with this controlling ethos. Bourdieu underwent a process of initiation into classical studies in a way which was still reminiscent of the tradition of Jesuit colleges. All his life he was fluent in Latin and he was manifestly at ease in his analyses of scholastic discourse in his "postface" to his translation of Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholastic Thought* (Bourdieu 1967b). His adoption of the concept of *habitus* was, accordingly, not at all linguistically pretentious.

In conversation with Loïc Wacquant, Bourdieu reflected that his experience as a boarder may have given him an affinity with Flaubert who had a similar experience and he also wondered whether it might have engendered a comparably compensatory capacity to empathize sociologically with the different life experiences of other people (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 205). My main point, however, is more formal than this: Bourdieu's educational experience instilled in him a lasting ambivalence about the function and status of objective knowledge. The ideal, shared with his father, was that education was the means to achieve an inclusive society, but the actuality was that he imbibed a cognitive culture which procured him "distinction",

potentially elevating him above the processes of mass democratization.

In an interview of 1985 with Axel Honneth (at that time Habermas's research assistant) and others, published as "Fieldwork in Philosophy" in *In Other Words* (Bourdieu 1994d [1987]), Bourdieu gave an account of some of the main intellectual influences on his thinking when he was a student. As noted in Chapter 1, and to summarize briefly, Bourdieu claimed that he had been influenced by a sequence of French philosophers and historians of science and also by some reading of Husserl. The first of these influences was reflected in the *diplôme d'études supérieures* which he wrote under the supervision of Henri Gouhier (an historian of philosophy) – a translation of, and critical commentary on, Gottfried Leibniz's critique of the general part of René Descartes's *Principles* (the first part of which is "on the principles of human knowledge" and the second part of which is entitled "on the principles of material things").[4] The second of these influences was reflected in the proposed title for the doctoral research which Bourdieu proposed, but never pursued, to be supervised by Canguilhem: "Les structures temporelles de la vie affective" (the temporal structures of affective life). What we can say tentatively is that Bourdieu came to the study of the philosophy of knowledge through meticulous reflection on the relationship between two of the dominant pre-Kantian rationalist philosophers, Descartes and Leibniz, both of whom differently sought to preserve metaphysics by reconciling the legacy of scholastic thought, dependent on *a priori* reasoning, with the knowledge claims of the new sciences, dependent on empirical observation and experience. Most of the historians and philosophers of science mentioned by Bourdieu as influences on his own thinking – Duhem, Koyré, Vuillemin, Bachelard, Guéroult – were involved in considering the extent to which Immanuel Kant's resolution of the conflict between rationalists and empiricists, in respect of the grounds of our knowledge of the external world in his "critical" philosophy, might be adapted to pertain to science.

Kant had famously argued at the beginning of the Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1st edn 1781; 2nd edn 1787) that

> although all our cognition commences with experience, yet it does not on that account all arise from experience. For it could well be that even our experiential cognition is a composite of that which we receive through impressions and that which our own cognitive faculty . . . provides out of itself . . .
>
> (Kant 1997: 136)

This compromise between the extreme claims of rationalism and empiricism gave rise in post-Kantian and neo-Kantian thought in the nineteenth century to dispute as to whether the input of the "cognitive faculty" should be thought to possess universal and a-historical, logical or particular and historical, psychological characteristics. Bachelard wanted to argue that science advances through the construction and verification of hypotheses, a process of what he called "applied rationalism". He developed an "historical epistemology" which emphasized that the dialectic between reason and observation is instrumental and that rational construction is always the historically contingent product of changing social and economic conditions. On the other hand, Cassirer began to emphasize the significance for the philosophy of science of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* more than his *Critique of Pure Reason*, developing a philosophy of symbolic forms which attempted to describe the historical emergence of competing discourses – myths, art, religion, philosophy, science – as objectified manifestations of *a prioristic* judgement rather than concentrating on the universal characteristics of *a prioristic* pure reason.[5]

For neo-Kantianism, philosophy and epistemology had become virtually synonymous. The young Emmanuel Levinas spent the year 1928–9 at Freiburg where he was admitted to Heidegger's seminar. In 1930, Levinas published one of the first French discussions of the work of Husserl – *Théorie de l'intuition dans la phénoménologie de Husserl*. He argued that the achievement of Husserl and Heidegger was that they had reasserted the philosophical primacy of ontology – the philosophy of being – and had pioneered attempts to liberate the experience of being from the strait-jacket of epistemological comprehension. Levinas called the epistemological approach to being "naturalism" and elaborated his meaning in the following way:

> naturalism conceives the existence of the whole of being on the model of material things. It understands the manner of appearing and of being revealed of the whole of being in the same way as it understands that of a material thing. (Levinas 1973: 12)

The origin of Husserl's phenomenology had been a rejection of psychologism and a desire to make the analysis of logic itself the basis of a science of thought. Husserl's early transcendental phenomenology can be seen to have been an extension from Kant's transcendental idealism, in opposition to the psychologism of the Marburg

neo-Kantians (Natorp, Cohen and Cassirer). It was different, how-ever, in rejecting the naturalism of the epistemological tradition. Paul Ricoeur published a translation of Husserl's *Ideen I*, with a detailed translator's introduction, in 1950 – the year in which Bourdieu com-menced study at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*. Ricoeur's philosophi-cal exegesis was an attempt to distinguish Husserl's transcendental idealism, both from Cartesian *a priorism* and from Kantian transcen-dental idealism. Ricoeur argued that "Husserl's 'question' . . . is not Kant's; Kant poses the problem of validity for possible objective con-sciousness and that is why he stays within the framework of an attitude which remains natural . . . Husserl's question . . . is the question of the origin of the world . . . it is, if you like, the question implied in myths, religions, theologies and ontologies, which has not yet been elaborated scientifically" (Ricoeur; in Husserl 1950: xxvii–xxviii). At the same time that Bourdieu was reading discussions of the implications of Kant's critical philosophy for the elaboration of a philosophy of science, Ricoeur's exposition of Husserl opened up the possibility of which Bourdieu would have been aware: that Husserl's work could help in attempting to analyse the foundations of Kantian *a priorism*. Phenomenology was not to be understood as another philosophy but as a method for analysing all modes of thought, including that of philosophy. This is the origin of Bourdieu's "reflexivity" or, better, his use of the idea of "epistemological break" to expose the social origins of all "objective" accounts of the social. It was this interpretation of Husserl – found in Lyotard's introduc-tion to phenomenology of 1954 (to which Bourdieu never referred in print) – that enabled Bourdieu to make a link between the legacy of Husserl and the influence on the theory of scientific method of Bachelard's "historical epistemology".

Bourdieu's work of the 1960s

It is now possible to offer an interpretative summary of some of the main components of Bourdieu's intellectual position at the beginning of the 1960s. This remains partial because it pays no attention, for instance, to: the formative statistical and ethnographic research which Bourdieu carried out in Algeria in the late 1950s; the influence in this work of American acculturation theorists;[6] the influence of Lévi-Strauss on Bourdieu in his attempt to represent his research findings within anthropological discourse; nor, overall, to Bourdieu's anxious efforts to produce accounts of Algerian society and Algerian

social movements which were not the expressions of a colonial "gaze" (see Chapter 1). However, the main issues are clear. Bourdieu felt strongly that the social function of the French education system, as envisaged by the innovators of the Third Republic at the end of the nineteenth century, had now become abused such that the acquisition of knowledge had become a mechanism of social division rather than solidarity. He wanted school learning to be an instrument for social integration. Through his own experience he had absorbed a sociological understanding of educational knowledge long before he could be said to have made a contribution to the sociology of education. As his intellectual formation progressed within the educational system, he became interested philosophically in the history and philosophy of knowledge and, more particularly, in the twentieth century attempts to derive a history and philosophy of science from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century epistemological debates between rationalists and empiricists. At the same time, as he came to adopt a rationalist, "constructivist" orientation in opposition to crude empiricism or positivism in scientific methodology, Bourdieu's interest in the work of Husserl led him to want to ground scientific practice in social action in the "life-world" and to be sceptical about the self-fulfilling, self-legitimating abstractions of autonomous discourses of objectivity. Within scientific practice, Bourdieu was interested in the logic of scientific discovery and also the logic of scientific explanation, but an amalgamation of the influence of Husserl and Heidegger led Bourdieu towards a desire to understand the ontological foundations of epistemology and to formulate what he might have called a socio-logic of science (by analogy with his insistence on the need for socio-linguistic analysis rather than the abstracted discourse of sociolinguistics).[7]

In 1960–1, Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron were not long returned from Algeria. Raymond Aron had been appointed professor of sociology at the Sorbonne in 1955 and had given courses of lectures on aspects of the social structure of modern, industrial society. Sociology only became formally institutionalized within French higher education with effect from 1958–9. Aron was eager to promote empirical research in relation to the issues that he had discussed theoretically and he was also eager to consolidate the discipline of sociology. He appointed Passeron as his research assistant, and founded the *Centre de Sociologie Européenne* research group to which Bourdieu was appointed secretary. Bourdieu and Passeron had similar backgrounds. They both had provincial origins, had similarly experienced social division in their schooling, had gained access to

the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, studied philosophy and been conscripted to military service in Algeria. Together they developed a research programme for the Centre which would explore the phenomenon of social mobility and analyse also the emergence of mass culture. It was in the 1960s that Bourdieu, with Passeron, developed many of his "key" sociological concepts, notably "*cultural capital*", "*habitus*" and "*field*". This is not the place to go into detail about this period of conceptual invention, but rather to emphasize that it evidenced an *ars inveniendi* within the field of sociology. Bourdieu and Passeron were fulfilling the intentions of their mentor – Aron – in seeking to institutionalize a discipline and to establish concomitantly an autonomous conceptual discourse. In all the practice of the work of the 1960s, however, there is also constant evidence of their interest in the epistemology of the social sciences. The texts that they produced together – notably *Les héritiers* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979b [1964]) and *La reproduction* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a [1970]) – were all meticulous in articulating the process in practice which led from the formulation of the research problem (discovery) through to the presentation of findings (explanation or, perhaps, simply understanding). Implicitly, they were always interested in the relationship between induction and deduction, and concerned to question whether their findings were disclosing causal relations between phenomena or only expressing predispositional, *a priori* logical connections. Bourdieu wrote "Champ intellectuel et projet créateur" in 1966 (see Bourdieu 1971c) in which he developed an analogy with physical fields of force (see Chapter 4) to show that the intellectual production of individuals, whether artists or scientists, is variably constituted by the fields within which their work is disseminated, depending on the degree of social autonomy of the field in question. A year later, Bourdieu and Passeron published "Sociology and Philosophy in France since 1945: Death and Resurrection of a Philosophy without Subject" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1967a) in which they tried both to criticize the "neo-positivism" of contemporary American sociology and to situate their own sociological creative project socio-historically within a representation of the French intellectual field in the post-Second World War years. The following year, Bourdieu published "Structuralism and Theory of Sociological Knowledge" (Bourdieu 1968) in which he argued, as the title suggests, that sociologists should be more concerned to acknowledge the epistemological status of their perceptions and observations than to develop "social theories" or theories of society in abstract. This article appeared in the same year as a collaborative venture

which can still be seen to fulfil Aron's intentions even if the implicit philosophy of social science was no longer one that he could share.

Also written in 1968, *Le métier de sociologue* (Bourdieu *et al.* 1991b) was designed to be a handbook for research students. It argued that sociology, just like any other discipline, needed to establish its own epistemic community ("field") and it claimed that a defining and unifying account of sociological practice could be extrapolated from the practices of canonical "sociologists" (notably Durkheim, Weber and Marx) irrespective of their ideological differences. What was extrapolated was a methodological blueprint that was derived from Gaston Bachelard. The handbook, which was sub-titled "Epistemological preliminaries", was presented in two sections, the first of which was an introductory discussion of "epistemology and methodology" and the second of which was a collection of "illustrative texts". In the first section, adherence to Bachelard is made explicit early on:

> As the whole oeuvre of Gaston Bachelard shows, epistemology differs from abstract methodology inasmuch as it strives to grasp the logic of error in order to construct the logic of the discovery of truth as a polemic against error and as an endeavour to subject the approximated truths of science and the methods it uses to methodical, permanent rectification . . . But the polemical action of scientific reason cannot be given its full force unless the "psychoanalysis of the scientific mind" is taken further by an analysis of the social conditions in which sociological works are produced.   (Bourdieu *et al.* 1991b: 3)

Part III of the introductory section is sub-titled "Applied rationalism", which directly registers allegiance to the position advanced by Bachelard in his *Le rationalisme appliqué* (1949). This elaborates the unifying formula derived from Bachelard – that "the social fact is won, constructed, and confirmed", involving a "hierarchy of epistemological acts" (Bourdieu *et al.* 1991b: 57). The second section of illustrative texts begins with a passage extracted from Canguilhem's hommage to Bachelard after his death and is followed by an extract from *Le rationalisme appliqué*. Each of the two extracts is introduced by the editors. In the first case, they highlight two elements of Bachelard's approach:

> This epistemology rejects the formalism and fixism of a single indivisible Reason in favour of a pluralism of rationalisms

linked to the scientific domains that they rationalize. Positing as its first axiom the "theoretical primacy of error", it defines the progress of knowledge as an unceasing rectification.

(Bourdieu *et al*. 1991b: 81).

Social scientific practice must be pluralist and continuous. Some recognition of this contention would have eradicated so much criticism of Bourdieu which has tried to de-contextualize his work by ignoring his deliberate participation in collective activity and by "fixing" his historically produced concepts in order to generate a spuriously universal falsification of them. In the second case, the extract from Bachelard, the editors summarize what he meant by "the three degrees of vigilance":

> First-degree monitoring – waiting for the expected or even alertness to the unexpected – remains a posture of the empiricist mind. Second-degree monitoring presupposes spelling out one's methods and adopting the methodic vigilance that is essential for the methodical application of methods . . . Only with third-degree monitoring does distinctively epistemological inquiry appear; and this alone can break free from the "absolute of method" – the system of the "censures of Reason" and from the false absolutes of the traditional culture which may still be at work in second-degree vigilance.
>
> (Bourdieu *et al*. 1991b: 87)

Here the "hierarchy of epistemological acts" is clearly linked with the assertion of the need to make "epistemological breaks".

Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique/Outline of a Theory of Practice

My interpretation of the effects of the combined early influences on Bourdieu's thinking is that increasingly during the 1960s he felt trapped within a singular, institutionalized discourse and that, within an academic field and as an "intellectual", he was betraying the primary, domestic, or familial experiences of his upbringing in the Béarn and the primary experiences that he had observed among the Kabyles in Algeria. When, in 1972, he revisited his early Algerian research, he wanted to apply Bachelard's formula to go beyond the second-degree monitoring of some of his earlier articles towards a

third-degree which would sociologically "situate" the eurocentrism of his structuralist analyses. In doing so, however, he wanted to ensure that his practice now would not simply be part of a process of consolidating the self-referentiality of an introspective and socially distinct sociological epistemic community, but, instead, would be a counter-transfugist action that would liberate primary experience by relativizing academic objectivism. It is significant that Bourdieu tried, by returning to his earlier anthropological perspective and also to Husserl, to go beyond his sociological practice of the 1960s. Bachelard's instruments for securing an "historical epistemology" were consequently transformed into procedures for phenomenological reduction.

The key passage which shows this development in Bourdieu's approach is, of course, the passage from *Esquisse* which was separately published in translation in 1973 as *The Three forms of Theoretical Knowledge*. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu 1977b), the passage is sub-titled: "From the mechanics of the model to the dialectic of strategies". The passage is dense and must be consulted in full but this is the sequence of Bourdieu's thinking:

> The social world may be the object of three modes of theoretical knowledge, each of which implies a set of (usually tacit) anthropological theses. Although these modes of knowledge are strictly speaking in no way exclusive, and may be described as moments in a dialectical advance towards adequate knowledge, they have only one thing in common, the fact that they are opposed to practical knowledge. The knowledge we shall call phenomenological . . . sets out to make explicit the truth of the primary experience of the social world . . . The knowledge we shall term objectivist . . . constructs the objective relations . . . which structure practice and representations of practice . . . Finally, it is only by means of a second break, which is needed in order to grasp the limits of objectivist knowledge – an inevitable moment in scientific knowledge – and to bring to light the theory of theory and the theory of practice inscribed (in its practical state) in this mode of knowledge, that we can integrate the gains from it into an adequate science of practices.
>
> (Bourdieu 1977b: 3)

Bourdieu uses Bachelard to talk about the way in which theory must be used to recover the practice of the agents about which it theorizes and, in doing so, becomes itself a practical, engaged social activity –

the practice or the craft of the sociologist as one practitioner among a plural society of other and equal practitioners.

Conclusion

It is possible, in conclusion, to clarify what Bourdieu sought to present as a "theory of practice" by reference, on the one hand, to an opposite view of "theory and practice" as presented by Habermas and, on the other, to views expressed by Althusser.

The interview that took place in Paris in April 1985, between Bourdieu and three German interviewers – Honneth, H. Kocyba and B. Schwibs – to which I have already referred ("Fieldwork in Philosophy"; in Bourdieu 1994d [1987]), is an ideal place to explore a confrontation between two traditions in the philosophy of social science. In "The Fragmented World of Symbolic Forms" (Honneth 1986), Honneth had identified the way in which Bourdieu had become dissatisfied with Lévi-Straussian structuralism. Having shown that Bourdieu's anthropological researches had caused him to question structuralism, Honneth contended that these had "provided the impetus for him to work out his own conception, which to some extent took him back to just that type of social-scientific functionalism which Lévi-Strauss' approach had been aimed against" (Honneth, in Robbins 2000b, vol. 3: 4). What Honneth did not appear to have realized was that Bourdieu's move away from structuralism was a move towards seeking to understand agents as theory-generating agents themselves rather than the objects of interpretation of academic social philosophers. As Bourdieu put this in response to Honneth's question in the 1985 interview:

> I was beginning to suspect that the privilege granted to scientific and objectivist analysis (genealogical research, for example), in dealing with the natives' vision of things, was perhaps an ideology inherent in the profession. In short, I wanted to abandon the cavalier point of view of the anthropologist who draws up plans, maps, diagrams and genealogies. That is all very well, and inevitable, as one moment, that of objectivism, in the anthropologist's procedures. But you shouldn't forget the other possible relation to the social world, that of agents really engaged in the market, for example – the level that I am interested in mapping out. One must thus draw up a theory of this non-theoretical, partial, somewhat down-to-earth relationship

with the social world that is the relation of ordinary experience. And one must also establish a theory of the theoretical relationship, a theory of all the implications, starting with the breaking off of practical belonging and immediate investment, and its transformation into the distant, detached relationship that defines the scientist's position. (Bourdieu 1994d: 20–21)

In response to further questioning, Bourdieu was equally emphatic that he was not wanting to produce a theory of "praxis":

I really must point out that I have never used the concept of praxis which, at least in French, tends to create the impression of something pompously theoretical – which is pretty para-doxical – and makes one think of trendy Marxism, the young Marx, the Frankfurt School, Yugoslav Marxism . . . I've always talked, quite simply, of practice. (Bourdieu 1994d: 22)

In these responses Bourdieu made it clear what his theory of practice was not but, in resisting any association with Marxism, he failed to acknowledge the affinity of his theory with the views that Althusser was expressing in the 1960s. The papers that became *Lire le Capital* were delivered in the course of a seminar held at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* early in 1965. In his introductory paper – "From 'Capital' to Marx's Philosophy" – Althusser argued that the general problem with which he was concerned (and which he was to explore with specific reference to Marxist explanation) was "by what mechanism does the process of knowledge, which takes place entirely in thought, produce the cognitive appropriation of its real object, which exists outside thought in the real world?" (Althusser & Balibar 1970: 56). This was also Bourdieu's general problem. In the Foreword to the second, abridged, edition of *Lire le Capital*, Althusser regretted that his discussions, and those of his colleagues, were thought to be "structuralist". He sought to confirm his objections to structuralism as a form of "theoreticism". Again, this was Bourdieu's position. However, Althusser admitted that one of the theses that he advanced "did express a certain 'theoreticist' tendency". He continued:

More precisely, the definition of philosophy as a theory of theoretical practice . . . is unilateral and therefore inaccurate. In this case, it is not merely a question of terminological ambi-guity, but one of an error in the conception itself. To define phil-osophy in a unilateral way as the Theory of theoretical practices

(and in consequence as a Theory of the differences between the practices) is a formulation that could not help but induce either "speculative" or "positivist" theoretical effects and echoes.

(Althusser & Balibar 1970: 8)

Although the problem of the relationship between thought and social reality was one which concerned both Althusser and Bourdieu, it can be said that Bourdieu realized that Althusser did run the risk, of which he was aware here, of philosophizing about theory and practice. Bourdieu proposed a practical theory of practices that meant he could deploy Bachelard's epistemological breaks to subject all practices, including his own sociological practice, to a third-stage sociological monitoring on a different level.

Notes

1 For some of the arguments advanced in this chapter, I am grateful for research funding in 2007–8 from the ESRC for a project on the work of Jean-Claude Passeron.

2 Jean Jaurès, "Discours à la jeunesse", *Albi*, 1903, reprinted in *Cahiers laiques* 30, November–December, 1955, 4–11.

3 For Bourdieu's general discussion of the imposition of French as an official language and for his specific commentary on the uses of Béarnais dialect, see Bourdieu 1991a: 46–8, 68–9 respectively.

4 Bourdieu's translation and commentary were not published but a parallel Latin/French text can be found in G. Leibniz, 2001, 30–159.

5 For a more detailed discussion of Bourdieu, Cassirer and Kant, see Part II, ch. 6 of D. M. Robbins 2006a; 2006b.

6 For some consideration of this influence, see D. M. Robbins, "Framing Bourdieu", 2007.

7 See Bourdieu 1990c; Bourdieu 1982b, passim.

Field theory: beyond subjectivity and objectivity

Introduction to Part II

At one point in his work, Bourdieu refers to the "opposition" between subjectivism and objectivism as dividing the social sciences and as being "the most fundamental, and the most ruinous" (1990c: 25). He goes on to refer to them as "modes of knowledge" and declares a necessity to go beyond their mutual antagonism while preserving what has been gained from each. Both are essential, yet both offer only one side of an epistemology necessary to understanding the social world. The world cannot be reduced to phenomenology or social physics; both must be employed in order to constitute an authentic "theory of practice". This part of the book sets out the key base concepts for the project.

As we saw in Part I, Bourdieu's "theory of practice" can be traced back to the intellectual tradition and contemporary climate in which he found himself. It can also be connected with his early field work experiences. In the previous chapters, we addressed the way that dominant French intellectual thought, in the 1940s and 1950s at least, was characterized by two opposing traditions – structuralism and existentialism – which respectively might be seen as representing the objectivist and subjectivist traditions. The former came from a background of anthropology and was exemplified in the work of Lévi-Strauss who was preoccupied with the workings of diverse, often exotic cultures. The latter subjectivist tradition was more philosophically grounded, rooted in the German philosophy of Kierkegaard, Husserl and Heidegger, and was more concerned with issues of personal freedom – a theme intensified by what French men and women had experienced in the Second World War. Greatly

simplifying the issues at stake, the argument between these opposing traditions revolved around two fundamentally distinct views of human action. On the one hand, the anthropological tradition undertook to establish the social *rules* that determined how individuals behaved. For example, there were rules concerning who one could and could not marry – the incest taboo – as well as cultural prescriptions involving what was considered sacred and profane. On the other hand, the existentialist tradition foregrounded individual choice and decision-making as an ultimate act of personal freedom. Here, men and women are free when they choose because they accept the consequences of their decisions and the repercussions. But, neither tradition explained what Bourdieu observed in his early studies in the Béarn and Algeria (see 1958; 1962b; 1963; 2002b; for example). In the case of rural France, there were indeed "rules" of matrimony which prescribed who young men and women should marry. However, such "rules" did not always seem to apply, or at least were interpreted with a degree of flexibility. At the same time, it was clearly not the case that individuals were "free to choose" for themselves who they would or would not marry. There was a similar situation in Algeria; cultural traditions were distinct but the underlying issues were identical. What became clear for Bourdieu was that, in both cases, the outcome of the social issue of who any one individual would marry depended on a whole series of personal and contextual conditions; and the best way of thinking about this question was not in terms of a rule or personal choice, but a *strategy*. In other words, while individuals were not free to act simply in accordance with their own personal will and conscience, the notion of *rules* implied both an explicit respect and conscious application that were rarely realized in practice. Rather, individual action emerged from an unconscious calculation of profit – albeit symbolic (in the first instance at least) – and a strategic positioning within a social space to maximize individual holdings with respect to their availability. Bourdieu needed a theoretical approach to account for this hybrid activity of socially shaped strategic, but individually constituted, personal practice – which then formed common trends.

Bourdieu developed his "theory of practice" out of such a need to understand data emerging from these empirical investigations; first in Algeria and the Béarn, and then secondly, in studies on education and culture in the 1960s. This theory of practice was to account for what he saw as an "ontological complicity" between objective structures and internalized structures. The basis of his science is this simple fact of a *coincidence* between the two: of an individual's

connection with both the material and the social world. Everything lies in this connection: here are the structures of primary sense, feeling and thought – the intensional[1] links that are established between human beings and the phenomena, both material and ideational, with which they come into contact. Everything we know about the world is both established and developed as a consequence of individual acts of perception. However, these structures have defining principles which are both pre-constructed and evolving according to the logic of differentiation found within the social universe. In other words, such principles do not exist in some value-free Platonic realm; rather, they are the product and process of what already-has-been – values which serve the status quo and/or emerging social forms. This phenomenological structural relation is a product of environmentally structural conditions that offer objective regularities to guide thought and action – ways of doing things.

These objective and subjective bases to Bourdieu's theory of practice can also be illustrated by his understanding of culture. Bourdieu writes that there are two traditions in the study of culture: the structural tradition and the functionalist one (1968). The structuralist tradition sees culture as an instrument of communication and knowledge, based on a shared consensus of the world (for example, the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss). The functionalist tradition, on the other hand, is formed around human knowledge as the product of a social infrastructure. The sociology of both Durkheim and Marx would form part of this second tradition, as both are concerned with ideational forms emergent in the structures of society – material, economic, organizational – one being positivist and the other critical–radical. As noted above, Bourdieu criticizes both traditions. The first tradition is too static for Bourdieu: *structured structures* taken as synchronic forms, and often based on primitive societies. While the second tradition reifies ideology – as a *structuring structure* – in imposing the ideology of the dominant class in the critical tradition, or maintaining social control in the positivist one. Bourdieu attempts to reconcile these two traditions by taking what has been learnt from the analysis of structures as symbolic systems in order to uncover the dynamic of principles, or logic of practice, which gives them their structuring power (see Bourdieu 1971b); in short, a theory of structure as both *structured* (*opus operatum*, and thus open to objectification) and *structuring* (*modus operandi*, and thus generative of thought and action).

As indicated in Chapter 2, Bourdieu proceeds through a series of "breaks". First, he wants to "break" from practical, empirical

knowledge – that tacit knowledge that guides individuals to orientate their actions in certain ways – in order to discover the underlying generating principles of such action. Secondly, however, he seeks to break with the two salient traditions conceptualized in terms of the subjectivist and objectivist approaches outlined above, which he sees as the common approach to studies in the social science. A focus on either one simply overlooks the significance of the other in constituting a particular (skewed) interpretation of the social world. The outcome of such a break is the possibility of "a science of dialectical relations between objective structures . . . and the subjective dispositions within which these structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them" (1977b: 3). All social structures – whether subjective or objective – are homologous for Bourdieu and are constituted by the same socially defining principles. It is therefore possible to analyse the way the same structural relations are actualized in both the social and the individual through studying structures of organization, thought and practice, and the ways in which they mutually constitute each other. Finally, Bourdieu breaks with "theoretical knowledge" itself – whether subjectivist or objectivist – because of its tendency to abstract reality, to "confuse the things of logic with the logic of things", to use a phrase of Marx borrowed by Bourdieu. For Bourdieu, the unanalysed element in any theoretical analysis is the theorist's relation to the social world, and the objective social conditions on which it is founded. This absence leads to a sort of "intellectual-centrism". It is therefore necessary to subordinate, "one's scientific practice to a knowledge of the 'knowing subject', as an essentially critical knowledge of the limits inherent in all theoretical knowledge, both subjectivist and objectivist" (1990c: 27).

The essential components of this argument connect with the principal ideas of the founding fathers of sociology. For example, Weber's understanding of social reality as on-goingly constituted by human signification, and Durkheim's approach to human action as having the character of *choseité* as against the individual are both correct. They intend respectively the subjective foundation and objective facticity of social phenomena, pointing towards the dialectical relationship of subjectivity and its object. Similarly, Marx writes of the defects of materialism as being that the external world – objects, reality, sense data – are viewed in terms of being objects of intuition, rather than "concrete human activity" or practice. This is the way Marx argues in *Theses on Feuerbach*, "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" (quoted by Bourdieu 1977b: vi). Thus, began the oppositions which Bourdieu sees as so fundamental and "ruinous".

As noted in Part I, Bourdieu's approach also connects with the ideas of such writers as Bachelard and Canguilhem. For example, there is an emphasis on the way we construct knowledge, especially in the opposition between relational and substantialist thinking. In the latter, groups, individuals, activities and preferences are treated as if they had substantial properties; while for the former, they can only ever be seen as definable in relation to each other (cf. Bourdieu 1998c [1994]: 4). Bourdieu's theory of practice is therefore essentially relational.

Issues of subjectivity and objectivity, and theory and practice, will run throughout the length of this book, both in terms of under-pinning rationale and practical applicability. Similarly, the nature and construction of theory goes to the heart of the key concepts presented here, their relation to each other, and the understanding of the practical world they render. It must always be born in mind that these concepts are not simply to be applied to what is researched. Various authors here will also draw attention to the significance of these concepts when applied to the researchers themselves.

The first group of concepts presented in Part II deals with Bourdieu's two principal "thinking tools". Chapter 3 considers *habitus*, the subjective element of practice. This concept signifies the "generative schemes" (themselves structured and structuring) acquired in the course of individual life trajectories. Chapter 4 then explores the concept of *field*: the objective network or configuration of relations (again structuring and structured) to be found in any social space or particular context. Separately they represent respectively the subjective and objective aspects of social phenomena. However, throughout these two chapters, it will be stressed that both concepts should be seen as being inseparable, mutually constituted and always interpenetrating to produce the ontologically complicit relation referred to above.

Note

1   The "*s*" is there to remind us that intentionality sets up a *structure* between the perceiver and what is perceived.

Habitus

Karl Maton

Introduction

Habitus is an enigmatic concept.[1] It is central to Bourdieu's distinctive sociological approach, "field" theory, and philosophy of practice, and key to his originality and his contribution to social science. It is probably the most widely cited of Bourdieu's concepts, has been used in studies of an astonishing variety of practices and contexts, and is becoming part of the lexicon of a range of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, education, cultural studies, philosophy and literary criticism. Yet, *habitus* is also one of the most misunderstood, misused and hotly contested of Bourdieu's ideas. It can be both revelatory and mystifying, instantly recognizable and difficult to define, straightforward and slippery. In short, despite its popularity, "*habitus*" remains anything but clear. In this chapter, I explore this complex concept. I suggest that its seemingly contradictory character flows from its principal roles in Bourdieu's sociology. In short, *habitus* does a lot of work in Bourdieu's approach. *Habitus* is intended to transcend a series of deep-seated dichotomies structuring ways of thinking about the social world. This would by itself make a full account of *habitus* a rich and multi-faceted discussion, touching on a wide-ranging series of profoundly significant issues and debates. However, the concept is also intended to provide a means of analysing the workings of the social world through empirical investigations. It is thus central not only to Bourdieu's way of thinking but also to his formidable range of substantive studies. Moreover, this highlights a third story: how the concept of *habitus*

has come to be understood and used, and misunderstood and misused, in empirical research by others. *Habitus* now also has a life beyond the work of Bourdieu. In this chapter I touch on these issues in turn.

The chapter begins by defining *habitus* and exploring its role in overcoming dichotomies in thinking. Secondly, I sketch the background to Bourdieu's formulation of *habitus* and its development through his empirical studies. No account of this concept can be comprehensive, for not only did Bourdieu employ the term in discussing a wide range of phenomena, but also once one thinks in terms of "habitus", its effects can be seen everywhere. Here, I give a sense of the analytical work to which Bourdieu puts the concept. Lastly, I consider what *habitus* can offer us, touching on how the concept can and should be developed to enhance its explanatory potential. My reference to "seeing the effects of habitus everywhere" represents a central theme of this chapter. *Habitus* is a concept that orients our ways of constructing objects of study, highlighting issues of significance and providing a means of thinking relationally about those issues. Its principal contribution is thus to shape *our* habitus, to produce a sociological gaze by helping to transform our ways of seeing the social world. This is, I argue, the basis of both misconceptions and its value since *habitus* is a crucial part of no less a task than attempting to enable a mental revolution in our understanding of the social world.

What is *habitus*?

The concept of *habitus* begins from both an experiential and a sociological conundrum. Experientially, we often feel we are free agents yet base everyday decisions on assumptions about the predictable character, behaviour and attitudes of others. Sociologically, social practices are characterized by regularities – working-class kids tend to get working-class jobs (as Willis 1977, put it), middle-class readers tend to enjoy middle-brow literature, and so forth – yet there are no explicit rules dictating such practices. These both raise fundamental questions which *habitus* is intended to resolve. As Bourdieu states, "all of my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?" (1994d: 65). In other words, Bourdieu asks how social structure and individual agency can be reconciled, and (to use Durkheim's terms) how the "outer" social, and "inner", self help to shape each other.

To explore how *habitus* addresses these questions requires first a brief excursion into rather theoretical terrain. Formally, Bourdieu defines habitus as a property of social agents (whether individuals, groups or institutions) that comprises a "structured and structuring structure" (1994d: 170). It is "structured" by one's past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It is "structuring" in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and future practices. It is a "structure" in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned. This "structure" comprises a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (1990c: 53). The term "disposition" is, for Bourdieu, crucial for bringing together these ideas of structure and tendency:

> It expresses first the *result of an organizing action*, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a *way of being*, *a habitual state* (especially of the body) and, in particular, a *predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination*. (1977b: 214)

These dispositions or tendencies are *durable* in that they last over time, and *transposable* in being capable of becoming active within a wide variety of theatres of social action (1993a: 87). The habitus is thus both structured by conditions of existence and generates practices, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and so forth in accordance with its own structure.

The habitus, however, does not act alone. Bourdieu is not suggesting we are pre-programmed automatons acting out the implications of our upbringings. Rather, practices are the result of what he calls "an obscure and double relation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 126) or "an unconscious relationship" (Bourdieu 1993a: 76) between a habitus and a field. Formally, Bourdieu (1986c: 101) summarizes this relation using the following equation:

[(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice

This equation can be unpacked as stating: practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field). This concise formulation highlights something of crucial significance for understanding Bourdieu's approach: the interlocking nature of his three main "thinking tools" (Bourdieu & Wacquant

1989d: 50): *habitus*, *field* and *capital*. Practices are thus not simply the result of one's habitus but rather of *relations between* one's habitus and one's current circumstances.

Bourdieu describes this relation as the meeting of two evolving logics or histories (1993a: 46; 2000a: 150–51). In other words, the physical and social spaces we occupy are (like the habitus) structured, and it is the relation between these two structures that gives rise to practices. This "obscure relation" is further complicated by being one of "ontological complicity" (1982a: 47), because the field, as part of the ongoing contexts in which we live, structures the habitus, while at the same time the habitus is the basis for social agents' understanding of their lives, including the field:

> On one side it is a relation of *conditioning*: the field structures the habitus . . . On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or *cognitive construction*. Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world.
>
> (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 127)

When Bourdieu's "logic of practice" is set out in such abstract language (as Bourdieu often did himself), the reader may feel somewhat bewildered. It is therefore worthwhile revisiting the above definition in less formal terms. Simply put, *habitus* focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being. It captures how we carry within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances, and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others. This is an ongoing and active process – we are engaged in a continuous process of making history, but not under conditions entirely of our own making. Where we are in life at any one moment is the result of numberless events in the past that have shaped our path. We are faced at any moment with a variety of possible forks in that path, or choices of actions and beliefs. This range of choices depends on our current context (the position we occupy in a particular social field), but at the same time which of these choices are visible to us and which we do not see as possible are the result of our past journey, for our experiences have helped shape our vision. Which choices we choose to make, therefore, depends on the range of options available at that moment (thanks to our current context), the range of options visible to us, and on our dispositions (habitus), the embodied experiences of our journey. Our choices will then in turn shape our future possibilities, for any choice involves foregoing alternatives and sets us on a particular path that

further shapes our understanding of ourselves and of the world. The structures of the habitus are thus not "set" but evolve – they are durable and transposable but not immutable. At the same time, the social landscape through which we pass (our contextual fields) are themselves evolving according to their own logics (to which we contribute). Thus, to understand practices we need to understand both the evolving fields within which social agents are situated and the evolving habituses which those social agents bring to their social fields of practice (Bourdieu 1990c: 52–65; 1991a: 37–42).

Transcending dichotomies

Habitus is the link not only between past, present and future, but also between the social and the individual, the objective and subjective, and structure and agency. As this list suggests, a lot rests on its conceptualization – *habitus* aims to overcome a series of dichotomies that are worth briefly exploring in turn.

Habitus links the social and the individual because the experiences of one's life course may be unique in their particular *contents*, but are shared in terms of their *structure* with others of the same social class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, occupation, nationality, region and so forth. For example, members of the same social class by definition share structurally similar positions within society that engender structurally similar experiences of social relations, processes and structures. We are each a unique configuration of social forces, but these forces *are* social, so that even when we are being individual and "different" we do so in socially regular ways; or, as Bourdieu puts it, "personal style . . . is never more than a *deviation* in relation to the *style* of a period or class so that it relates back to the common style not only by its conformity . . . but also by the difference" (Bourdieu 1977b: 86).

Habitus conceptualizes the relation between the objective and subjective or "outer" and "inner" by describing how these social facts become internalized. Habitus is, Bourdieu states, "a socialized subjectivity" and "the social embodied" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 127, 128); it is, in other words, internalized structure, the objective made subjective.[2] It is also how the personal comes to play a role in the social – its dispositions underlie our actions that in turn contribute to social structures. Habitus thereby brings together both objective social structure and subjective personal experiences: "the *dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality*" (1977b: 72).

Bourdieu also intends *habitus* to transcend the structure–agency dichotomy. This brings us to the limits of the metaphor of a "journey" I introduced above. Instead, Bourdieu often uses the analogy of a game and the notion of "strategy" to emphasize the active, creative nature of practices. Each social field of practice (including society as a whole) can be understood as a competitive game or "field of struggles" in which social agents strategically improvise in their quest to maximize their positions. Social agents do not arrive in a field fully armed with god-like knowledge of the state of play, the positions, beliefs and aptitudes of other social agents, or the full consequences of their actions. Rather, they enjoy a particular point of view on proceedings based on their positions, and they learn the tempo, rhythms and unwritten rules of the game through time and experience. Against accounts such as rational choice theory that suggest conscious choice or rational calculation as the basis of actions, Bourdieu posits the notion of a "feel for the game", one that is never perfect and that takes prolonged immersion to develop. This is a particularly *practical* understanding of practice – highlighted by Bourdieu's use of terms such as "practical mastery", "sense of practice" and "practical knowledge" – that he claims is missing from structuralist accounts and the objectivism of Lévi-Strauss. Bourdieu contrasts the abstract logic of such approaches, with their notion of practice as "rule-following", with the practical logic of social agents. Even this notion of a game, he warns, must be handled with caution:

> You can use the analogy of the game in order to say that a set of people take part in a rule-bound activity, an activity which, without necessarily being the product of obedience to rules, *obeys certain regularities* . . . Should one talk of a rule? Yes and no. You can do so on condition that you distinguish clearly between *rule* and *regularity*. The social game is regulated, it is the locus of certain regularities. (Bourdieu 1990c: 64)

To understand practice, then, one must relate these *regularities* of social fields to the *practical logic* of social agents; their "feel for the game" is a feel for these regularities. The source of this practical logic is the habitus. "The habitus as the feel for the game", Bourdieu argues, "is the social game embodied and turned into a second nature" (1994d: 63). This link to social structure enables Bourdieu to emphasize creativity without succumbing to the voluntarism and subjectivism that, he argues, characterizes the existentialism of

Sartre. Thus, Bourdieu claims to go beyond the opposition between structuralism and hermeneutics, between providing an objective account of social regularities and a subjective focus on the meaning-making of social agents.

The emphasis on the situated, practical nature of practice also underlies Bourdieu's strictures against confusing the model of reality with the reality of the model (see 1977b: 29). For Bourdieu, there is always a danger, by virtue of the external, distanced vision of the scholarly gaze, of turning logical terms of analysis into reality – concepts as reified phenomena (see 1994d: 61). This is to mistake social regularities observed sociologically for the basis of practice in everyday life – the view of the game from above is not the same as the view of participants on the ground. Imagine, for example, the differences in form and function between a map of an underground railway system that, through its colour-coded straight and curved lines neatly intersecting stations, shows the *relative* positions of stations, with a map of the actual geographical positions of those stations or, even more so, with the experience of travelling on the system. Put another way, there are fundamental differences between "the *theoretical* aims of theoretical understanding and the practical and directly concerned aims of practical understanding" (*ibid*.: 60) that must be overcome if social practice is to be understood fully. The concept of *habitus* is intended to do just that.

The habitus is thus, for Bourdieu, the crucial mediating link between a series of dualisms often portrayed by other approaches as dichotomous, and brings together the existence of social regularities with the experience of agency. Crucially, in doing so, *habitus* is intended to encourage us to think relationally: Bourdieu emphasizes "relations between" rather than "either/or", where each dimension being related is itself defined relationally. Discussion of transcending dichotomies is, however, simply intellectual gymnastics unless one can *use* the concepts to understand and explain the social world. I thus now turn to consider why Bourdieu developed the concept of *habitus* and its explanatory power in his empirical studies.

A history of *habitus*

A history of the issues the concept of *habitus* aims to resolve would be the history of philosophical thinking itself, for these questions are perennial. A wide variety of thinkers have also suggested similar concepts. The related notion of "habit", for example, appears in the

work of James (1976), Garfinkel (1967), Schutz (1972) and Berger and Luckmann (1967). Among thinkers who predate Bourdieu in describing something akin to "habitus" are Aristotle, Ockham, Aquinas, Merleau-Ponty, Husserl and Elias, as well as Durkheim and Weber.[3] Bourdieu himself also cites Hegel's "ethos", Husserl's "Habitualität" and Marcel Mauss's "hexis" as precursor ideas to his own conception (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 121). A particularly direct influence was Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (1957), which Bourdieu translated into French.[4]

Bourdieu's use of the term *habitus* deliberately aims to break with such past accounts – "I said habitus so as *not* to say habit" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 122). The key difference is that Bourdieu's *habitus* emphasizes the underlying structures of practices; i.e. acts are underpinned by a *generative principle*. As Bourdieu explained:

> Why did I revive that old word? Because with the notion of *habitus* you can refer to something that is close to what is suggested by the idea of habit, while differing from it in one important respect. The *habitus*, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions. So the term constantly reminds us that it refers to something historical, linked to individual history, and that it belongs to a genetic mode of thought, as opposed to existentialist modes of thought . . . Moreover, by *habitus* the Scholastics also meant something like a property, a *capital*.   (1993a: 86)

In other words, Bourdieu argues that previous accounts tend to focus on regular practices or habits rather than the principles underlying and generating those practices. What may be "invisible relationships" to the untrained gaze "because they are obscured by the realities of ordinary sense-experience" (1984: 22), are, to Bourdieu, crucial to understanding the social world. This "genetic" or "relational" mode of thinking excavates beneath the surface of empirical phenomena to hypothesize the existence of a generative principle, the habitus, which is more than the practices to which it gives rise – it can be possessed and has its own properties and tendencies.

This conception of *habitus* evolved through the course of Bourdieu's writings. As Grenfell (2004b) highlights, the notion of *habitus* occurs in his early work on Béarn farmers to describe their habits and physical actions (Bourdieu 1962b; 2002b). Though using the term "habitat", Bourdieu also places the idea at the heart of *The*

Inheritors (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979b [1964]) to account for different take-up rates of university education between social classes. *Habitus* is more formally defined in *Reproduction* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a [1970]), *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977b [1972]) and *The Logic of Practice* (1990c [1980]) and consequently becomes both more integrated within a broader theoretical framework and more widely applicable. Over time, the concept also broadened out from a cognitive focus to embrace more the corporeal (primarily through the concept of *hexis*), and from emphasizing socialized forms of actions to highlighting the creativity of practice. Through this development, *habitus* has been a lynchpin of analyses of a wide variety of social arenas. While a potted summary of these studies is beyond my scope here, Bourdieu insisted the value of his concepts lies in their explanatory power in concrete empirical analyses, so it is worthwhile illustrating the ways Bourdieu puts *habitus* to work in these studies.

Habitus at work

Central to how *habitus* works as an explanatory tool is the relationship between habitus and field. As outlined above, both habitus and field are relational structures and it is the *relation between* these relational structures that provides the key for understanding practice. The two structures are homologous – they represent objective and subjective realizations of the same underlying social logic – and mutually constituting, in that each helps shape the other. Crucially, they are also both evolving, so relations between habitus and field are ongoing, dynamic and partial: they do not match perfectly, for each has its own internal logic and history. This allows for the relationship between the structure of a field and the habituses of its members to be one of varying degrees of fit or mismatch (see Chapter 8 on *hysteresis*). Imagine, for example, a social situation in which you feel or anticipate feeling awkward, out of your element, like a "fish out of water". You may decide not to go, to declare it as "not for the likes of me", or (if there already) to make your excuses and leave. In this case the structuring of your habitus does not match that of the social field. Conversely, imagine a situation where you feel comfortable, at ease, like a "fish in water". Here your habitus matches the logic of the field, you are attuned to the *doxa*, the unwritten "rules of the game" underlying practices within that field. This relationship between habitus and field, crudely conveyed here, is central to

Bourdieu's accounts of a wide range of social fields of practice and, in particular, their role in social reproduction and change.

In *The Inheritors* (1979b) and *Reproduction* (1977a), for example, Bourdieu and Passeron address why social agents from middle-class backgrounds are more likely, and those from working-class backgrounds are less likely, to attend university. They describe how innumerable stimuli during upbringing shape the outlooks, beliefs and practices of social agents in ways that impact upon their educational careers. Rather than the educational system blocking access to social agents from non-traditional backgrounds, these social agents relegate themselves out of the system, seeing university as "not for the likes of me". Conversely, middle-class social agents are more likely to consider university education as a "natural" step, as part of their inheritance. When at university they are also more likely to feel "at home", for the underlying principles generating practices within the university field – its unwritten "rules of the game" – are homologous to their own habituses. Bourdieu argues that people thereby internalize, through a protracted process of conditioning, the objective chances they face – they come to "read" the future and to choose the fate that is also statistically the most likely for them. Practices within a given situation are, Bourdieu argues, conditioned by expectation of the outcome of a given course of action, which is in turn based, thanks to the habitus, on experience of past outcomes.

Through such studies, Bourdieu shows how the shaping of our habitus may provide us with a practical mastery or "feel for the game" but not for all games equally; our past and ongoing conditions of existence enable more of a "feel" for some games than others, and for particular ways of playing those games. Our aspirations and expectations, our sense of what is reasonable or unreasonable, likely or unlikely, our beliefs about what are the obvious actions to take and the natural way of doing them, are all for Bourdieu neither essential nor natural but rather conditioned by our habituses and are thereby a mediated form of arbitrary social structure (see 2000a). It is our material conditions of existence that generate our innumerable experiences of possibilities and impossibilities, probable and improbable outcomes, that in turn shape our unconscious sense of the possible, probable and, crucially, desirable for us. We learn, in short, our rightful place in the social world, where we will do best given our dispositions and resources, and also where we will struggle (see 1984: 471). In this way, we achieve "subjective expectations of objective probabilities" (1990c: 59): what is likely becomes what we actively choose. Social agents thereby come to gravitate towards

those social fields (and positions within those fields) that best match their dispositions and to try to avoid those fields that involve a field–habitus clash.

In other major studies of education (see Bourdieu 1988a; 1996b; Bourdieu *et al.* 1994a), cultural consumption (1984), language (1991a), the creation and canonization of art (1993b; 1996a), among a myriad other foci, Bourdieu repeatedly addresses these questions of how and why people come to be thinking and acting as they do, and how these actions and beliefs impact upon social reproduction and change. The notion of degrees of what I have called here field–habitus match or clash is not only crucial to the processes outlined above but also to how these processes are normally rendered invisible to the social agents involved. As "fish in water", social agents are typically unaware of the supporting, life-affirming water, the match between their habituses and the fields in which they flourish or feel at ease, and how they come to be in these contexts. Moreover, by virtue of field–habitus match, social agents share the *doxa* of the field, the assumptions that "go without saying" and that determine the limits of the doable and the thinkable. As Bourdieu states: "The most profitable strategies are usually those produced, on the hither side of all calculation and in the illusion of the most 'authentic' sincerity, by a habitus objectively fitted to the objective structures" (1977b: 214). Social agents typically embrace their fate and "misrecognize" the arbitrary for the essential. The habitus "continuously transforms necessity into virtue by instituting 'choices' which correspond to the condition of which it is the product" (1984: 170). Revealing the hidden workings of habitus is thus, for Bourdieu, a kind of "socio-analysis", a political form of therapy enabling social agents to understand more fully their place in the social world.

The relation between habitus and the social world is, however, not always simply one of degrees of match or class – they can become "out of synch". Because its dispositions are embodied, the habitus develops a momentum that can generate practices for some time after the original conditions which shaped it have vanished. Moreover, primary socialization in the family is for Bourdieu deeply formative and, though the habitus is shaped by ongoing contexts, this is slow and unconscious – our dispositions are not blown around easily on the tides of change in the social worlds we inhabit. One can thus have situations where the field changes more rapidly than, or in different directions to, the habitus of its members. The practices of social agents can then seem anachronistic, stubbornly resistant or ill-informed. This "hysteresis effect" (1977a: 78–9) is central, for

example, to Bourdieu's analyses of the economic practices of peasants in Algeria (Bourdieu *et al.* 1963; Bourdieu & Sayad 1964; Bourdieu 1979a; 2000e)[5] (see Chapter 8 for further discussion). Under French colonialism, the traditional peasant society of Algeria was submitted to "a kind of *historical acceleration* which caused two forms of economic organization, normally separated by a gap of several centuries and making contradictory demands on their participants, to coexist" (2000e: 18). The money economy imported and imposed by colonialism demanded of peasants new attitudes towards time and a monetary rationalism. This "properly economic habitus" (*ibid.*: 29) involves viewing economic transactions as having their own logic separate from those of ordinary social relationships, especially between kin. However, peasants maintained for some time their traditional modes of acting. This was not, Bourdieu argued, irrational, stubborn or conservative. Rather, peasant dispositions were forged in a different social world; though this world was being transformed, these durable dispositions could not be expected to change at the same rate, leading to *hysteresis* before these practices slowly adapted and changed in a process not of "purely mechanical and passive forced accommodation" but of "creative reinvention" (1979a: 4). That habitus and field, our dispositions and material conditions of existence, have a relative autonomy from one another thereby not only enables Bourdieu to proclaim to transcend such philosophical dichotomies as individual–social but also, more crucially, it provides the basis of the explanatory power of his analyses of social agents in empirical social worlds.

Habitus – beyond Bourdieu

Thus far I have sketched how, with *habitus*, Bourdieu aims both to transcend philosophical dualisms and to offer epistemologically powerful accounts of the social world. The question remains, though, as to what the concept of *habitus* offers us *beyond* Bourdieu. The principal legacy of *habitus*, I would argue, is its crucial role in a wider project. Bourdieu proclaimed:

> The task is to produce, if not a "new person", then at least a "new gaze", a sociological eye. And this cannot be done without a genuine conversion, a *metanoia*, a mental revolution, a transformation of one's whole vision of the social world.
>
> (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 251)

Habitus is a key part of Bourdieu's lens through which he sees the social world. As noted, this new sociological "gaze" is underpinned by a *relational mode* of thought. Relation is the essence of *habitus*. Where many approaches reduce practice to one dimension of a dichotomy, such as either the individual or the social, and thus dissolve dualisms through reductionism, *habitus* provides a means of maintaining but relating such dualisms. Moreover, it compares favourably to other similarly proclaimed concepts. Giddens's notion of "structuration" (1984), for example, brings together structure and agency but at the cost of their analytical integrity, disabling the capacity to capture either (see Archer 1995, 1996). With *habitus*, Bourdieu aims to allow structure and agency (and, likewise, the individual and social, "outer" and "inner", etc.) their analytical integrity, but also to relate them to each other. As stated above, the concept of *habitus* is itself also relational. As the examples outlined here show, practice is not reducible to *habitus* but rather a phenomenon emergent from relations between social agents' habituses and their contextual social fields. For Bourdieu, habitus, capital and field are necessarily interrelated, both conceptually and empirically (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 96–7n). To talk of *habitus* without *field* and to claim to analyse "habitus" without analysing "field" is thus to fetishize habitus, abstracting it from the very contexts which give it meaning and in which it works. The habitus is a relational structure whose significance lies in its relations with relational fields. Thus, the concept of *habitus* and the object it aims to conceptualize are both thoroughly relational in intention. With the concept, Bourdieu is thus encouraging us to adopt a relational mode of thinking that goes beyond surface empirical practices to excavate their underlying structuring principles. *Habitus* thereby aims to shape our habitus – it aims to help transform our ways of seeing the social world.

If the principal contribution *habitus* makes is to shape our habitus, this is also the basis for how it may be developed beyond Bourdieu. The concept has been subject to considerable philosophical debate. However, my focus here is its capacity for enabling empirical research. This follows Bourdieu's own strictures about its value – his theoretical framework represents, he says, "a *temporary construct which takes shape for and by empirical work*" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 50, original emphasis). As an orientating idea, *habitus* works by drawing attention to something significant and offering a way of thinking about it. It is a powerful heuristic, thanks partly to its general nature – once one thinks in terms of *habitus* one sees the effects of habitus everywhere. Thus, *habitus* can be and is

being used to analyse a wide variety of issues and areas across a number of disciplines – it is highly applicable and an account of the uses of *habitus* by other researchers would be a book in itself (for examples, see Fowler 2000; Grenfell & Kelly 2004; Grenfell & Hardy 2007). As a concept for empirical research, however, this strength of *habitus* can also create difficulties.

Habitus does a lot of work in Bourdieu's approach and can be applied at macro, meso and micro levels. It can, though, be difficult to define. As one commentator argues, "this very appealing conceptual versatility sometimes renders ambiguous just what the concept actually designates empirically" (Swartz 1997:109). More important is the question of the structure of the habitus. This is to ask: if *habitus* highlights a generative structure, then what is the internal structure of that structure? According to Bourdieu, practices are generated by the habitus and so all practices offer evidence of the structures of the habitus that generate them. The task for the researcher is to analyse practices so that the underlying structuring principles of the habitus are revealed. However, empirically, one does not "see" a habitus but rather the *effects* of a habitus in the practices and beliefs to which it gives rise. The structure of the habitus must be captured by excavating beneath practices to capture its relational structure as one among a range of possible structures. The questions for research are thus: what particular structure of the habitus is in play here compared to other possible habitus structures?; and how can we tell when that habitus has changed, varied or remained the same?

Here, we reach the limits of the concept as currently formulated. Raymond Boudon (1971: 51, 102) distinguishes between *intentional* relational concepts, that aim to construct an object of study relationally, and the *operative* implementation of that intention. The latter requires concepts that can analyse phenomena as relational systems. As a number of sympathetic critiques have argued, to achieve operative relational concepts requires being able to state the internal structure of a habitus *separate* from a description of the practices it gives rise to; for example, as structure X among a range of possible structurings W, X, Y, Z.[6] Without this ability, there is a danger of circularity and *ad hoc* explanation. For example, Bourdieu himself acknowledged that one could state "why does someone make petty-bourgeois choices? Because he has a petty bourgeois habitus!" and claimed to be "keenly aware of this danger" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 129). However, vigilance is one thing, a conceptual means of avoiding the possibility of circularity is another. Without a clear means for others to identify the "X" then, as Basil Bernstein puts it,

"once an illustration is challenged or an alternative interpretation given, there are problems" (Bernstein 1996: 136). This is not to say that *habitus* is deficient or that Bourdieu's own analyses are not convincing, but simply highlights how the explanatory potential of the concept can be strengthened further to enable the kinds of epistemologically powerful accounts of the social world Bourdieu aimed to provide. For, as it stands, *habitus* is open to misuse and misunderstandings when used in research.

Too often, for example, in educational research (where *habitus* has often been used), the relational construction of the object of study that Bourdieu emphasized as essential to his approach has been eschewed in favour of using *habitus* as a synonym for social background or socialization. Studies purporting to employ Bourdieu's approach sometimes simply point to practices, such as students' attitudes to education or choice of university, and proclaim they show the effects of habitus. *Habitus* is thereby stripped of its relational structure, its crucial relationship with field in generating practices and its dynamic qualities. Used alone, *habitus* is often little more than theoretical icing on an empirical cake. The concept can be removed from such accounts without any loss of explanatory power. A second effect is the tendency for *habitus* to proliferate adjectives. This adjectival addition (e.g. "emotional habitus") often compensates for the lack of an analysis of the field – the adjective highlights the area of social life in which its effects are being proclaimed – or to denote the kind of social agent being studied (e.g. "institutional habitus"). The proliferation of *habitus* illustrates the versatility of the concept. It also reflects a temptation to decontextualize *habitus* from the approach that gives the concept meaning and to adopt instead an empiricist lens – naming parts of a *habitus* distinguishes empirical features of practices rather than their underlying generative principles. At this point we are back to a pre-Bourdieusian understanding of habitus. Such temptations, I am suggesting, highlight the need to elaborate *habitus* by developing a means for translating between the theoretical and the empirical, i.e. for identifying the "X".[7]

Nonetheless, the concept remains extremely valuable. In an article responding to dismissals of its value, Roy Nash asked of *habitus*, "is it all worth the candle?". He concluded:

> If it takes the best part of a decade to make sense of the core concepts of Bourdieu's theory only to find one has no more ability to understand the world than one did before, then

perhaps not. Yet the struggle to work with Bourdieu's concepts
. . . is worthwhile, just because to do so forces one to think.

(Nash 1999: 185)

I would add that it is worthwhile not only because they force one
to think but also because they offer a fruitful way of thinking. As
Bernstein argues, *habitus* is "something good to think with, or
about" and alerts us "to new possibilities, new assemblies, new
ways of seeing relationships" (1996: 136). *Habitus* is to Bourdieu's
approach what *power–knowledge* is to Foucault's or *coding orien-
tation* to Bernstein's – once one has internalized the idea to the extent
that it is part of one's way of seeing and thinking about the social
world, it becomes second nature. If habitus is the social embodied,
habitus can become the sociological embodied. Thinking in terms of
habitus becomes part of one's habitus. When the concept is in one's
intellectual marrow in this way it achieves the "metanoia" Bourdieu
hoped to enable. This is its strength and a considerable achievement.
It is not, however, the end of the story. *Habitus*, as its evolution
through Bourdieu's work shows and like the very thing it aims to
capture, should not be considered as fixed or eternal but rather an
evolving idea. The development of *habitus* to become a fully opera-
tive relational concept represents the next, exciting stage for an
evolving conceptualization of habitus.

Notes

1. To avoid eliding discussion of the concept with that of the object it aims to
   conceptualize, I use italics (*habitus*) to denote the concept and non-italics
   (habitus) to denote its referent.
2. Bourdieu further emphasized the embodiment of social structures with the
   notion of *hexis corporal* – one's past is enscribed onto the body in terms of
   gait, posture, stance, stride, facial expressions, and so forth (1985d; 1990c:
   80–97). This highlights yet another dichotomy Bourdieu aims to transcend,
   that of the body and mind.
3. On the history of "habit" see Carmic (1986); for accounts of the history
   of "*habitus*" see Bourdieu (1985d), Héran (1987), Nash (1999) and Rist
   (1984).
4. Bourdieu took Panofsky's argument that a way of thinking (Scholasticism),
   itself shaped by the socio-cultural conditions of the time, gave rise to the
   Gothic style of architecture, and extended this argument to contemporary
   education. Scholastic thought is, he suggested, a product of the organizational
   and ideological structure of the field of education, which itself is conditioned
   by socio-historical conditions. The school thus acts as a "habit-forming force"
   that gives rise to "the cultivated habitus" (see Bourdieu 1971a: 184).

5. See Bourdieu (1988a) for another analysis of *hysteresis*, this time explaining the student revolts in France in the late 1960s in terms of a mismatch between the aspirations of an expanding student population and the objective probabilities of entering the job market at the same level as in the past under conditions of expansion-fuelled credential inflation.

6. See for example, Bernstein (1996), LiPuma (1993), Maton (2000; 2003; 2005) and Moore (2004).

7. One means of doing so is to use Bernstein's notions of "coding orientation" to describe different possible structurings of the habitus and of "codes" to conceptualize different possible structurings of fields (Bernstein 1975; 1996). The potential for the approaches of Bourdieu and Bernstein to complement one another has yet to be fully explored, and has not been helped by intellectual "turf wars" that exaggerate their differences and are more concerned with status distinctions in the sociological field than with building powerful knowledge of the social world (Maton 2005).

Field

Patricia Thomson

Introduction

Bourdieu argued that in order to understand interactions between people, or to explain an event or social phenomenon, it was insufficient to look at what was said, or what happened. It was necessary to examine the *social space* in which interactions, transactions and events occurred (Bourdieu 2005: 148). According to Bourdieu, an analysis of social space meant not only *locating* the object of investigation in its specific historical and local/national/international and relational context, but also interrogating the ways in which previous knowledge about the object under investigation had been generated, by whom, and whose interests were served by those knowledge-generation practices (e.g. Bourdieu 1993a; 1994d; 2001c).

This chapter looks specifically at what Bourdieu meant by social space, or *field*, as he named it. After discussing how *field* can be understood and the work which the theorization of *field* was designed to accomplish, I consider specific "fields" using Bourdieu's own writings on these topics, as well as that of other social scientists who have adopted his methodological tool kit. I conclude by looking at some critiques made of the idea of *field* and its operationalization in research.

The idea of *field*

Bourdieu's first use of the concept of *field* was in an article entitled "Champ intellectuel et projet créateur" (1971c [1966]; see also

Boschetti 2006: 140), which discussed a difference in view between two French scholars, Roland Barthes and Raymond Picard. Bourdieu suggested that despite their differences, both academics were engaged in a similar academic pursuit: such disagreements were the stuff of scholarly practice and both scholars were equally invested in the intrinsic value of dispute and debate (Lane 2000: 73).

Field was to assume an increasingly significant aspect of Bourdieu's work, and much of his later writing was concerned with specific investigations of *field*: for example, education (1977a; 1988a; 1996b), culture (1984; 1990a; 1990b), television (1998b), literature (1996a), science (2004b), housing (2000c), bureaucracy (see Wacquant 2005b) and the restructured social sites of globalized de-industrialization (Bourdieu 1999a).

In English, the word "field" may well conjure up an image of a meadow. Perhaps it is early summer and the meadow is a profusion of wild flowers and grasses surrounded by a dark mass of trees. In French, the word for this kind of field is *le pré*. However, Bourdieu did not write about pretty and benign *les prés*, but rather *le champ* which is used to describe, *inter alia*, an area of land, a battle field, and a field of knowledge. There are many analogies for Bourdieu's *le champ*: the field on which a game of football is played (*le terrain* in French); the field in science fiction, (as in "Activate the force-field Spock"); or even a field of forces in physics. Bourdieu's concept of *le champ*, or *field*, contains important elements of all of these three analogies, while equating to none of them. I will take each of these three in turn and use them to explain Bourdieu's notion of field.

A football field

A football field is a boundaried site where a game is played. In order to play the game, players have set positions – when the football field is represented in visual form, it is as a square with internal divisions and an external boundary, with the set positions marked in predetermined places. The game has specific rules which novice players must learn, together with basic skills, as they begin to play. What players can do, and where they can go during the game, depends on their field position. The actual physical condition of the field (whether it is wet, dry, well grassed or full of potholes), also has an effect on what players can do and thus how the game can be played.

The idea of a social field being a football field is not so far-fetched. Bourdieu did discuss social life as a game. He frequently referred to it as a football game, perhaps because this was the game he knew

well himself (in fact, as a young man, he was a keen rugby player). He suggested that, just as in football, the social field consisted of positions occupied by social agents (people or institutions) and what happens on/in the field is consequently boundaried. There are thus limits to what can be done, and what can be done is also shaped by the conditions of the field (see Chapter 3 on *habitus* for more on playing the game).

Just like a football field, the social field does not stand alone. Bourdieu developed the notion of social field as one part of a means of investigating human activity. That is, by itself, the idea of social field has insufficient explanatory "take". Rather than becoming bogged down in aimless debates about the primacy of either social structures or human agency, Bourdieu argued for a methodology that would bring together an inter-dependent and co-constructed trio – *field*, *capital* and *habitus* – with none of them primary, dominant or causal. Each was integral to understanding the social world, and the three were tangled together in a Gordian knot that could only be understood through case-by-case deconstructions.

According to Bourdieu, the game that occurs in social spaces or fields is competitive, with various social agents using differing strategies to maintain or improve their position. At stake in the field is the accumulation of *capitals*: they are both the process within, and product of, a field. Bourdieu nominated four forms of capital: economic (money and assets); cultural (e.g. forms of knowledge; taste, aesthetic and cultural preferences; language, narrative and voice); social (e.g. affiliations and networks; family, religious and cultural heritage) and symbolic (things which stand for all of the other forms of capital and can be "exchanged" in other fields, e.g. credentials). However, unlike a carefully manicured football field, there is no level playing ground in a social field; players who begin with particular forms of capital are advantaged at the outset because the field depends on, as well as produces more of, that capital. Such lucky players are able to use their capital advantage to accumulate more and advance further (be more successful) than others.

Fields are shaped differently according to the game that is played on them. They have their own rules, histories, star players, legends and lore. And this is where the next field analogy is helpful.

Science fiction force-fields

Science fiction force-fields are constructed through the erection of a barrier between what goes on inside and what happens outside.

Designed to protect insiders, they constitute little self-contained worlds. The activities inside follow regular and ordered patterns and have some predictability: without this, the social world inside the force field would become anarchic and cease to function. The social order on fictional space ships is hierarchically structured: not everyone is equal, and there are some people who are dominant and who have decision-making power over the ways in which the little social world functions. However, the rules on the self-contained starship are also like those which operate on other similar craft and while some local variation is both possible and necessary for survival, there is a common pattern of operations among space-ships.

Bourdieu's social space can, therefore, be thought of as just such a little world. In talking about the economic field for example he described it as "a cosmos" (2005: 5) and also a "separate universe governed by its own laws" (*ibid*.: 7).

Like a force field, a social space operates semi-autonomously. It is a human construction with its own set of beliefs (or *theodicies* – see Chapter 10 for further discussion), which rationalize the rules of field behaviour – each field has its own distinctive "logic of practice". Social agents who occupy particular positions understand how to behave in the field, and this understanding not only feels "natural" but can be explained using the truths, or *doxa*, that are common parlance within the field. The *doxa* misrecognizes the logics of practice at work in the field, so that even when confronted with the field's social (re)productive purpose, social agents are able to explain it away.

A social field is not fixed, and it is possible to trace the *history* of its specific shape, operations and the range of knowledge required to maintain it and adapt it. To do so is to understand how change happens within a field.

Collectives of people occupy more than one social field at a time. They/we can be thought of as occupying a common social space – Bourdieu called this the *field of power* – which consists of multiple social fields such as the economic field, the education field, the field of the arts, bureaucratic and political fields, and so on. Bourdieu suggests that just as there are similarities in the science fiction social spaces that are created through the erection of force fields, there are also important *homologies* (likenesses) between social fields. The patterned, regular and predictable practices within each field bear striking similarities, as do the kinds of social agents who are dominant in each social field. There are also relationships of exchange

between fields which make them inter-dependent: for example, what kind of schooling people receive in the education field can make a lot of difference to how they are positioned in the economic field (see Chapter 6 on *capital*). However, unlike the fictional spacecraft, which is under the control of a large authority, Bourdieu does not posit the field of power as determining what happens in each of the various social fields. Rather, he suggests a mutual process of influence and ongoing co-construction: what happens in the field of power shapes what can happen in a social field, at the same time as what happens in a social field shapes the field of power and also may influence other social fields. This brings us to the third analogy.

A force field

A force field in physics is generally represented as a set of vectors which illustrate the forces exerted by one object on another. Bourdieu also thought about social fields in not dissimilar ways. He proposed that a field could be thought of as made up of opposing forces, that is as *chiasmatic*. He posited that cultural and economic capital operated as two hierarchized poles in a social field. The field worked a little like a magnetic field, with positions determined by their relationship to the two poles. A field could be expressed figuratively as a square consisting of two intersecting axes: one axis was economic capital (from plus to minus) and the other cultural capital (from plus to minus). Bourdieu reasoned that fields could thus be plotted (see Figure 4.1), with "At one pole, the economically or temporally dominant and culturally dominated positions, and at the other, the culturally dominant and economically dominated positions" (1988a: 270). The economic axis is vertical because economic capital brings more status and power than cultural capital, although both together are highly advantageous in the field of power. But, in a physical force field, there is no necessarily hard boundary, but rather an ebbing away of the forces at the edges. In other words, the force field exists only as far as its effects. However, unlike physical force fields, one of the sites of struggle within a social field may be at, and about, its borders and the value of its capitals (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 104).

Each social field has "*distinction*" (Bourdieu 1984) or quality – for example, between elite avant garde and populist forms in literature (Bourdieu 1996a); between "hard" sciences and "soft" arts in academic disciplines (Bourdieu 2004b; Bourdieu *et al.* 1994a); between

Economic capital +

Cultural
capital −

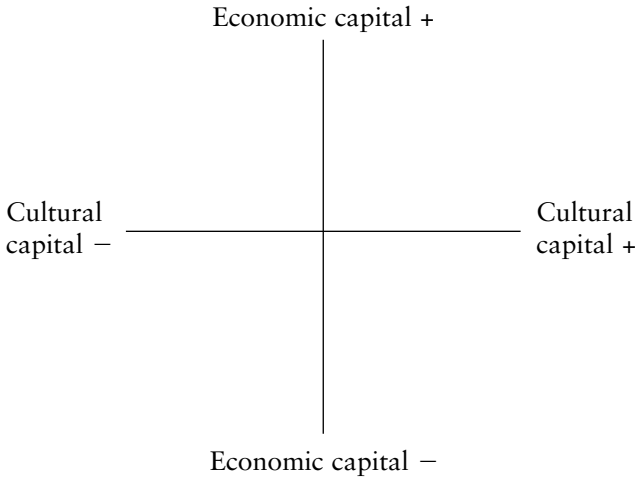Cultural
capital +

Economic capital −

Figure 4.1   Diagram of a social field

art in galleries and the art of family photographs (Bourdieu *et al.* 1990a; 1990b); between architect-designed housing and project kit-homes (Bourdieu 2000c) – which are expressions of the volumes and type of cultural or economic capital at stake in the specific field. Positions can be plotted on a field by amassing a set of data about the type and volumes of capitals held by social agents (institutions and individuals): for example, data about an individual's social origins, educational level and institution attended, social networks, memberships and affiliations, employment, place of residence and so on. Clusters of individual profiles with the same or similar characteristics, or correspondences, can then be developed, using a version of multivariate factor analysis (see Bourdieu 1988a: 69–72) and plotted on planes in the field. One example of this kind of "mapping" can be seen in Bourdieu's explication of the field of power in *The State Nobility* (Bourdieu 1996b: 264–72) where industrial and commercial heads, *Inspecteurs de Finances*, mines engineers, ministry cabinet members, ministry directors, prefects, generals, teachers and bishops were positioned chiasmatically (*ibid.*: 269): this also gave an indication of the relative power of each of the fields within the field of power.

So, unlike a force field which usually exists as a single entity, Bourdieu posited a social world (the field of power) made up of multiple fields: large fields could be divided into subfields (for example, art into literature, painting, photography and so on). Each subfield,

while following the overall logic of its field, also had its own internal logics, rules and regularities and moving from the larger field to a subfield might well require a "genuine qualitative leap" for both social agents and those who seek to investigate and understand it.

As noted above, the fields that make up the field of power are not all on a level playing field: some are dominant and the game in subordinate fields is often dependent on activity in another – what happens in the housing field, for example, is highly dependent on what happens in the state and the financial field. Bourdieu maintained that *all* subfields of the cultural field were dominated by the economic field (Bourdieu 1994d: 144). To complicate things further, Bourdieu suggested that institutions within fields also operated as subfields, and his analysis of the housing market exemplifies both an analysis of the field, and the subfields of specific housing firms.

Bourdieu notes that "the homology between the specialized fields and the overall social field means that many strategies function as *double plays* which . . . operate in several fields at once" (2005: 271). This homology was generally not understood by field members, he suggested, because the *doxa* in each field operates to misrecognize its contribution to the overall field of power and to the (re)production of social inequalities.

Bourdieu produced studies which showed how various subfields appeared in people's lives. For example, in *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu brought detailed analyses of numbers of economic and cultural fields together to show not simply the correspondences across fields, but also the important mutualities that worked across fields to create gradations of social groupings distinguished by their "taste" in food, art, housing, schooling, recreation and so on. This study used details of the education of clusters of social agents as a key indicator of the volume and type of cultural and social capital associated with each social position (see Bennett *et al*. 1999; Trifonas & Balomenas 2004 for two explorations of taste and distinction in more recent times). A later study, *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu 1999a), was designed to show how the changes in French society imposed by the field of power – globalization, de-industrialization, the imposition of neo-liberal policies – played out in the lives of the poor and those who now struggled, small business people, the aged, those with young families, immigrants and refugees.

Even though a field is profoundly *hierarchized*, with dominant social agents and institutions having considerable power to determine what happens within it, there is still agency and change. Unlike

the force field in physics, which is governed by immutable and un-changing laws, Bourdieu was very clear that people are not automa-tons:

> not particles subject to mechanical forces, and acting under the constraint of causes: nor are they conscious and knowing subjects acting with full knowledge of the facts, as champions of rational action theory believe . . . (they are) active and knowing agents endowed with a practical sense that is an acquired system of preferences, of principles, of vision and . . . schemes of action.   (Bourdieu 1988a: 25)

Bourdieu argued that there was the possibility of "free play" in fields and, that events in adjacent fields and external to fields (demographic change, new technologies, global crises, natural disasters and so on) could also produce change within them.

To see how these ideas come together in Bourdieu's work, it is helpful to give a summation. Writing about the field of television, Bourdieu defined a field as:

> a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies.   (Bourdieu 1998b: 40–41)

It is important to understand that Bourdieu was speaking about a social field as a social scientist. Above all, his field must be under-stood as a scholastic device – an epistemological and methodologi-cal heuristic – which helps researchers to devise methods to make sense of the world. It was not meant as a mimetic: there is no equiv-alent material place to a field, although all of the people, practices, institutions, goods and services in social fields do have a physical manifestation and can be investigated.

Bourdieu was also adamant that the notion of *field* was not a "system", stating:

> A field is a game devoid of inventor and much more fluid and complex than any game that one might ever design . . . 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.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 104)

Nor was *field* intended to be a theory applied as a paint-by-numbers formula to any given situation. It was to be developed on a case-by-case basis.

Research using field theory

Bourdieu suggested three steps which could be used to investigate a given field:

1. Analyse the positions of the field *vis-à-vis* the field of power.
2. Map out the objective structures of relations between the positions occupied by the social agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate forms of specific authority of which this field is a site.
3. Analyse the habitus of social 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 . . . a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualized (see Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 104–5).

This approach allowed a researcher to reveal the *correspondences* or "fit" between a position in the field, and the "stance" or position-taking of the social agent occupying that position (see Grenfell 1996; Grenfell & Hardy 2007; Grenfell & James 1998; and Grenfell 2007 for elaboration and applications). Bourdieu suggested that in a situation of equilibrium in a field, the space of positions tends to command the space of position-takings, that is the field *mediates* what social agents do in specific social, economic and cultural contexts. In other words, *field* and *habitus* constitute a dialectic through which specific practices produce and reproduce the social world that at the same time is making them.

The three steps Bourdieu outlined opens up the possibility of "seeing" the ongoing construction of any number of aspects of the life-world.

Researching the educational field and education in fields

Bourdieu devoted considerable time and intellectual effort to analysis of education through specific investigations of schools and universities. He was concerned to show the socially (re)productive effects of formal education. Far from being a meritocratic institution through which any individual child could progress, Bourdieu demonstrated that those who benefited from the French schooling system were those already possessed of social and economic advantages. Bourdieu argued that the purpose of the school system was the production and maintenance of elites: schooling operated to sort and sift children and young people into various educational trajectories – employment, training and further education, and various kinds of universities. The practices of differentiation included anti-democratic pedagogies, taken-for-granted use of elite discourse and knowledges, and a differentiated system of selection and training of teachers. Education was, he suggested, a field which reproduced itself more than others and those social agents who occupied dominant positions were deeply imbued with its practices and discourses (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a; 1979b; Bourdieu *et al*. 1994a).

Bourdieu also produced two studies of higher education. *Homo Academicus* (1988a) elaborates the institutional and disciplinary positions in the field of knowledge production into which students gained entrée via a selective "classical" school education and the support of a similarly, highly educated family. In *The State Nobility* (1996b) Bourdieu showed that education in elite universities was necessary cultural capital for social agents taking up dominant positions in the universal field of power, through the fields of government, commerce, politics, the arts and education.

Bourdieu (1996b: 273) argued that education was one of a series of strategies used by families to perpetuate or advance their social position (others included fertility – ensuring an heir – and inheritance – ensuring laws benefit those who pass on property – as well as purely economic strategies such as financial investment and investment in building advantageous social networks). Education as symbolic capital worked together with other capitals to advantage and disadvantage, and to position social agents in multiple fields.

But, Bourdieu's concerns with education went even further. He was critical of the ways in which educational disciplines produced particular ways of understanding the social worlds of fields – economic theory about the economy, political theory about the political field and so on. Bourdieu wrote about his own discipline of social science

and its impact on what could be seen and said about the social world, and what this rendered invisible (e.g. Bourdieu 1993a; Bourdieu *et al*. 1991b; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a). His study of knowledge production, *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004b) explored the production of scientific knowledge (both the social and physical, applied and theoretical), the increasing encroachment of commerce and political interests in scientific endeavour, and the emergence of a semi-autonomous subfield of "research technology" which operated across disciplinary subfields with normative *doxic* effects. Indeed, the vast majority of Bourdieu's studies of fields incorporated investigations of what was known and understood about them through the workings of the relevant discipline. These *knowledges*, he suggested, were the main aim of the scholarly game, in which it was imperative for social agents to pursue new ways of representing (naming and framing) the social and material world. This activity required time, a feature of a privileged lifestyle and a "scriptural economy" (de Certeau 1988). Bourdieu called this reflective and disputational time *skholè* (see 2000a).

Bourdieu's study of housing, *The Social Structures of the Economy* (2005), not only showed how the subfield of housing operated, but how the very idea of *homo economicus* had no explanatory power but a powerful *doxic* effect which brought distinction to those who supported and enacted it, while shaping the corporate strategies of firms that created particular kinds of delimited opportunities for home ownership for differentiated social groups. This study detailed how the theorizations of economic activity as a form of rational action, developed in elite university schools of economics, was taken up and made material (by academics, executives, and an influential strata of the civil service) through an interlocking set of think-tanks, consultancies, commissions, reports and policies. Here, the educational experience, expressed as technical and managerial capital and social capital bonds formed via education, was significant.

Only some of Bourdieu's studies of fields relied on education to plot field position. Bourdieu's study of the literary field *The Rules of Art* (1996a) mapped positions of bestselling and recognized authors by looking at their date of birth, stated profession, place of residence, prizes, decorations and honours and their publisher (*ibid*.: 155) and ignored their education. However, his steady deconstruction of the notion of a "pure aesthetic" shows how the meaning ascribed to "artists" and "works of art" owes much to education via the scholastic pursuits in theology and philosophy. He posited that in the field of art there were two opposing principles of hierarchization – that

which meets commercial interests, and that which has no commercial value, or which is produced for its own sake. Like many of Bourdieu's other field analyses – of school and higher education, of literature, of distinction more generally – the art field analysis is specific. It refers to a particular country, and a particular time. Now, in times of high modernity, the field has changed. The cultural capital invested in avant-garde art made, according to its producers apparently for its own sake, has become highly commercial and no longer sits in opposition to economic capital (see Grenfell & Hardy 2007 for an exploration of the field of contemporary art in the UK and USA).

By contrast, Bourdieu's critique of the increasingly sensationalized efforts of television journalists (1998b) may still have considerable contemporary relevance, and given the increasingly globalized nature of media, it may also have significant international reach. *On Television* relied primarily on an analysis of the game (the logic of the field), where journalistic agents are driven by commercial pressures to meet short time-lines in the form of attention grabbing, decontextualized snippets of news. This analysis caused considerable controversy in France, with journalists themselves unable to get beyond their own field-specific ethics and rationales to accept the historicized and sociological account that Bourdieu offered.

The issue of temporality and particularity does imply, as Bourdieu himself suggested, that new field analyses are always required. What Bourdieu offered was a tool kit, an epistemology and a methodology, rather than a set of immutable facts about the field he studied.

Problems with field theory

In conclusion, it is important to consider some of the concerns that are raised about the field component of Bourdieu's research agenda. I will not list them all here, but focus on some that emerge through the process of using *field* as methodology.

The problem of borders

Bourdieu draws attention to the question of borders, arguing that these are often "fuzzy" and contested. The methodological border problem for scholars working with Bourdieu's tool kit is where to draw the line, that is, how to find out where the field effects stop. For example, in the knowledge society, when "life long learning" is seen

as a necessary and universal practice, when companies have sections dedicated to staff development, when as much can be learnt from niche television programmes as in some formal learning settings, and when every large cultural institution has a public education programme, where does the field of education end?

The problem of too many fields

Bourdieu's own explications of field often involved four semi-autonomous levels: the field of power, the broad field under consideration, the specific field, and social agents in the field as a field in themselves. This foursome can be seen in the study of housing referred to earlier, with the field of power, the economic field, the housing field and the field of the firm. This might mean that an analysis of education might look at the field of power, the field of higher education, the discipline as a field, the university as a field and the department or school as a field. Perhaps this is too many fields altogether! It may be better to do as Bourdieu did himself in relation to education, and reduce the number of fields in play at any one time (for example see Ladwig 1996 on disciplinary knowledge as a field).

The problem of change in the field

One of the more persistent critiques of Bourdieu's work is that it is determinist, or at the very least it dwells too much on the reproductive aspects of fields and not their changeability. This is an interesting charge given that some of Bourdieu's key studies have in fact been of periods of change, in art, literature and housing for example. His emphasis on historicity also stresses the examination of the development of a field in order to understand its contemporary form. He specifically discusses how social agents can experience change in fields when there is a disjunction between their *habitus* and the current conditions within the field. He also talks about the ways in which dominant fields can determine change and how external material shifts such as the development of new technologies or new kinds of demographies can force changes in fields. But, above all else, Bourdieu theorized fields as antagonistic, as sites of struggle. The game that is played in fields has no ultimate winner, it is an unending game, and this always implies the potential for change at any time.

The problem of inter-field connections

Bourdieu is unequivocal that some fields are dominant and others subordinate, but it is not necessarily clear how this domination is materially enacted. Bourdieu does provide some examples. His housing study, for example, makes explicit how the actions of the state, through policies related to home financing, land development, and social welfare assistance, shapes what it is that the housing field can do. Another example of field-to-field interaction is the case of television, where the ownership of media is in the economic field and is driven by the logic of that field. This is then translated, via editorial agents, into media field practices. Bourdieu argued that the interrelationships of fields were specific and not amenable to a universal theory. Indeed, he might suggest that the search for a universal theory of change within fields is part of the scholarly *doxa*!

Not all concerns about fields can be dealt with simply through reference to the body of Bourdieu's work. For example Lane (2000: 198) argues that Bourdieu (falsely) claims an ontological status for fields. Raising concerns about the omissions from the field of power developed in *The State Nobility* (Bourdieu 1996c) and the "lack of articulation of the forms of intellectual, cultural or economic power" of the groups of professionals plotted on the chiasmatic field diagram, Lane suggests that "there is a danger in confusing this model of reality for the reality of the model". In other words, Bourdieu has taken the phenomena of correspondence as mimetic, despite assertions to the contrary, and has ceded it explanatory power it may not have. Lane proposes that Bourdieu may have mistaken outcomes (correspondences) for causes (2000: 79).

Nevertheless, despite these concerns, increasing numbers of scholars in different disciplinary fields have taken up Bourdieu's challenge to work, with his tool kit, on a case-by-case basis. Field theory appears in diverse investigations – in English language publications these range from fashion (Entwistle & Rocamora 2006), research practice (Grenfell & James 2004), educational management (Gunter 2003), food (Wood 1996), colonial literature (Smith 2006) and globalized policy-making (Lingard & Rawolle 2004), to questions of gender (McNay 1999) and equity (Naidoo 2004). Yet, very few of these studies are as exacting and as comprehensive in their methods as Bourdieu's own studies (exceptions to this are the works on taste (Bennett *et al*. 1999; Trifonas & Balomenas 2004) and art (Grenfell & Hardy 2007)). The processes of correspondence analysis that Bourdieu advocated are time intensive and require knowledge of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods. It may be that

changes in the higher education field mean that many contemporary social scientists are no longer so blessed with the *skholè* – the time and funding – for this kind of exacting research activity. It may also be the case that at least some who are attracted to Bourdieu's work do not have the statistical background to stretch his methodological approach as far as he did.

Conclusion

Bourdieu argued that his approach produced different outcomes, alternative ways of seeing and understanding the world, to those offered by mainstream social science. *Field* is one part of a trio of major theoretical tools. Together with its stable mates, *habitus* and *capital*, it offers an epistemological and methodological approach to a historicized and particular understanding of social life. *Field* was not developed as grand theory, but as a means of translating practical problems into concrete empirical operations. This work is not done simply in an office or a library, but literally *in the field*. As Bourdieu remarked when teaching students in Paris about the practices of social science:

> The data available are attached to individuals or institutions. Thus, to grasp the subfield of economic power in France, and the social and economic conditions of its reproduction, you have no choice but to interview the top two hundred French CEOs . . . It is at the cost of such a work of construction, which is not done in one stroke but by trial and error, that one progressively constructs social spaces.
>
> (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 232)

Field mechanisms

Introduction to Part III

Part III contains four chapters, all looking at features of the way fields operate. Here, we subordinate particular considerations of *habitus* and *field* to aspects of their interrelationships and workings. Field operations are often played out in terms of *social class*, and Chapter 5 considers what we mean by this term and how Bourdieu employed it. For example, fields such as education, culture and politics are often transversed with strata characterized by their participants' social origins. Here, issues of status and power are at stake, as well as cultural and economic standing. Groups often form in ways representative of their social derivation, and Bourdieu's field theory suggests how this comes about. However, fields also need a medium for operating, and Chapter 6 on *capital* discusses their "currency"; in other words, the means by which field participants position them- selves and effect change. This chapter considers capital in its various forms: symbolic, economic, cultural and social. However, fields are never "value-free" and homogeneous. Chapter 7 on *doxa* discusses how orthodox values, practices and beliefs typify both *field* and *habitus*, and how the configuration of such aspects makes up the unique typography of particular fields. Here, a number of fields are considered as exemplars, including the scientific or academic fields themselves. The implications of *doxa* for them are drawn out. Finally, we address the issue of change within fields and its impact on those operating in them. Bourdieu's field theory is a dynamic one, partly constructed to show how social phenomena evolve. The "complicity" between *habitus* and *field*, discussed in Part II, is never complete, and there is always a tension between individuals and the

social environments in which they find themselves. The final chapter in this part addresses the issue of *hysteresis*; that is, when *habitus* and *field* are "out of synch". How this comes about is discussed, together with the likely consequences for those who experience it. This chapter indicates the dynamics of change and some of its possible effects. As in the other Parts of this book, the underlying intentions of Part III are both to give an account of how Bourdieu used these concepts and to consider their on-going value as tools for analysis.

Social class

Nick Crossley

Introduction

Bourdieu is distinctive among his contemporaries in having maintained a balance in the focus of his work between culture and lifestyle on one side, and social class on the other. His analysis of cultural life maintains a strong focus upon class, prioritizing it in a way that is unusual today. And, he further distinguishes himself from much cultural analysis by using large quantitative (survey) data sets in this context. Equally, however, his cultural focus distinguishes him from most other class analysts. He resists the tendency in much class analysis, criticized by Savage (2000), of retreating from the territory of mainstream social science and ignoring culture and lifestyle in order to focus upon relatively narrow and technical issues. Bourdieu maintains a role for social class within the context of a mainstream and culturally focused sociology. However, there are very few places in his work where he discusses the concept of class directly. He never engages in any detail with other key contemporary theorists of social class (for example, John Goldthorpe or E. Wright) and he does not offer a typology of classes to compete with others on the academic market. His "theory" of social class, if it is appropriate to say that he has one, remains implicit for much of the time (although see Bourdieu 1985d; 1987; 1992f;[1] 1998c: 10–13). My aim in this chapter is to make it explicit and explain why it precludes the formulation of a clear class typology.

The chapter has four main sections, each describing a key aspect of class formation as Bourdieu understands it. The first discusses the

concept of *social space*. The second considers how location in social space shapes an individual's experiences, life chances and *habitus*, giving rise to a tacit "sense of place" or "class unconsciousness", as Bourdieu (1985d; 1992f) calls it. Much of Bourdieu's best-known work hinges upon this association between "position" and "disposition". However, I will argue that for Bourdieu, positions and corresponding dispositions do not suffice to make a class in what he deems a "real" sense; that is, a class as a force which has real social and historical effects. Real classes, for Bourdieu, must be formed as a group and mobilized, and this presupposes representation in a double sense: it presupposes categories of class which function as social identities; and it also presupposes representative organizations who mobilize, organize and articulate the interests of classes. This is discussed in the fourth section of the chapter. Before addressing this, however, I take a detour, in the third, through two key themes of Bourdieu's work, *reproduction* and *distinction*, in an effort to show how they connect to this discussion of class.

Capital and objective social space

The starting point for Bourdieu's approach to class is the claim that all agents within a particular society have an objective position in *social space* in virtue of their portfolio of economic and cultural capital. I will unpack this claim in stages.

Bourdieu's attempt to move away from a narrowly materialist conception of power and inequality, by introducing the concepts of *cultural*, *social* and *symbolic capital*, is well known. In a key paper on class, he is clear that, in doing this, he is distinguishing himself from Marxism (Bourdieu 1985d; 1992f). Power and dominance derive not only from possession of material resources but also from possession of cultural and social resources. Moreover, through the concept of symbolic capital, in addition to capturing the importance of general signs of social recognition, he is drawing attention to the fact that the value of any form of capital depends, in part, upon social recognition. Capital is valuable because we, collectively and sometimes in spite of ourselves, value it. This can give rise to a situation in which our capital assets have a double value: having a lot of money, for example, is advantageous because it confers both spending power and status.

Bourdieu's distance from Marx reflects the historical situation of the two theorists. Writing in the nineteenth century, Marx observed

an early phase in the development of capitalism, wherein two new classes (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat), distinguished from, and simultaneously related to, one another by their relations to the new industrial means of production (for example, factories), were forming themselves and sparking conflicts that would dominate their societies for a century. What made the difference between them was ownership and control of the means of production: economic capital. Bourdieu, by contrast, was writing in the second half of the twentieth century, when this dichotomous structure had been obscured by, among other things: partial separation of ownership from control of the means of production; the growth of public-sector employment; and the emergence of high-salary occupations, elevated above manual labour by their dependence upon scarce forms of technical or cultural knowledge. While enormous discrepancies in economic wealth were (and are) apparent, social stratification had become more complex than it was in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the expansion of education and increased significance of qualifications, which contributed to this change, rendered an exclusive focus upon economic capital problematic.

Every individual, on Bourdieu's account, has a portfolio of capital. They have a particular amount or volume of capital, and their capital has a particular composition. Among the rich, for example, we find those whose wealth is weighted in the direction of economic capital and others whose wealth is weighted towards cultural capital (in practice Bourdieu's mapping of social space tends to focus upon these two forms of capital alone). These are individual possessions and attributes. In so far as they can be quantified, however, they have a distribution within any given population and it is possible to construct a graph or "map" of that population, in which all individuals have a position in accordance with their individual volume and composition of capital.

This is relatively easy to conceptualize in relation to economic capital since that already has a numerical form. If we each add up the economic value of our income, savings and capital goods (house, car, etc.), we can derive a figure of what we are "worth". And, if we construct a vertical graph axis which tracks the range of values we collectively traverse, then we can place ourselves along it, relative to one another. If the monetary value of my income, wealth and possessions is higher than yours, then I will be located further along the axis than you. If we can find a way of deriving a similar scale for our cultural "worth" (for example, by "adding up" our qualifications, culturally valuable goods, etc.), then we can add a second (horizontal) axis to
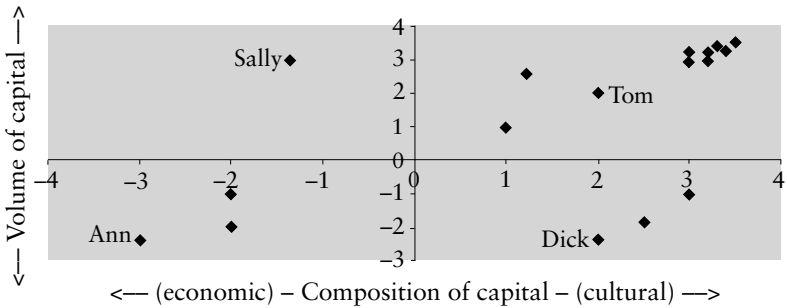
Figure 5.1   A hypothetical map of social space

the first and position ourselves, relative to one another, in two-dimensions. Each individual's economic and cultural worth, respectively, will provide a set of coordinates by which we can locate them on a graph.

This is the mathematical thinking behind Bourdieu's conception of *social space*, albeit in a somewhat simplified form. Social space is a graph in which every individual from a survey sample which is believed to be representative of a wider population, has a location in virtue of their capital assets. In practice the axes that Bourdieu constructs for his graphs reflect the aforementioned "volume" and "composition" of capital, rather than volumes of economic and cultural capital taken separately. But the underlying idea is the same.

Figure 5.1 offers a simplified hypothetical example, identifying, for illustrative purposes, four individuals. On this graph both Sally and Tom have a relatively high volume of capital, compared to Dick and Ann. However, Tom's portfolio of capital is weighted in the cultural direction, whereas Sally's is weighted towards economic capital. Sally derives her social power from her financial assets, whilst the basis of Tom's power is cultural. Ann and Dick are similarly polarized along the composition axis, with Ann leaning towards the economic pole and Dick leaning in the cultural direction.

There are three key differences between my "map" and the maps that we find in such key studies as *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984), apart from the fact that mine is hypothetical. First, Bourdieu's graphs are based upon surveys of thousands of individuals. If the location of those individuals were indicated it would be impossible to distinguish them. The graph would be filled with a swarm of dots: what the mathematicians who worked with Bourdieu on his later projects call

"the cloud of individuals" (Le Roux & Rouanet 2004). Secondly, the cloud of individuals, as a graphic representation, is not usually shown in Bourdieu's publications (an exception is *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1988a). The maps he shows usually locate occupational groups and social practices rather than individuals. I explain how we move from a cloud of individuals to a map of practices shortly. For now, note that the "cloud of individuals" is the basis upon which these other maps are constructed and is a lynchpin of Bourdieu's conception of social space and thus also of class. The third difference is cosmetic. Bourdieu generally deletes axis values from his graphs, only showing the relative positions of practices. This makes sense as only the relative positions have significance. I have left the numbers on my axes, however, as a reminder that each individual is located in accordance with their scores for "volume" and "composition" of capital.

Constructing social space

Given the centrality of social space to Bourdieu's conception of class it would be useful to consider briefly the method he uses to construct its axes. The mathematics is complex, but the idea is straightforward enough (for an introduction to the mathematics see Clausen 1998). Bourdieu uses a technique called "multiple correspondence analysis" (MCA). This is a method of "data reduction" akin to "factor analysis" but suitable for categorical variables. It allows us to take a relatively high number of non-numerical variables and to derive from them a small number of numerical variables. For example, we might begin with thirty different variables, covering individuals' qualifications, jobs, savings, possessions, titles and so on, and we might boil that down to two numerical "scores" representing volume and composition of capital, respectively.

   The rationale for using this method is as follows. If we want to measure complex and compound constructs such as "cultural capital" we cannot simply ask people "how much cultural capital do you have?" We have to ask people about all of the facets that we believe cultural capital has, for example, education, ownership of cultural goods, etc. But, we might then want to merge these various facets back into a measure of the one underlying variable we believe they are facets of (i.e. cultural capital). We could do this simply by awarding an individual "one point of cultural capital" for each of the (cultural) boxes on our survey which they tick. However, this

would fail to engage with the fact that some variables may be more central to cultural capital than others. And, it would fail to offer any test of our assumptions about the facets of cultural capital. We need a technique that both checks the extent to which different variables are associated with one another, such that we can test our assumption that they are facets of a single underlying variable, and that offers us a meaningful way of weighting their significance for our "underlying" variable. MCA does both of these things, using the level of (chi-square) association between each variable and the others. We might find, for example, that "having a degree" is very strongly associated with the other cultural variables on our survey, achieving a score that is three times higher than "owning fifty or more books". In that case, to simplify somewhat, survey respondents would score three points on our cultural capital scale for having a degree but only one point for owning fifty or more books. We might also find that some variables which we had assumed to be facets of cultural capital have very little positive association with the others, such that we are persuaded to exclude them from our measure.

We should read MCA maps with the same critical eye that we apply to all research findings. The technique is sophisticated and its results will often surprise and challenge a researcher, forcing them to revise their ideas. However, like many other statistical techniques, use of MCA involves decisions and manipulations that affect outcomes and require researchers to re-run tests in search of a meaningful result (which is then subject to interpretation). Bourdieu does not just "discover" that social space consists of two key dimensions (volume and composition of capital). This "discovery", though grounded in empirical findings that cannot be interpreted or manipulated in any old way, depends upon interpretation and manipulation all the same.

Positions, dispositions and class unconsciousness

Mapping social space allows us to allocate individuals to classes. For example, we may be inclined to group together all individuals who have a high volume of capital and whose wealth is primarily cultural. Bourdieu is at pains to argue, however, that such classes are only "theoretical"; what he calls "classes on paper". They are not *real* groups. Individuals who are proximate in social space do not necessarily identify with one another or act collectively, which is what "real classes" involve for Bourdieu. He again distances himself from Marx here. Marx, of course, draws a distinction between a class "for

itself", whose members recognize themselves as a class, and a class "in itself", whose members have no such recognition. A class "in itself" is still a class, for Marx, however. Bourdieu (1985d, 1992f), apparently drawing from Sartre's (2004) later work, takes a different view. Individuals who share a position in social space are just individuals. To exist as a class they must "form" as such, acting and identifying collectively.

However, although they do not form a class, individuals who share a similar position in social space also share, because of this, many of the same conditions of work and life. Furthermore, their proximity in social space will tend to generate a degree of interpersonal proximity which, in turn, will encourage certain types of group formation. Individuals who are proximate in social space are more likely to live and socialize in the same places (allowing for the geographical dispersal of national populations) and are therefore more likely to come together in such ("real") groups as families and neighbourhoods. In addition, they are inclined to develop similar lifestyles, outlooks, dispositions and a tacit sense of their place in the world or "class unconsciousness"; that is, class *habitus*.

It is my view that "differential association" – that is, the fact that individuals who have a similar volume and composition of capital are more likely to meet, interact and form relationships (because, for example, they can afford the same type of housing, send their children to the same schools, etc.) – is key to understanding the similarities in their *habitus* and lifestyle. *Habitus* is shaped by interactions within concrete social networks. Bourdieu sometimes seems reluctant to accept this account, however, dismissing it as "interactionist". He suggests a more direct link between position and disposition. Positions in social space and the social conditions they entail, he maintains, explain variations in *habitus* independently of any effect of differential social mixing, in consequence of the constraints and exigencies they impose. If anything, patterns of social contact are explained by similarities in *habitus* rather than vice versa.

The notion that variations in *habitus* are explained by the objective conditions attaching to objective locations in social space is expressed in *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984) when, echoing the language of Kojéve (1969), Sartre (2004) and Halbwachs (1958), Bourdieu argues that differences between the *habitus* of manual and white collar workers can be explained by reference to their respective distances from "necessity"; that is, how far removed they are, in economic terms, from a situation in which they would be unable to provide for their biological needs for food, shelter, etc. Manual

workers often live so close to the breadline, he seems to suggest, that their lifestyle is little more than a functional adaptation to the exigencies of survival, with "no frills". They can only afford the basics and they make a virtue of this necessity. It becomes an ethos, embodied in their *habitus*, which acquires a relatively autonomous existence from the conditions in which it was generated. They eschew "frills". Richer individuals, by contrast, enjoy sufficient distance from the imperatives of survival that they are and feel free to pursue more aesthetic concerns. Not having to worry about the basics of survival, they enjoy the opportunity to invest their life with a style and choose to repress basic bodily impulses and needs which they can afford to fulfil (for example, through diet or aesthetic schemata which overrule "gut reactions"). Or, perhaps rather, this is true of the culturally rich who enjoy distance from material necessity but whose real resource advantage, relative to others, is their culture.

How true this was, even at Bourdieu's time of writing, is open to question. It suggests both that manual workers in France live close to absolute poverty and that poverty negates the potential for imagination and cultural innovation. This is reductive and many writers are critical of Bourdieu's portrayal of working-class culture for his failure to recognize its vibrancy and creativity (for example, Jenkins 1992). However, material resources are important and the concept of the *habitus* suggests that ways of adapting to difficult conditions may outlive those conditions, such that social groups may continue to act as if poverty stricken even after escaping poverty.

When Bourdieu maps social space (for example, in *Distinction*), it is this association between practices/dispositions and volume/composition of capital that figures on his maps, not the aforementioned "cloud of individuals". The former is based upon the latter, however. Having constructed his social space on the basis of one set of variables, and located individuals in it, Bourdieu then uses a further set of (passive)[2] variables to locate dispositions and tastes, via the individuals who subscribe to them. He identifies where specific subgroups of consumers are located on his graph and uses their location (assuming they form a cluster and are not too widely dispersed) to locate their consumption preference. If the tight cluster of points in the top right-hand corner of Figure 5.1 contained all of the individuals in my hypothetical sample who claim to go to the theatre, for example, then the practice of theatre going itself would be located in the middle of that cluster. Bourdieu's team of statisticians devised a sophisticated geometrical technique for identifying the centre of clusters (Le Roux & Rouanet 2004). One could equally well use the

mean average that theatre-goers score for volume and composition of capital, however.

My example is too neat to be realistic. No "community of practice" is so homogenous in its social profile. The dots would normally be more spread out. But it illustrates the point. Practices, tastes and dispositions are located in social space via the individuals who embody them.

Reproduction, distinction and symbolic struggle

Linking habits or tastes to positions in social space is one of the main ideas that Bourdieu is known for. It is also central to the theses of two of his key studies: *Reproduction* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a) and *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984). In *Reproduction*, he claims to show how children from culturally wealthy backgrounds inherit that wealth, in the form of embodied dispositions which are recognized and valued both by teachers and by the institutional procedures of the educational field. These students appear brighter and more articulate to their teachers because they "speak the same language" and because the cultural knowledge and abilities valued and rewarded within the educational system are those which these children have experienced and acquired at home. Perhaps their parents read the books that are taught in literature classes or listen to the music that features on the school syllabus. Certainly, their parents have succeeded in school, before them, and are in a position to help with their schoolwork. In this way, the embodied cultural capital of these pupils is used (however unknowingly) to procure the qualifications (institutionalized cultural capital), which in turn afford power in the job market. Recent work by Devine (2004) suggests that this process is by no means straightforward, automatic or assured, and has become less so in recent decades. Nevertheless, her work also provides fascinating and important evidence of the ways in which middle-class parents mobilize a variety of resources in an effort to secure educational and occupational success for their children.

Bourdieu does not discuss the significance of these processes of reproduction for his concept of class directly, but they are important. Inequality is not sufficient to constitute class, for many sociologists. We can only talk legitimately of class when members of high-ranking occupational groups reproduce their advantage across time by securing access to similarly high-ranking occupations for their children, effectively narrowing access for children from "lower" backgrounds.

Class formation involves closure of "ranks" and minimal social mobility. Bourdieu's analysis of reproduction processes is, in this respect, important to an understanding of class.

There is another important aspect to "reproduction"; namely, that the education system confers legitimacy, prestige and value (symbolic capital) upon the culture of the middle class, constituting it as cultural capital. Although Bourdieu wavers in my view, sometimes seeming to identify an intrinsic value in "educated culture" (his critique being that many are denied access to this resource), much of his work seeks to deconstruct the notion of value by claiming that official judgements of value are stakes in struggle. The educated are powerful in virtue of the official legitimacy of their (educated) culture and they use their power to maintain its legitimacy.

This point connects with the theme of "distinction". In some places, Bourdieu (1985d, 1992f) claims that what he means by "distinction" is simply that clusters of individuals in social space each develop cultural peculiarities which mark them out from one another. They have distinct cultures – hence "distinction". However, these differences can become a focus of symbolic struggles (struggles for distinction) in which members of those clusters seek to establish both the superiority of their peculiarities and an official sanction for them. These symbolic struggles are, in effect, aspects of class struggle. Control over the knowledge that is valued, sanctioned and rewarded within the education system is one aspect of this, but in *Distinction* (and related publications) Bourdieu casts his net wider to capture a more general sense of dominant forms of the judgement of taste.

The habituation of both cultural differences and criteria for judging them "higher" or "lower" is an important part of this process. It allows differences and ultimately inequality between clusters of individuals to appear natural and thus both inevitable and just. And it generates the paradox, noted by Bourdieu, that some individuals and social strata appear "naturally more cultured" than others (Bourdieu *et al.* 1990b).

The struggle for distinction is another context in which distinct class *habitus* is formed. Groups form themselves, in some part, by cultivating distinguishing features and signs of "superiority". Note, however, that this already presupposes some degree of "in group" identification and interaction. It could not be an effect of simply occupying the same position in social space, as many markers of distinction are arbitrary and only become meaningful to the extent that their meaning is agreed upon and thus communicated between relevant parties.

Group formation

Positions in social space, as noted above, only suffice to constitute "classes on paper", for Bourdieu. These classes are not entirely arbitrary. Positions in social space are objective and, to a degree, they both predict and explain differences in *habitus* and lifestyle. Furthermore, Bourdieu concedes both that concrete groups (kinship groups, neighbourhoods, friendship networks) and a tacit "sense of place" take shape within this space. Individuals develop a sense of where they belong in society and what is, and is not, "for the likes of us". This is not yet class in the fully developed sense that Bourdieu wants to speak of, however. What finally transforms these fuzzy lines of division into historically effective class groups, he maintains, are representations of class which both resonate with the aforementioned practical sense that individuals have of their position and serve, via agents who advocate these representations, to organize individuals as groups. In the case of the working class, for example, labour parties and trade unions have played a key role in organizing and effectively constituting it as a class. They have persuaded members of the working class to recognize themselves as members of it, and as such they have helped to shape and form it.

Exactly how the lines of division are drawn remains relatively open, however. Bourdieu notes two complications. First, although he maintains that proximity in social space, as he defines it, is the best guarantee of the formation of solidaristic groups, he also acknowledges that individuals belong to various categories (for example, ethnic, national and religious) that may assume priority in their identity and group affiliation. Secondly, he notes that even with respect to class, there are different ways in which lines of division may be drawn. We can categorize classes in different ways (as all first-year sociology students soon discover). The process of categorization is restrained both by the broad outlines suggested by objective positions and, if the category is to be historically effective, by individuals' own common-sense constructions (which are shaped by their social positions). However, the categories can be drawn up in different ways and the precise details of how they are drawn up will be contested. It will be an object of symbolic struggle.

The symbolic struggle over classes takes place in a number of fields and, to complicate matters, is therefore subject to the distinct logics of these fields. One such field is that of academic social science. Social scientists construct social class. How they do so is influenced by their own lived sense of class and by their need to make sense of research

findings regarding persistent social inequalities and their effects. It is also partly shaped by the logics and conflicts of the academic field, however. Academics want to advance their own professional position and make their own mark. Furthermore, grants from government or charitable bodies, each of whom need constructions of class that afford them purchase upon their administrative problems, exert a structuring force too. For this reason, Bourdieu avoids direct participation in debates about where the boundaries around specific classes should be drawn. Where the boundaries are, for Bourdieu, is contested. It is a stake in symbolic struggles that are, essentially, part of the class struggle. His position is reflexive. He stands back from this classificatory struggle in an effort to understand it better (thereby making his own mark, of course). Or rather, his is a definition of class that incorporates within itself a recognition that class is an essentially contested concept.

Classificatory struggles are won, however, and their outcomes and influence far outlive any reflective memory of the issues they involved. So many class and occupational categories seem natural to us, Bourdieu warns. They have acquired a taken-for-granted, *doxic* status (see Chapter 7 for further discussion). Such designations as "clerical workers" or "manual workers" trip easily off the tongue and we are generally prepared to treat the individuals who belong to these categories as members of a natural group. Against this, Bourdieu argues that the "group-ness" of these groups derives at least in some part from our appropriation and use of these labels. We shape these groups (and they shape themselves) as groups by our tendency to label and treat them as groups. This is an example of what Bourdieu calls "theory effects"; that is, it is an example of the way in which social theories shape the realities they purport to describe.

No less important than the field of academic social science is the political field. Here too, "class" is constructed and, here too, the process of construction is shaped by the logics of the field. Political parties have to balance considerations arising from the need to appeal to their would-be constituents against other demands arising from, for example, the claims of their opponents. And, the representations generated in this context feed back out to members of the represented classes. As noted above, for example, labour parties and trade unions, in particular, have played a key role in the formation of the working class, for Bourdieu. They have, in varying degrees at different times, succeeded in persuading individuals clustered within particular positions in social space to take on board an identity and mobilize around it. And this identity, the mobilizations it has been

implicated in and the habits and ethos cultivated in the process of struggle, have all further contributed to the "group-ness" and thus "class-ness" of those involved.

Classes have, in this sense, emerged as real historical forces out of a history of political struggles and mobilization. Indeed, classes have come into being through processes of mobilization and struggle. Such mobilizations are perhaps rare and short lived but their effect may be more enduring in so far as they sediment in the forms of *habitus*, ethos and *doxa* which continue to shape action outside of periods of political contention and institute a sensitivity to future "calls to order" by political agitators. Class formation, in effect, is a continuous process which, notwithstanding ebbs and flows, builds upon itself.

Conclusion: the dynamics of class

My presentation in this chapter has been linear. I have suggested that individuals are positioned in social space; that this shapes their lifestyles and *habitus*; and that these two conditions prepare the way for processes of mobilization and representation which bring classes into being. It is possible to read Bourdieu in this linear manner, with mobilization drawing upon dispositions, which are the effect of social positions. It is also possible, however, to view the three "moments" of class formation discussed here as mutually and simultaneously affecting: for example, mobilizations shape both *habitus* and social space, as well as being shaped by them, and position and *habitus* are similarly mutually affecting. It is not clear which of these readings Bourdieu would have preferred but, perhaps, that is probably best left to the reader.

Notes

1. Bourdieu 1985d and 1992f are, in fact, two different translations of the same paper.
2. MCA can involve both "active" and "passive" variables. Active variables are those that are actually used in the construction of the graph axes (the original variables that are combined and reduced to form new variables). Passive variables are variables that we believe are affected by our new variables: e.g. having devised a scale for "volume" of capital and calculated values for our survey respondents, we may wish to ascertain whether "opera going" (a passive variable not considered until this point) is a preserve of those with a high volume.

Capital

Robert Moore

Introduction

The first task of this chapter is to describe *capital* it in its general symbolic form rather than its specific types such as "cultural", "social", "linguistic", "scientific", etc. I first address what is distinctive about Bourdieu's use of the term and the manner in which it functions within his theory.

Usually the term "capital" is associated with the economic sphere and monetary exchange. However, Bourdieu's use of the term is broader:

> It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory. Economic theory has allowed to be foisted upon it a definition of the economy of practices which is the historical invention of capitalism; and by reducing the universe of exchanges to mercantile exchange, which is objectively and subjectively oriented toward the maximization of profit, i.e., (economically) *self-interested,* it has implicitly defined the other forms of exchange as non-economic, and therefore *disinterested*. In particular, it defines as disinterested those forms of exchange which ensure the *transubstantiation* whereby the most material types of capital – those which are economic in the restricted sense – can present themselves in the immaterial form of cultural capital or social capital and vice versa. (Bourdieu 2006: 105–6)

Hence, Bourdieu's purpose is to extend the sense of the term "capital" by employing it in a wider system of exchanges whereby assets of different kinds are transformed and exchanged within complex networks or circuits within and across different fields. He is attempting to relocate the narrow instance of mercantile exchange away from economics into a wider anthropology of cultural exchanges and valuations of which the economic is only one (though the most fundamental) type. It is important to note, however, that other forms of capital such as cultural and social can be seen as "transubstantiated" forms of economic capital.

Bourdieu's theory of *capital*[1] and how it is used in various areas of his work possess distinctive characteristics. As a consequence, there is an important, though subtle, point at issue in terms of how forms of symbolic capital should be understood. There are, in effect, two different ways in which this is done, both in Bourdieu's own work and by those using his ideas. In the first, the values, tastes and lifestyles of some social groups (of *habitus* held in common in different status groups by virtue of power relations in society and in terms of which they are defined and differentiated) are, in an arbitrary manner, elevated above those of others in a way that confers social advantage (for example, in education). In the second way, forms of capital such as cultural capital can be understood in terms of qualitative differences in *forms* of consciousness *within* different social groups (class fractions rather than classes in themselves); that is, in terms of *habitus* as a specialization ("cultivation") of consciousness and a recognized mastery of some technique(s). In other words, social membership *in itself* (membership of a particular status group *per se*) does not automatically translate into a *habitus* that confers symbolic capital in a uniform way for all members (such that, for instance, middle-class and working-class parents are automatically engaged in a zero-sum conflict of interests regarding their children in education simply by virtue of differing degrees of cultural capital associated with class *habitus*).

The distinction outlined above is central to grasping the distinctiveness of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital. If the first usage alone is employed, then, it can become difficult to differentiate conceptually between Bourdieu's ideas and those traditionally employed in social stratification theory – cultural capital is to all intents and purposes a synonym for "status" or *habitus* for "socialization". The use of Bourdieu's language is then merely terminological rather than conceptually distinctive and adds little to analysis beyond a shift in the lexicon. Furthermore, the first use can lead, methodologically, to

what John Beck has termed the "class essentialism and reductionism" that he argues typifies and also, in his view, vitiates a prominent current in educational research that often draws upon Bourdieu in studies of the effects of marketization (Beck 2007).[2]

In all fields of social practice, there will be graduations between those who exhibit what Bourdieu terms the "well-formed *habitus*" and those who do not. The symbolic forms of capital are associated with the well-formed *habitus* and in any group, however defined, those with the well-formed *habitus* are higher in cultural capital; although not all *habitus* and their instances of cultural capital are accorded equal value in society – for example, that of the artist versus that of the craftsman. In this second usage, symbolic capital is therefore significant not just for exegetical reasons, but because it points to the possibility of opening new avenues of analysis by examining the effects (for example, in education) of *intra*-group variance and complementarities *between* class fractions rather than simply inter-group differences and the associated tendency to class essentialism and reductionism[3].

The rest of this chapter first considers the *forms* of capital. Secondly, it goes on to discuss the types and patterns of distinctiveness that underlie them. Thirdly, there is discussion of how capitals are valued within the social structure, in particular by the dominant. Finally, I address differences in capital both across and within particular groups before concluding the chapter.

The forms of capital

As noted above, the broad distinction that Bourdieu develops is that between economic capital (or "mercantile exchange") and symbolic capital, that includes sub-types such as cultural capital, linguistic capital, scientific and literary capital depending on the field in which they are located. The fundamental difference between economic and symbolic capital, that is crucial to understanding how the concept operates within Bourdieu's system, is that in the former, the instrumental and self-interested nature of the exchange is transparent. Mercantile exchange is not of intrinsic value, but is always only a means to an end (profit, interest, a wage, etc). Bourdieu contends that this is also true for other forms of symbolic capital, but that they, in their distinctive ways, deny and suppress their instrumentalism by proclaiming themselves to be disinterested and of intrinsic worth. In the field of the arts, for example, cultural capital is presented as

reflecting the intrinsic value of art works in themselves ("essentialism") and the capacity of certain gifted individuals (those with "distinction") to recognize and appreciate those essential qualities (see Grenfell & Hardy 2007 for a fuller discussion). In the scientific field, knowledge is apparently pursued for its own sake by disinterested scholars in search of truth. The formal presentation of the principle of social capital is that of altruism. This systematic denial of the fact that symbolic capitals are transubstantiated types of economic capital involves the process that Bourdieu calls *misrecognition*. Symbolic fields, on the bases of their specific principles, establish hierarchies of discrimination (some things are better or more worthy than others). This process of misrecognition is a type of "symbolic violence" (see Chapter 11 for further coverage). The "violence" reflects the fact that the relationships within fields and their hierarchies of value are in reality purely arbitrary rather than being grounded in intrinsically worthwhile and superior principles radically detached from the this-worldly instrumentalism and materialism of mercantile exchange. The legitimations of the system of social domination and subordination constituted within and through these symbolic relations are ultimately based on "interest". Hence, when Bourdieu couples the term "cultural" with "capital", he is presenting a challenge or provocation by coupling the sacred with the profane (see Bourdieu 2006).

Bourdieu's intention, when examining the types of symbolic capital, appears to be twofold. First, he seeks to demonstrate the arbitrary and instrumental character of symbolic capitals as types of assets that bring social and cultural advantage or disadvantage. Secondly, he seeks to demonstrate that through the process of transubstantiation, the fields of symbolic capital are homologous to the structure of the economic field. Each field of symbolic capital reproduces the system of unequal relations in the economic field (relations of class and power) and, in doing so, reproduces the fundamental structure of social inequality. The deep structure of this homology is that of the relations of power between groups as constituted within the economic field. Symbolic fields and their specific types of capital are institutionally distinct and distanced from the economic field with their own personnel, principles and logics, but are, nevertheless, the economic field "reversed" (see Bourdieu 1993b: ch. 1). Their logic is ultimately that of the structured inequalities and power relations of the economic field and it is in terms of this logic that such fields can be decoded.

Each type of symbolic capital achieves its effect by virtue of the contrived and sustained "illusion" of the autonomy of its field as constituted by what is claimed to be its intrinsic principle – its own particular, disinterested, sacred, consecrating principle (beauty, truth, altruism, etc). Fields, in this respect, can be understood as means of production of symbolic capitals of different types and the regulators of the social distribution of those capitals. Although at any particular point in time a field can be viewed statically (synchronically) in terms of its structure and the relationship of positions within it, the most important feature of a field is that it is dynamic – it exists in and through time (diachronically) in the trajectories of position-takings and strategies (indeed, each field has its own time: the succession of movements in the arts, changes in fashion and taste, scientific innovation and paradigm change). Capital can be understood as the "energy" that drives the development of a field through time. Capital in action is the enactment of the principle of the field. It is the realization in specific forms of power in general.

To understand how this is so, it can be noted that the different types of capital are able to each exist in different forms (see Bourdieu 2006). In one form, capital is *objectified*. It is materially represented in things such as art works, galleries, museums, laboratories, scientific instruments, books, etc. – artefacts of various kinds. In another form, capital is *embodied*. Here, the principle of a field is incorporated within the corporality of the person as principles of consciousness in predispositions and propensities and in physical features such as body language, stances, intonation and lifestyle choices. Between these two is a third expression of capital in the form of *habitus*. Unlike objectified and embodied capital, *habitus,* does not have a material existence in itself in the world since it includes attitudes and dispositions. It is insubstantial in the sense that the rules of chess or of grammar cannot be found anywhere in the world in a material form, but are known only through their *realizations* in practice – in the actual games of chess or speech acts that they enable and make possible (see Moore 2004: 168–70). The formation of *habitus* takes place initially within the family, the domestic *habitus*, but, for Bourdieu, the most important agency is education where capital assumes an institutionalized form. However, these forms of capital should be seen as being, in an important sense, continuous with each other, as "moments" of one thing rather than three different varieties of the thing. These forms and relations can be illustrated in the following way (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Forms of capital

Forms of capital/types	Objectified	Habitus (dispositions and attitudes)	Embodied
Cultural	Galleries, museums, libraries, concerts, etc.	Knowledge of the canon, discrimination of genres and periods, the "rules of the game".	Cultivated gaze, poise, taste, desire for the recognition of distinction.
Scientific	Laboratories, textbooks, instruments, "normal science", etc.	Knowledge of the problem field, mastery of problem solving techniques, "objectivity".	Ability to manipulate instruments and formulae, rationality, desire for peer recognition through innovation.

The institutionalized form of capital (formal education), to varying degrees for different groups, attempts to inculcate (to make embodied) a *habitus*, the principle of which is congruent with the dominant principles of the various fields in which capital exists in its objectified forms: to acquire, for example, a predisposition to the "rules of the game" for viewing paintings in a gallery and, furthermore, doing so in a way that appears entirely natural and effortless (see Bourdieu 1984: 71).

Forms of distinction

The objectified forms of capital might be seen as a kind of "raw material". Imagine entering a large store that sells books, music CDs and films on DVD. These things have, of course, already been organized in the ways in which they are distributed on the shelves in categories and genres (the principles governing this constitute what Bourdieu calls, "legitimate culture", the correct way of doing it (e.g. 1984: 56). Imagine, now, two shoppers with equal amounts of economic capital, money to spend. They wander through the shop browsing the shelves and filling their baskets with their selections.

When they stand together at the checkout, their baskets contain very different selections of books, music and films (of equal total cost). For Bourdieu, there will be a dual logic at work here. The first could be called "the logic of association" whereby each individual makes his or her particular choices and the other could be called "the logic of difference" connected with the differences between the selections. These logics are internally connected. The logic of association entails the principle that if person *a* selects first this *type* of book, then they are likely to select that *type* of music, and, then, likely to select a particular *type* of film. These calculable, statistical probabilities – meticulously mapped by Bourdieu in his classic study of taste, *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984) – are associated with the person's social background and will be shared by those of similar background – not that they would necessarily choose the exact same items, but they employ the same cultural logics of selection, of what can go together and what must be kept apart (association and difference). The principle of selection is *generative*, but not deterministic. The logic of difference entails the principle that, in part, person *a* selects what he or she does because it is *not* what person *b* would select. The logics of selection are internally connected in that they are culturally and socially valorized by their opposition. At the extremes, one logic of selection would entail "distinction" and the other "vulgarity". Bourdieu says that how we categorize the world, in turn, categorizes us – we belong to that category of persons that categorizes the world, thus:

> Aesthetic intolerance can be terribly violent. Aversion to different life-styles is perhaps one of the strongest barriers between the classes; class endogamy is evidence of this. The most intolerable thing for those who regard themselves as the possessors of legitimate culture is the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates should be separated. This means that the games of artists and aesthetes and their struggles for the monopoly of artistic legitimacy are less innocent than they seem. At stake in every struggle over art there is also the imposition of an art of living, that is, the transmutation of an arbitrary way of living into the legitimate way of life which casts every other way of living into arbitrariness. (Bourdieu 1984: 36–7)

To take the illustration one step further, imagine that the two shoppers have one item in common in their baskets. Although they have both selected the same thing, they will have done so for very

different reasons according to different cultural logics. For one, it is a thing of beauty, but for the other it is delightfully *kitsch* and will amuse his or her friends at their next dinner party (and, so, increase their stock of social capital in their circle where being cleverly amusing in this way is valued as a sign of distinction). It is valorized ironically in counterpoint to the logic of selection of the other items whereas for the "vulgar" buyer, its value is conventional – "homely". What is important for Bourdieu is the matrix of connections within fields of symbolic capital. In one dimension, a certain array of items will be positively connected in terms of their cultural complementarity, and in another related negatively through oppositions. The logic of similarity automatically entails a logic of difference, continuities and discontinuities, and these relationships structure the social space (or, simultaneously, reflect the structure of the social space). Central to Bourdieu's approach is the principle that it is these *relationships* that valorize items and not some intrinsic (or essentialist) feature of the items in themselves. The symbolic violence associated with cultural capital is the misrecognition of the actual arbitrariness of values in symbolic fields.

It is *habitus* that provides the principle for the logic of selection. The shoppers select as they do by virtue of the *structured and structuring predispositions* that they bring with them into the shop. But, this will be reflected, also, in how they conduct themselves in the shop. The shopper with "distinction" will be familiar with how such a shop is organized (the "legitimate culture"), with the categories and genres (this shopper possesses cultural capital), and will walk around, "navigate" the social space, with assurance, knowing the "rules of the game". The shopper with "distinction" will be confident and authoritative in dealings with staff: "I've just read a review of a book by Bourdieu. It was published a couple of years ago, I think. I can't remember the title, something to do with science. I need it for something I'm writing at the moment. Would you look it up for me and see if you have it in stock". The "vulgar" shopper will be disoriented and unsure (because lacking the cultural capital and the "rules of the game") and if able to ask the staff for help at all will do so diffidently: "I wonder if you could help me, please. I'm trying to find a book about a French painter that my daughter likes. It's her birthday. He painted water lilies and gardens, but I'm not sure of his name. Thank you very much, sorry to trouble you".

The relationships between things (the items in the shopping baskets) correspond, at one level, to social hierarchies and at another to everyday personal deportment in routine social situations and

to emotional states (assurance or anxiety). Bourdieu is telling us that there will be systematic parallels (homologies) between social relations and symbolic capital in its institutional and embodied forms mediated by *habitus*. There is an internal relation between the items in the basket, the structuring principles of consciousness in the head of the shopper and in social relations – in the principles of social order and difference. The cultural logic of similarity and difference between the shopping baskets corresponds to the relations of in-equality and power in society and to the personal predispositions of different groups of people – similarities and differences of consciousness and self. The shoppers have translated their economic capital into symbolic resources, but their returns in terms of cultural capital are highly unequal in proportion to their inequality in cultural capital in the first instance.[4] In one case the choices are emblems of distinction, but in the other the stigmata of vulgarity. We classify ourselves through the ways in which we classify the world, but "the world" has already classified us and through our classifications we confirm (or "consecrate") that act (see Bourdieu 1984: part 1). In that symbolic capital is the transubstantiation of economic capital, it multiplies or diminishes the *social* returns to economic capital to varying degrees for different social agents and groups:

> Because they are all organised around the same fundamental opposition as regards the relation to demand (that of the "commercial" and the "non-commercial"), the fields of production and distribution of different species of cultural goods – painting, theatre, literature, music – are structurally and functionally homologous among themselves, and maintain, moreover, a relation of structural homology with the field of power, where the essential part of their clientele is recruited.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984: 161)

The formation of capital

The inequalities associated with cultural capital reflect inequalities in capacities to acquire capital which themselves reflect prior inequalities in the possession of cultural capital. There are two distinctive features that affect the manner in which forms of symbolic capital can be acquired. The first, from the point of view of acquisition, is that they cannot be divorced from the person (they presuppose embodiment), and the second is that they can only be acquired over

time (they presuppose duration). Bourdieu draws a contrast with economic capital where it is possible to become very rich very quickly with a spin of the roulette wheel (Bourdieu 2006: 105). But we cannot, in a similar way, acquire embodied cultural capital:

> Most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. The accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, *Bildung*, presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor.   (Bourdieu 2006: 107)

The acquisition of embodied cultural capital is identical to the formation of *habitus*, an integration of mind and body harmoniously adapted to specialized habitats (fields) and transposable beyond them. Although Bourdieu typically defines *habitus* with reference to inner-consciousness and practice (or, more precisely, the generative principles and strategies of consciousness and practice), it must be recognized that it also has an "outer" form. Like both Durkheim and Weber before him, Bourdieu's concern with *habitus* is the problem of how the "outer" (the social) becomes "inner" (the social self or a "second nature") (see Moore 2004: ch. 3). Hence, it is possible, for instance, to talk about "class *habitus*" – *habitus* as a "collective consciousness" expressed in objectified form in styles of life and lifestyle choices (and also objective life chances) (Bourdieu 1984) and expressing different degrees of cultural capital. Somewhat similarly, in the case of science, Bourdieu says that:

> The perception of the space of positions, which is both a cognition and recognition of symbolic capital and a contribution to the constitution of this capital (through judgements based on indices such as the place of publication, the quality and quantity of notes, etc.), makes it possible to orientate oneself in this field. When apprehended by a well-constituted habitus, the various positions that are realized are so many "possibles", so many possible ways of doing what the agent who perceives them does (such as physics or biology), possible ways of doing science that are either already realized, or still to be realized, but called for by the structure of already actualized

possibilities. A field contains potentialities, a probable future, which a habitus adapted to the field is able to anticipate.

(Bourdieu 2006: 60)

The formation of embodied cultural capital entails the prolonged exposure to a specialized social *habitus*, such as that of the traditional English public school (i.e. an exclusive and expensive private boarding school cultivating the classical liberal humanist "gentleman" (*Bildung* in the German tradition)), the priesthood or the military or, in plebeian form, in the craft apprenticeship or, with greater distinction in the modern period, in the apprenticeship of the artist or, elsewhere, in the cultivation of elite sporting skills or the vocations of the liberal professions. Cultural capital is acquired in the systematic cultivation of a sensibility in which principles of selection implicit within an environment (a *milieu* or habitat) translate, through inculcation, into principles of consciousness that translate into physical and cognitive propensities expressed in dispositions to acts of particular kinds: "A scientist is a scientific field made flesh, an agent whose cognitive structures are homologous with the structure of the field and, as a consequence, constantly adjusted to the expectations inscribed in the field" (Bourdieu 2004a: 41).

The well-known UK store chain, Habitat, aspires to be able to furnish your entire home, from cutlery and wine glasses and carpeting to dinner tables and beds, according to its particular style. Even more ambitiously, the pre-Second World War German school of art and design, the Bauhaus, aspired to do all that, but also to design the homes and the towns in which they would be located – a totalizing habitat that provides a total way of life grounded in the sensibility of an integrated, coherent modernist aesthetic. It is not just that Bauhaus design expressed that sensibility in its practitioners (made the inner outer), but that exposure to such a habitat, such a style of life (cultural capital), would also cultivate that sensibility ("taste" or dispositions) in those who inhabited it (the outer becoming inner). In this instance, an individual would acquire (they would become habituated to) the *habitus* and cultural capital of Bauhaus modernism, its predispositions, its "rules of the game" or "habits":

[habitat ⟺ *habitus* ⟺ habituation⟺ habit]

That is, capital is objectified as *habitus*, and is embodied and realized in practice.

Capital and the well-constituted *habitus*

The phrase "the well-constituted *habitus*" logically implies the possibility of a "less well-constituted *habitus*". If symbolic capital and *habitus* are in effect the same thing (one thing being described in different ways in terms of its different aspects – see Moore 2007: ch. 5), then the distinctive features of symbolic capital and its formation must be understood in terms of the formation of *habitus*. In Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a: 31), we find this proposition: "(*Pedagogic Action, PA) entails* pedagogic work *(PW), a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a* habitus, *the product of the internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after the PA has ceased*" (original emphasis).

Bourdieu further writes about *scientific* capital and the *scientist* in his later published work (2004b). In relation to science, he similarly stresses that its practice, "can only really be mastered through a long apprenticeship" (*ibid*.: 5) and, also, by initiation into, "a great mastery of the tradition" (*ibid*.: 16) – so that "a twenty year old mathematician can have twenty centuries of mathematics in his head" (*ibid*.: 40; see also Moore & Maton 2001). The key point in the extract quoted above is the distinction made between, "the profound and lasting transformation" of the self associated with *habitus* and the, "discontinuous and extraordinary actions of symbolic violence like those of the prophet, the intellectual 'creator' or the sorcerer" (*ibid*.).

With reference to a different field, that of photography, Bourdieu describes its position as being, "halfway between 'vulgar' activities abandoned apparently to the anarchy of individual preferences, and noble cultural activities subject to strict rules" (Bourdieu 1971c: 176). This manner of distinguishing between the "vulgar" and the "noble" is similar to that whereby Durkheim distinguishes, in one respect, between the profane and the sacred in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995); that the latter is governed by the strict rules of ritual and sacrament in contrast to the stochastic interactions of everyday life. It is important to note that this distinction, for both writers, is *sociological* not evaluative. It has to do with the structural character of fields and the regulation of conduct within them. The "sacraments" of noble or scholarly discourse regulate its form of debate in a way that distinguishes it from the free (though still rule-governed) flow of simple "chat" where the "anarchy of personal preferences" is properly the guiding principle (see Moore

2007: ch. 4; also Collins 2000: ch. 1, esp. 26). All of this is not to suggest that scholars do not themselves "chat" – the distinction is, rather, to do with the ways in which things are *known*, not with *knowers* (see Maton 2000), with the "when" and "how" and not the "who" and "what". The formation of *habitus*, and the symbolic capital it endows, occurs through the "pedagogic work" of the inculcation of the "strict rules" to the point that they acquire an embodied form.

This distinction is in line with that made (independently) by both Durkheim and Weber in relation to *habitus*. In each case, the formation of *habitus* (the acquisition of symbolic capital) is understood in terms of a specialization of consciousness through a systematic process of inculcation that is extended in time to the degree that, as noted above, it achieves a "profound and lasting transformation" of the self grounded in a coherent and integrated set of principles embodied in the social agent and congruent with the symbolic capital of the institutional agency of inculcation and effectively transportable beyond it (exemplified for Durkheim by the Christian scholastics and for Weber by the Confucian literati). The distinctiveness of Bourdieu's approach to cultural capital is that it is associated primarily with specialization and accomplishment ("cultivation") and not *directly* with socio-economic status. It is for this reason that socio-economic status and cultural capital can vary independently and the latter cannot simply be collapsed back into the former, for example, in the phrase generic "middle-class *habitus*" (Bourdieu frequently rejects this kind of reductionism). As Bourdieu demonstrates (for example, in *The Rules of Art* (1996a)), the group highest in cultural capital is that which he designates as the "dominated fraction of the dominant group"; that is, an intelligentsia based in fields of symbolic production, in education especially (Bourdieu 1988a), but lower in economic capital than the dominant fraction (based in fields of material production and power). Those highest in cultural capital in the form of possession of "legitimate culture" are those highest in *educational* capital (see Bourdieu 1984: 16–17). Bourdieu refers to this as "delegation" and it is necessary in order for cultural capital to do the work it does by appearing to do something entirely different; that is, the pursuit of "disinterestedness" identified as the sovereign principle of any type of cultural capital – the pursuit of beauty, truth, etc. It is in this delegation of authority that economic capital is transubstantiated as symbolic capital (e.g. see Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a: 25). It is worth emphasizing here that this division within the dominant class is not only a central

feature of Bourdieu's theorizing, but carries implications that extend beyond the theory and can potentially make problematical certain aspects of the theory itself.

The phenomenon of intra-class variance corresponds to the graduations in the formation of *habitus* between the "well formed" and the "less well formed", which is expressed in their capital configurations. This calibration will be found in *all* areas of social practice. However, there is a second criterion for distinguishing between *habitus*. In *Reproduction* we are further presented with the following proposition:

> The specific productivity of PW, *i.e. the degree to which it manages to inculcate in the legitimate addressees the cultural arbitrary it is mandated to reproduce, is measured by the degree to which the habitus it produces is* transposable, *i.e. capable of generating practices conforming with the principles of the inculcated arbitrary in a greater number of different fields.*
> (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a: 33, original emphasis)

Hence, we can now approach *habitus* and, so, cultural capital, in terms of two dimensions, *accomplishment* and *transposability*, that, in a combined embodied form, give a social agent "distinction", and that together, determine the relative values of instances of cultural symbolic capital. In practical terms, some social agents might be high in cultural capital (highly accomplished) but only in a restricted number of fields – their capital has restricted transposability ("a big fish in a small pond"). *Habitus*, then, can be more or less "well formed" and also more or less "transposable". Cultural capital has its highest value when it is (a) most highly formed and (b) optimized in terms of transposability.

In summary, forms of symbolic capital, such as cultural capital and scientific capital, exhibit the following features:

(a) they are objectified or embodied;
(b) they are acquired over time;
(c) they are acquired through a systematic process of inculcation;
(d) they express the (outer) *habitus* of the inculcating agency and its field;
(e) they bring value to a social agent to the degree that his or her personal (inner) *habitus* is more or less "well formed" relative to that of the field of inculcation;
(f) they differ in terms of their transposability across fields.

Together, these features constitute the forms of symbolic capital and determine their relative values. They are represented in this statement by Bourdieu relating to the scientific field:

> The space of positions, when perceived by a habitus adapted to it (competent, endowed with a sense of the game), functions as a *space of possibles*, the range of possible ways of doing science, among which one has to choose; each of the agents engaged in the field has a practical perception of the various realizations of science, which functions as a *problematic*. This perception, this vision, varies according to the agent' dispositions, and is more or less complete, more or less extensive; it may rule out some sectors, disdaining them as uninteresting or unimportant (scientific revolutions often have the effect of transforming the hierarchy of importance). (Bourdieu 2004b: 59–70)

In the final analysis, the forms of symbolic capital are given and valorized by the structure of fields in terms of (a) relations within them – internal complexity and (b) relations between them in the social space – their relative status. Individuals will possess cultural symbolic capital in proportion to the status of their specialized field in the social space and their position within their specialized field.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth examination of the concept of symbolic capital in a way that highlights its distinctiveness and distinguishes it from other concepts such as those found in the social stratification tradition. Understanding the distinctiveness of the concept is crucial to understanding the kind of work that it can do and the avenues it opens up. A concept is distinctive to the degree that, within the framework of its problematic, it enables analyses that could not be accomplished just as well with some other concept (in which case, the *concept* would be the same in both instances, but with different names, e.g. "cultural capital" and "social status"). What can cultural capital *do* that social status cannot, or what is the difference between *habitus* and socialization? To apply this rule of thumb or "test" to any specific case is important within the context of academic debates and disputes. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a: 35) refer to the "intellectual game of self-demarcation" which often takes the form of a position in an intellectual field presenting its claim

to originality by promoting a new lexicon as if it were a new theory or paradigm. Bourdieu (2004b: 7) makes a similar observation in terms of what he calls, "the fictitious pursuit of difference". The above has attempted to demonstrate the distinctiveness of Bourdieu's concepts in this manner – that they cannot be simply substituted with terms from another lexicon.

Bourdieu's extensive work is obviously open to multiple interpretations and he himself does change position over time. Also, his works do frequently contain (with relative degrees of explicitness) alternative languages in terms of which it is possible to construct coherent systems of theoretically opposed logics. The key to this peculiarity lies in the role of "the arbitrary" in Bourdieu's thinking and the manner in which it tends to be foregrounded against an immanent and muted theory of the non-arbitrary (see Moore 2007: ch. 5 for further discussion), that is almost invariably present below the surface and which his very project presupposes. In the particular case of symbolic capital, the arbitrary results in the injustice that restricts access to its riches; whilst the riches of the non-arbitrary, of the mythic, "well-formed *habitus*" allows for the recognition of *truth* as well as of "illusion" and misrecognition.

Notes

1. I will take Bourdieu's essay, "The Forms of Capital" (Bourdieu 2006) as my central reference because of its current availability and accessibility of style. I recommend Randal Johnson's "editor's introduction" to the collection *The Field of Cultural Production* (Bourdieu 1993b) with reference to cultural capital. Bourdieu's last published work before his death, translated as *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004b), provides a good, short introduction to his mode of theorizing with reference to the sociology of science and "scientific capital". I build, here, upon an earlier paper on cultural capital first published in the *British Journal of Sociology of Education: Special Issue: Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Education: the Theory of Practice and the Practice of Theory* **25**(4) (2004) (also in Moore 2007: ch. 5).
2. The argument in this chapter can be aligned with Beck's (2007) in these respects.
3. This opens up the possibility that because of particularities of *habitus*, some lower-class groups might acquire types of cultural capital that advantage them in some areas (e.g. education) over some groups within the middle class: for instance high levels of learning acquired within a domestic *habitus* by virtue of, say, political activism or the inheritance of a skilled craft tradition or religious commitment.
4. The fact that both individuals might be equally happy with what they have bought and derive equal pleasure from their purchases is beside the point, here. It is the social relation that is important: because the different logics of

dispositions have inscribed within them a wider social relationship of inequality; and because they can bring unequal social returns of capital – not least in that the logic of "distinction" can contribute cultural capital to the domestic *habitus* that will bring long-term educational benefits to children.

Doxa

Cécile Deer

This chapter has three main sections. After first introducing the concept of *doxa*, the second section considers it as part of Bourdieu's theory of practice. Here, I address its significance in the way fields operate, crucially in the relationships between field structures and *habitus*. I show how Bourdieu's approach to *doxa* differs significantly from others and the implications that follow on from his own working of the concept. There are examples of the way *doxa* functions in a range of Bourdieu's empirical studies – in education, culture and economics, etc. These examples extend to knowledge or academic field, which is the focus, in conclusion, for the third section of the chapter. Here, we consider the extent to which *doxa* rules in intellectual fields and what needs to take place in order to break free from it. Finally, I conclude with some reflections on what might be the outcome of such an undertaking.

Introduction

Following on from Durkheim's understanding, Bourdieu considered that the sociology of culture was the sociology of religion of our time. The early adoption of the Husserlian concept of "doxa" in his work may be seen as directly related to this approach.[1] *Doxa* has a number of related meanings and types of understanding in Bourdieu's work but the concept broadly refers to the misrecognition of forms of social arbitrariness that engenders the unformulated, non-discursive, but internalized and practical recognition of that same

social arbitrariness. It contributes to its reproduction in social institutions, structures and relations as well as in minds and bodies, expectations and behaviour.

Doxa is first used by Bourdieu in his description and explanation of "natural" practice and attitudes in traditional societies from a phenomenological perspective (for example, Bourdieu 1977b). His stated aim is to provide an understanding of the practical reasoning of the groups of people studied, based on their own vision and experience of the world (Bourdieu 1990c). *Doxa* refers to pre-reflexive intuitive knowledge shaped by experience, to unconscious inherited physical and relational predispositions. In Bourdieu's mind, this approach is epistemologically sounder than traditional anthropological approaches in that it bridges the gap between the disengaged intellectual projection of structural anthropology and the artificial involvement of ethno-methodology.

In modern societies, *doxa* similarly refers to pre-reflexive, shared but unquestioned opinions and perceptions mediated by relatively autonomous social microcosms (fields) which determine "natural" practice and attitudes *via* the internalized "sense of limits" and *habitus* of the social agents in the fields. *Doxa* is "a set of fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma" (Bourdieu 2000a: 16). It refers to the apparently natural beliefs or opinions that are intimately linked to *field* and *habitus*. It is the taken-for-granted assumptions (orthodoxies) of an epoch which lie beyond ideologies, yet can generate conscious struggles. In relation to the scholastic field (*skholè*), *doxa* acquires an epistemological further relevance, which in turn leads to the need for greater reflexivity on the part of intellectuals and scientists.

Doxa as part of a theory of practice

As noted, the concept of *doxa* appears at an early stage in Bourdieu's work as part of his ethnographic studies of the natural order of traditional societies where, "what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying", where "the tradition is silent, not least about itself as a tradition" (Bourdieu 1977b: 165–7). In this kind of social environment, *doxa* relates to "what is taken for granted", to the reality that goes unanimously unquestioned because it lies beyond any notion of enquiry. It is linked to a "primal state of innocence" (Bourdieu 2000a) to "what cannot be said for lack of an available discourse":

> The adherence expressed in the doxic relation to the social world is the absolute form of recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness, since it is unaware of the very question of legitimacy, which arises from competition for legitimacy, and hence from conflict between groups claiming to possess it.   (Bourdieu 1977b: 168)

In this case, *doxa* is more specifically used to account for actions and practice in traditional social organizations where the near perfect correspondence between the social structures and mental structures, between the objective order and the subjective organizing principles, make the natural and social world unquestionable. As such, *doxa* allows the socially arbitrary nature of power relations (e.g. classifications, values, categorizations and so on) that have produced the *doxa* itself to continue to be misrecognized and as such to be reproduced in a self-reinforcing manner. The arbitrariness of the established social order, together with its discursive justification, conditions and informs the internalized sense of limits of those involved and, by extension, their sense of reality and their aspirations. *Doxa* is the cornerstone of any field to the extent that it determines the stability of the objective social structures through the way these are reproduced and reproduce themselves in a social agent's perceptions and practices; in other words in the *habitus*. The mutual reinforcement between *field* and *habitus* strengthens the prevailing power of the *doxa*, which guides the appropriate "feel" for the game of those involved in the field via presuppositions that are contained in the *doxa* itself (see Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 66, 74).

This conceptualization of *doxa* as unquestioned "shared beliefs" constitutive of a field, underpins the related notion of symbolic power, which is particularly relevant in Bourdieu's understanding of social relations in modern societies. In this context, *doxa* takes the form of symbolic power which is mediated by various forms of accumulated capitals (cultural, economic, social – see Chapter 6 for further coverage). Explicit physical force is replaced by implicit social habits, mechanisms, differentiations and assumptions, the "natural" strength and legitimacy of which reside in the misrecognition of the arbitrary nature of their socio-historical emergence and reproduction. Symbolic power is embedded in recognized institutions as well as in institutionalized social relations (education, religion, art) which have the power to establish categories and allocate differential values in the market of symbolic goods, legitimizing themselves further in the process. *Doxa*, as a symbolic form of power, requires that those

subjected to it do not question its legitimacy and the legitimacy of those who exert it. Recognition is the by-product of unquestioned norms that have been internalized by social agents, as opposed to any explicit external pressures placed upon them. In a field, the *doxa* takes the form of a misrecognized unconditional allegiance to the "rules of the game" on the part of social agents with a similar *habitus*. *Doxa* creates, in contrast to the notion of rules accepted by a majority, which posits the emergence of a field of *opinion* where different legitimate answers can be given to an explicit question about the established order.

Extended in this way, the concept of *doxa* can come in many empirical guises in modern societies, as it relates to the *habitus* and power structure of relatively autonomous social fields which have their own specific logic and necessity. *Doxa* is embedded in the field whilst helping to define and characterize that field (the artistic field, the religious field, the economic field). *The Inheritors* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979b), *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a), *Photography: A Middle-brow Art* (Bourdieu *et al.* 1990a),[2] *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984) are all anthropological studies that seek to unveil the *doxic* conflation between objective social structures and subjective mental dispositions in various social fields of modern France (education, aesthetics). The aim is to make explicit the forms of misrecognized symbolic power (i.e. *doxa*) that underpin the implicit logic of practice, expectations and relations of those operating in these fields. Thus, the "distinction" *doxa* of the dominant social groups is matched by the proletarian *doxa* of the working classes in that both imply forms of cognition with practical implications that do not recognize the conditions of their own production. Bourdieu insists that the latter should not be mistaken for any notion of Marxist class consciousness. He rather provocatively deems this a "learned" form of ignorance, that is to say an *allodoxa*, a type of misrecognition that occurs when an erroneous recognition reinforces the discursive and representative aspects of the prevailing *doxa*. In modern societies, language and linguistic exchanges and the misrecognized arbitrary classifications, categorization and differentiation they operate and reproduce are key elements of the symbolic power that contribute to the legitimation of *doxa*. They provide both the nexus and the web of its reproduction by securing the unrecognized, active complicity on the part of those who are subjected to it (see Bourdieu 1991a).

The kind of interpretation and understanding that Bourdieu developed in his early works led to his questioning whether any genuine

break with ruling *doxa* was possible. From the outset, Bourdieu foresaw the theoretical possibility of *doxa* being questioned and of "the universe of the undiscussed" receding and even being totally overhauled in times of crisis, when drastic socio-structural modifications and disruptions could give rise to a critical consciousness, that might undermine the prevailing *doxa* and foster the emergence of other ones: "Doxa, the sum total of the theses tacitly posited on the hither side of all inquiry, which appear as such only retrospectively, when they come to be suspended practically" (Bourdieu 1977b). However, Bourdieu stringently qualifies this possibility by stipulating that if crisis is necessary for such a rupture to occur, it is a condition that is not sufficient *per se* to trigger the emergence of a genuine critical discourse that would radically unravel the prevailing *doxa*. This limitation is due to the distinction Bourdieu draws between any lay consciousness, reflection and understanding of social limits and a scientifically-informed (via systematic gathering of empirical evidence, statistics, interviews, cross-reference, historical research, etc.) unveiling of misrecognized forms of social limitations and symbolic domination inscribed in bodies, behaviours, aspirations, decisions and actions. For Bourdieu, any common-sense reflection on established rules is necessarily mediated – and therefore restricted – by day-to-day experience, by taken-for-granted practice, in short by *what is*; as such it is stifled by the lack of means to express and therefore question what is implicit and taken for granted. This leads him to consider that the ability of the socially dominated effectively to act upon their condition is either limited to weak, non-discursive, practical means (strike actions, violent burst) or is open to "symbolic hijacking" in the transition from practice to verbal representation (*logos*). This is because verbal representation is only produced by institutionalized and recognized third parties (trade-unions, established political parties, etc.) with access to the order of political opinion.

The above is linked to Bourdieu's definition of orthodoxy, and its corollary, heterodoxy. Orthodoxy refers to a situation where the arbitrariness of *doxa* is recognized but accepted in practice. The "rules of the game" are known and played accordingly. On the other hand, heterodoxy depends on the recognition of the possibility of competing beliefs and on the emergence of such competing beliefs, which entails a move from practical action to discursive exchanges and the emergence of a field of opinion. Heterodoxy, in its most efficient form, comes from groups whose experience of life is neither that of the lower order of society, nor of any dominant part of the higher

order, who are often well endowed in cultural capital but are poor in economic capital. However, though it may seek to be critical and even heretic, heterodoxy often remains mediated by the ruling *doxa*.

In the last chapter of *Homo Academicus*, entitled "The Critical Moment" (Bourdieu 1988a: 159–93), Bourdieu sets out to illustrate and discuss this theoretical understanding by using the example of the May 1968 crisis which shook both French academia and society at large. For Bourdieu, these events were a genuine – if limited – critical moment of crisis that resulted from the conjunction of synchronic latent crises that existed in different fields. These crises shared *allodoxic* characteristics in that they stemmed from maladjusted expectations: groups with diverging *habitus* perceived their social position with outdated schemes of understanding, that resulted in an inflated appreciation of their objective life chances. The events of May 1968 revealed this situation and led to the radical questioning of the prevailing academic and social order, and associated *doxa*, both in practice, actions and discourses. The crisis in academia that manifested itself as critical and festive debates – and "happenings" that directly questioned the academic *doxa* – was initiated by those who were in a dominated position in the academic field but not socially dominated and had to reconsider their objective life chances. The crisis spilled over into broader society because of the possibility of drawing on homologous positioning in other fields (university students, academics, manual workers). Eventually the temporary receding of the prevailing order was curbed when debates and actions became mediated by the *doxa* of the political field.

More than just an *a posteriori* analysis of May 1968, the publication of *Homo Academicus* was also part of a broader reflexive exercise on the conditions of emergence and reproduction of an autonomous academic field with its own prevailing scholastic *doxa* (see Bourdieu 1998c) that both set the rules of the game within the academic field and contributed to its differentiation in relation to other social fields. *Homo Academicus* is both and at the same time an unveiling of the academic *doxa* and, as such, is inscribed in the continuity of Bourdieu's previous theoretico-empirical works such as *The Inheritors* (1979b), *Reproduction* (1977a) or *Distinction* (1984). However, it also signals the beginning of a more reflexive conceptualization of the specificities of the intellectual field in relation to other social fields and, more particularly, the fields of power and economics and their implications. This is further developed in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000a) and in *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004b).

This reflexivity was a key evolution in Bourdieu's conceptualization of *doxa* and it came largely as a result of his own reflexive thinking on his scientific practice, as well as his professional and intellectual trajectory from philosophy student to sociologist at the *Collège de France* via self-taught anthropologist during the Algerian war. A clarification of the concept of *doxa* in relation to that of *field* and *habitus* was also necessary in relation to the increasingly influential relativist agenda of the post-structuralist, postmodern discourse. In the event, Bourdieu developed a theoretically-based approach to the condition of the emergence of autonomous social fields in modern capitalist societies using, among other things, the example of the struggle for the conquest of the autonomy of the field of cultural production in the first half of the nineteenth century by *heresiarchs* – i.e. *doxa* breakers – such as Courbet or Manet in the visual arts or writers such as Flaubert and Baudelaire in literature (Bourdieu 1993b; 1996a). *Doxa* is understood as comprising field-specific sets of beliefs that inform the shared *habitus* of those operating within the field. It is the result of a conquest via normative and even performative statements often expressed and represented by and/or around influential elements in the field which sets the field as a world apart with its own fundamental rules and laws (*nomos*), discursive forms (*logos*), normative beliefs (*illusio*), expected actions and behaviours and barriers to entry. The specific socio-historical conditions (*époché*) of the emergence of the field is ignored or forgotten and the constitutive *doxa* becomes unquestioned as the field becomes increasingly autonomous and differentiated from other fields, and in particular from the economic field, which is itself characterized by its own historically-grounded normative presuppositions and predispositions, its own *doxa* (see Bourdieu 2000c) .

For a better understanding of the emergence of an autonomous field and the practice within it, one has to understand the specific point of view at the origin of any separate world which has become so familiar that we are oblivious of the arbitrariness of its rules and regularities (aesthetic field, scholastic field, religious field, democratic field, etc.). It is also important to understand the influence of the ruling *doxa* in terms of positioning (orthodoxy/heterodoxy) of those operating and interacting within the field – visual art field (Bourdieu 1993b; 1996a), the academic/intellectual field (Bourdieu 1988a), and the philosophical field (Bourdieu 2000a). It is also necessary to grasp the significance and the influence of interrelations with other social fields, in particular the political field, the field of power, the economic

field (see Rigby 1993: 271; Bourdieu 2000a: 121) whose *doxa* is articulated around the legitimation and accumulation of different types of social, economic, symbolic and cultural capitals. The unchecked growing influence in a field of unquestioned sets of belief that belong to other fields and *habitus* can disrupt its autonomous presuppositions and arrangements by influencing and questioning the tacit rules of the game and adjusted practice. This leads to a situation of growing heteronomy in the field. This situation has become particularly relevant to the academic field in relation to the economic, political and media/journalistic fields as Bourdieu illustrated in the pamphlet *On Television*: "The autonomy of the cultural and intellectual fields, and the legitimacy of their specific doxa, is threatened by the heteronomy brought into these fields by the externally defined symbolic legitimacy conferred by the media, and their market-orientated, on certain intellectuals" (Bourdieu 1998b). To counter this evolution, Bourdieu suggested that the required scientific level of knowledge production for right of entry to the intellectual field should be maintained and even raised, while the duty of scholars to enter other fields and, in particular the political field, should be reinforced so as to share knowledge generated in appropriate epistemological conditions (Bourdieu 2000a: 188). The latter proposition is based on the understanding that the instruments of expression and criticism that can denounce the untold arbitrariness of *doxa* are unequally distributed (*ibid.*). The transfer of cultural capital stemming from the imperfect homologies-*cum*-solidarities between the dominated in the cultural field and in the social space, can facilitate collective mobilization and subversive action against the established order. This echoes the analysis developed by Bourdieu in *Homo Academicus* (1988a). Paradoxically, the appropriate conditions for the scientific generation of truth are said to be provided by the critically reflexive work of reason in the scientific field. The chapter on the historicity of reasons entitled "The Dual Face of Scientific Reason" in *Pascalian Meditations* set out to clarify this matter:

> Scientific fields, microcosms which in a certain respect are social worlds like others, with concentrations of power and capital, monopolies, power relations, selfish interests, conflicts, etc., are also, *in another respect*, exceptional, somewhat miraculous universes, in which the necessity of reason is instituted to varying degrees in the reality of structures and dispositions . . . The fact remains that, despite everything, the struggle [for

truth] always takes place under the control of the constitutive norms of the field and solely with the weapons approved within the field . . . so it is the simple observation of a scientific world in which the defence of reason is entrusted to a collective labour of critical confrontation placed under the control of the facts that forces one to adhere to a critical and reflexive realism which rejects both epistemic absolutism and irrationalist relativism.   (Bourdieu 2000a: 110–11)

This later quasi-acceptance of scientific *doxa* as a lynchpin of an autonomous intellectual field, leading to the advancement of truth via the mediation of critical reason, seems difficult to reconcile with Bourdieu's earlier work on higher education; in particular, the unveiling of the set of beliefs underpinning *habitus* in the educational and academic field. But, for Bourdieu, the scientific analysis of the social conditions of production and reception of art, science, or reason, and the understanding of the social genesis of fields (their beliefs, linguistic games, materialistic and symbolic interests) is not a destructive pleasure but a painful epistemological requirement that intensifies the experience and forces the critical observer to look at things as they are and to see them for what they are (see Bourdieu 2004b: 14–16).

The considerations touched upon in the above are central in understanding the manner in which Bourdieu has taken forward the concept of *doxa* to fend off half-learned ultra-relativist interpretations of the socio-historical arbitrariness of *doxa*. To denounce the illusion of an original foundation in reason does not mean giving up the possibility of reason but rather it calls for the need to clarify the emergence and the possibility of the production of reason based on the very historicity of the field in which it is produced. Thus, if Bourdieu considered that abstract universalism serves the interest of the established order by ignoring the historical conditions of emergence of, and access to, reason and thereby legitimizing the unjustifiable monopoly of the universal, he rejected even more vigorously the seemingly radical but in reality corrosive, relativist vision that discounts any form of belief in the universal values of truth, emancipation and Enlightenment. This is why Bourdieu ascribes a pivotal role to the scientific field – and the associated struggle for *doxa* – within the fields of cultural production (juridical, scientific, philosophical, religious), conceptualized as privileged social universes that are all fighting for the conception, and the monopoly, of the universal.

In conclusion: intellectual practice and the epistemic *doxa*

Applied to the intellectual field, this understanding of *doxa* acquires a reflexive epistemic dimension:

> what philosophers, sociologists, historians, and all those whose profession it is to think and speak about the world have the greatest chance of overlooking are the social presuppositions inscribed in the scholastic point of view, what, to awaken philosophers from their scholastic slumber, I shall call the oxymoron of *epistemic doxa*: thinkers leave in a state of unthought (*impensé*, doxa) the presuppositions of their thought, that is the social conditions of possibility of the scholastic point of view and the unconscious dispositions, productive of unconscious theses, which are acquired through an academic or scholastic experience, often inscribed in prolongation or originary (bourgeois) experience of distance from the world and from the urgency of necessity. (Bourdieu 1998c: 129)

The entry requirement demanded by all scholastic universes, and the indispensable condition for excelling in one of them, is also constitutive of the epistemic *doxa* (Bourdieu 2000a: 15). Bourdieu makes it clear that any reference to the economic and social privileges of the scholastic posture, the *skholè*, should not be understood as a condemnation or political denunciation, but as a fundamental epistemological question concerning the impact of the epistemic *doxa* on the formation of thought and the production of knowledge. Un-reflexive social science (and politics) leads to propositions and dualisms that are *endoxic* in that they belong to the ordinary conception of the world (e.g. Weber versus Durkheim, methodological individualism versus holism, rational action theory versus collective action theory, objectivism versus subjectivism, socialism versus liberalism, capitalism versus collectivism, etc.) and are based on common-sense values and ideas. As such, they pertain and contribute to the reproduction of the ruling *doxa*. Bourdieu refers to the Pascalian notion of *demi-savants* (half-learned thinkers) to describe this situation, which he pits against a genuine social-scientific approach which would be based on reflexive epistemology and knowledge accumulation as the only way to generate a proper scientific understanding of social structures and interrelations. Paradoxically, this can in part be achieved thanks to the scientist's privilege of being able leisurely to distance himself from the *doxa* of other fields but also, reflexively, to uproot

himself from the *doxa* of the scientific and scholastic field. Navigating between the Scylla of elitism and Charybdis of demagogy is not easy, as Bourdieu is well aware.

This argument again echoes the clear distinction made by Bourdieu between common sense, ordinary knowledge (embodied sensibility) and scientific knowledge (discursive rationality). This seemingly unbridgeable polarization between "alienating" embodied *doxa* and empowering discursive reflexivity has been a major source of criticism because it has been interpreted as being too simplistic, regressive and conservative, and at times self-contradictory and self-defeating, thereby breeding a sense of stalemate and powerlessness. This is however a key element in understanding the evolution of Bourdieu's theory and practice in the last decade of his life, both in terms of scientific reflexivity and political activism, for this is what guided him towards producing elaborated responses (and for Bourdieu this meant reflexive responses) to his critics, clarifying, in the process, the evolution of his own positioning in the fields of cultural production both past and present.

Thus, the reflexive scientific methodology in *The Weight of the World* (1999a) is not only an attempt at implementing the kind of *participant objectivation* advocated by the sociologist. The timing of the research and its publication make it a political stance as well, opposed to the taken-for-granted vision of the world vehiculed by other cultural producers and, in particular, by those that Bourdieu calls the modern *doxosophes* (see Bourdieu 1972b), the technicians of the political *doxa* that presuppose that all citizens are equal in the understanding of their environment. On the contrary, Bourdieu insists that the forming and expression of opinions is conditioned and constrained by experience, linguistic abilities, gender, economic conditions, educational background and to presuppose formal equality is to hide real inequalities (see Bourdieu 1971d). Any effective – that is to say, discursively-based – action against the predispositions and presuppositions of *doxa* depends on the ability to identify the implicit in social relations, structures and unquestioned *doxic* categorization. The social scientist should therefore work at universalizing and democratizing the economic and cultural conditions of access to social scientific knowledge so as to universalize access to the universal, which is the only way to achieve a lasting undermining of *doxa*. This stance is illustrated by Bourdieu's theoretical view of modern social movements (feminism, gender and racial politics, activist groups, etc.) in which he encourages those who are intellectually and practically involved in these movements to be more reflexive in

their approach so as to understand more fully the vantage point from which they are speaking (social conditions, categories, assumptions, values, beliefs). Similarly, Bourdieu is critical of the particularist, *communautarist* position and advocates a more universal approach that would radically identify and question the un-thought categories of thought, rather than rely on established, empirical categories of perception to assert one's own difference (see, in particular, Bourdieu 2004b). Bourdieu uses a similar argument in *The Rules of Art* to encourage a more liberated approach to literature and its canonical authors (Bourdieu 1996a). He recognizes that his earlier work was influenced by his own desire to rehabilitate the down-trodden but he warns that if this goodwill does not take into account the effect of the market of symbolic goods, it is bound to remain powerless and ineffective. This helps to reconcile Bourdieu's engagement in left-leaning intellectual and political campaigns towards the end of his life with his earlier concept of *doxa* which makes it almost impossible to consider political and cultural actions on the part of field practitioners as genuinely reflexive.

Notes

1. In ancient Greece, "*doxa*" (opinion) was used in opposition to "*episteme*" (knowledge).
2. In the index of the French edition of *Un art moyen, essai sur les usages sociaux de la photographie* (Paris, Les Editions de Minuit), *doxa* is sent to Vulgate.

Hysteresis

Cheryl Hardy

Introduction

Since *hysteresis*, generational change, dislocation of *habitus*, social crisis and field restructuring are all terms closely related in Bourdieu's discussion of social phenomena and how they change over time, "Bourdieu and change" could be an alternative title for this chapter. Bourdieu saw that *hysteresis* was a necessary consequence of his definitions of *habitus* and *field* as mutually generating and generated. These interrelations are the focus of this chapter. The chapter is presented in three main sections: first, definition and historical context of *hysteresis*; secondly, Bourdieu's usage of the concept in his published writing; and, thirdly, some practical applications of the concept are considered. A brief discussion of practical and theoretical implications concludes the chapter.

Bourdieu and change

Bourdieu's definitions of *habitus* and *field* have change as a necessary consequence of their condition – a change in one necessitates a change in the other. As such change is often taken for granted in his own writing since it does not require a distinct theorization. Because change is presupposed in this way, it is often not made explicit in Bourdieu's social analyses. It is perhaps understandable, then, if his work has been criticized for being deterministic, in particular with respect to social class. Bourdieu strongly and explicitly refutes this

claim. For him, an individual's history is ongoing and the resulting accumulation of symbolic and economic capital which constitute *habitus* is also continuous, *habitus* itself is in a state of constant flux. As Bourdieu writes in *In Other Words*: "Habitus, as a product of social conditionings, and thus of a history (unlike character), is endlessly transformed" (Bourdieu 1994d: 7). The symbolic capital of any individual is not only open to transformation, but is continuously fluctuating in response to changing field position and changing field structures. This modified and modifiable *habitus* then feeds back into the subsequent structuring of the field itself in a continuing and continuous process of change.

In times of personal and social stability, change takes place gradually along already anticipated pathways, so that each individual is "a fish in water", so to speak, where *habitus* and *field* are well matched. Here, the dynamic implicit in Bourdieu's thinking tools, *habitus* and *field*, provides explanation of homeostatic change and generational shifts and, "habitus changes constantly in response to new experiences" (Bourdieu 2000a). In other circumstances, and at times of crisis in particular, *habitus* must respond to abrupt, sometimes catastrophic, field changes, but that response always takes time. In such circumstances where new and stable field structures have yet to emerge, novel field opportunities, often transitory, come into being. *Habitus* evolves in response to these new opportunities, but in unpredictable ways where the consequences for an individual's field positioning are yet to be determined. Where change is indeterminate like this, *hysteresis* provides an invaluable technical term to highlight the disruption between *habitus* and *field* and the consequences of this over time.

Definition and historical context

So what are the origins of the term *hysteresis* and why did Bourdieu choose it over others?

Concepts for this sense of being "out of touch" with time and place can be found throughout sociology. For example, Marxist traditions use the term "alienation" to make reference to the individual who, in a capitalist society, is disconnected from their work and the society around them. There is in this term an implied moral judgement that things should be "otherwise". Durkheim, also, in his work on *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1938) and *Suicide* (1952) uses "anomie" to describe the troubled relationship of an individual to a

society which lacks guiding norms for behaviour – where there is the absence of "a body of rules governing the relations . . . between social functions" (see Lukes 1975: 15). Both "alienation" and "anomie" as concepts presuppose that when change takes place in a society, there is a determinate moral force that conditions the direction of change. Either it is argued that the desirable change is directed towards a more idealized (Utopian) view of society or the State is seen to be "bad" and therefore change is a move away from a corrupted moral condition. For Bourdieu, neither of these positions will do. He breaks with a pre-existing moral position and suspends moralistic judgement in the interest of objectivity. He therefore chooses a word that supports a more scientific view of the relationship between society and the individual, between the subjective and the objective, *hysteresis* as a field condition affecting individuals within this social space.

The historical roots of *hysteresis* are in scientific experimentation. A brief look at the scientific origins of the term will serve to establish the background and usage of the term. This will demonstrate aspects with which it is commonly associated. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first records of the use of the term "hysteresis" were indeed in scientific contexts. In 1881, J. J. Ewing, who was investigating the effects of magnetism, claimed, in Royal Society Proceedings, that there is a *hysteresis* effect when "the change of polarisation lags behind the change in torsion" (OED 1989: 9). This early definition identified two of the key characteristics of *hysteresis* – its association with *change* and with a *time lag*. Much later, in 1965, the term was used by A. P. Goresi in relation to "elasticity". He claimed that, "Whenever a body exhibits the phenomenon of hysteresis – that is, of returning to its original size and shape only slowly or not at all – its behaviour is not perfectly elastic" (OED 1989: 9). This scientific view identifies some further properties of *hysteresis*: a *mismatch* between two elements which were previously coordinated, and the possibility of change which is permanent. More generally, the phenomenon of *hysteresis* is defined as occurring when "changes in a property lag behind changes in an agent on which they depend . . ." (*ibid*.). This last definition highlights the conditions of applicability of *hysteresis* as a scientific concept: where two *ontologically distinguishable elements are dependent on one another* – a property and an agent. For Bourdieu, these elements are *field* and *habitus*.

Thus, key characteristics of the phenomenon of *hysteresis* emerge from a scientific context in which it is a term to describe a particular sort of change that involves a mismatch and a time lag between

the change in each of the previously "well-behaved" elements that are ontologically distinct but interrelated. *Hysteresis*, as the term which Bourdieu uses in his own theoretical writing, follows on from this and is used to describe the disruption in the relationship between *habitus* and the field structures to which they no longer correspond. It is a concept that he uses to describe the effects of change in the structures of any particular *field* where there is, at least for a time, a breakdown in the self-regulation (*habitus*) which was established to fit an individual to society. In Bourdieu's words: "As a result of the hysteresis effect necessarily implicated in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that in which they are objectively fitted" (Bourdieu 1977b: 78). The next section will show how these characteristics of *hysteresis* lie at the heart of Bourdieu's theorization of socio-cultural and economic change.

Bourdieu's use of *hysteresis*

In this section, Bourdieu's scientific meaning of *hysteresis* is discussed in light of his basic thinking tools – *habitus*, *field* and *capital*. The development of cultural dispositions, the durability of educational capital, the role of the State and of avant-garde groups are examined through a detailed consideration of Bourdieu's published work, including *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977b), *Pascalian Meditations* (2000a), *Le bal des célibataires*[1] (2002b) and *The Weight of the World* (1999a). Specific examples used by Bourdieu are discussed including the marriage strategies of Béarnais peasant farmers and the cultural and economic displacements of Algerians in France.

In *Outline of Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu undertakes a "reflection on scientific practice" (1977b: 83). In the chapter on "Structures, Habitus and Practice" he defines *hysteresis* when he writes:

> The hysteresis of habitus, which is inherent in the social conditions of the reproduction of the structures in habitus, is doubtless one of the foundations of the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities and, in particular, of the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and thought other than those of the past.
> (*Ibid*.: 83)

In this, he highlights the gap between the new opportunities that occur as a result of any field change, and field participants with attitudes and practices that are needed to recognize, grasp and occupy these new field positions. Since an individual's early experiences contribute disproportionately to the construction of the dispositions and practices that constitute *habitus*, it is likely that only those "players" who are from secure and probably relatively privileged family backgrounds will be equipped to recognize (or assert) the desirability of new field positions. As Bourdieu writes in *The Rules of Art*: "In a general manner, it is the people who are richest in economic capital, cultural capital and social capital who are the first to head for new positions" (Bourdieu 1996a: 262).These field participants will have acquired the dispositions and practices that allow them to recognize the symbolic capital to be gained from early occupation of the freshly created field positions. In contrast, it is usually field participants from dominated groups – the working classes or petite bourgeoisie, provincials and foreigners – who move "in the direction of the dominant positions at a time when the profits they provide tend to be diminishing, due to the very attraction they exercise" (*ibid*.). It is the "*hysteresis* effect", or inertia in the *habitus*, which provides opportunities for the already successful to succeed further, while the less successful continue to misrecognize the strengths and weaknesses of relative field positions.

In *The Logic of Practice,* Bourdieu again returns to the "time signature" of *habitus*, but here with an emphasis on the indeterminate nature of the change and the *hysteresis* effect:

> The presence of the past in this kind of false anticipation of the future performed by habitus is, paradoxically, most clearly seen when the sense of a probable future is belied and, when dispositions ill-adjusted to the objective chances because of a hysteresis effect, . . . are negatively sanctioned because the environment they encounter is too different from the one to which they are objectively adjusted.   (Bourdieu 1990c: 62)

One classic case of *hysteresis* as dispositional *habitus* based on a historical field and not corresponding to contemporary field requirements is found in Don Quixote of whom Marx wrote: "it is centuries since Don Quixote had to pay for the mistake of believing that knight errantry was equally compatible with all economic forms of society" (Marx 1933 [1867]: 57). In other words, Don Quixote's enduring belief that knight errantry (out-moded *habitus*) was a durable and

infallible dispositional form rather than a time dependent field strategy successful only within particular field structures. Bourdieu uses the same example in *Pascalian Meditations* (Bourdieu 2000a: 8) to throw light on the time lag which is an essential element to change and *hysteresis*. He writes of "dispositions out of line with the field and with the 'collective expectations' which are constitutive of normality" (*ibid*.: 160). Despite his best efforts, Don Quixote's enduring knightly dispositions did not realize the goals he anticipated, from past experiences, he could achieve. Instead, his audience, fully naturalized to the feel of the game, see his actions as mysterious, incomprehensible and comic.

There are further examples of *hysteresis* in Bourdieu's work.

Example 1: Peasant farmers in the Béarn

An early example of the *hysteresis* effect for Bourdieu can be found in *Le bal des célibataires* (Bourdieu 2002b: 12), where he describes the crises which were then taking place in Béarnais society as a consequence of the national changes in French society as a whole; in particular, the developments and relationships between a range of socio-economic fields. Since Bourdieu himself grew up in the Béarn in the 1930s, he was familiar with the customs and practices of the local families with respect to marriage, and with village and farm life. Local marriage practices had traditionally involved careful arrangements taking account of the number of offspring in a family and the size of the inheritance. What was important was not the perceived needs of the individual but the continuing preservation of family status within the community (see Grenfell 2004b: 119–21; Grenfell 2006 for further discussion). In 1914 with the introduction of the State Code on inheritance – in effect, producing a field change induced by a state regulation – new strategies were needed for the altered field structures. Individual *habitus* altered in response. The principal losers, the "celibate", were the younger sons of large families where too many marriages would have fragmented inheritance and therefore decreased the family's status in the community. A photograph of these middle-aged bachelors was reprinted on the cover of Bourdieu's 2002 book. It shows them standing on the edge of the dance floor at the village's Christmas ball, watching not dancing – victims, indirectly, of state legislation and disrupted local traditions.

Their difficulties were compounded by the field changes at national level. With increasing national prosperity, better communications

and greater access to education, many of the local population had found employment outside the area. Bourdieu's statistics show that a disproportionate number of women did not, for example, return from urban centres where they had gone to take up jobs. No wonder talk in the villages was of a "crisis" in society. When the structures of the local field were changed by this access to a wider geographical area, a fracture between durable dispositions (*habitus*) and new field structures opened up as established local customs, based on long-standing traditional dispositions, no longer worked.

Example 2: Algerian displacements

As argued above, *field* and *habitus* are necessarily open to change. Bourdieu writes "This is the case, in particular, when a field undergoes a major crisis and its regularities (even its rules) are profoundly changed" (Bourdieu 2000a: 160). The Algerian War of Independence was one such crisis. Bourdieu himself served in Algeria during the war in the 1950s. He saw at first hand the field disruption where the militant discontent of the "natural occupants" of the territory was met with brutal retaliation from the French army. The field changes were to the very structures of the nation and state. Modern Algeria had been founded by the French, forcibly amalgamating people and cultures of vastly different traditions and lifestyles: Berbers and Arabs, the Kabyle, the Shawia, the Mozabites (Bourdieu 1958: 18). The War of Independence was intended to free Algeria of its French oppressors, including Algerians who now formed part of the ruling elite. As a result, the practices and traditions of each group of local people, including those who had previously responded positively to French rule, were under threat. Because of war and the severe disruption to established social, economic and political structures that resulted, both field structures and the symbolic capital from which *habitus* is formed, were "up for grabs" so to speak. There was then a plethora of new field positions to occupy, but no guarantees; too many norms rather than a lack of them.

This situation can also be understood in terms of the *hysteresis* effect, where the eventual source of consecration (state authority) was as yet undetermined and *habitus* patterns were likewise indeterminate. Furthermore, traditional ways of doing things and long-standing cultural dispositions were challenged by the influx of new technologies – motor scooters, pneumatic drills or high-heeled shoes. Bourdieu's own photographs published in *Images d'Algérie* (Bourdieu 2003a: 16), show visually the contradictions that co-existed at

that time: scooters were used alongside donkeys; stiletto shoes with traditional dress; French and local breads, etc. As with other cases of "colonization" – India, Northern Ireland or Iraq among many others – the time lag between field change and the recognition of configurations of capital (*habitus*) that would support dominant field positions is always a long one, measured in decades rather than weeks. Bourdieu himself "revisited" Algeria in his writing throughout his career, and later in this section, the more recent difficulties of Algerian immigrants in Paris are considered in the light of this background.

Example 3: The academic field

An extended discussion of field change and its consequent *hysteresis* can also be found in *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1988a). Here Bourdieu's analysis is based on empirical data collected between 1967 and 1971. It seeks to establish the structure of the academic world in France at the time of the student revolts of 1968. As he writes,

> everything which made up the old order, the intangible liberties and connivances which are shared by people of the same milieu, the respectful familiarity which was *de rigeur* between different generations of the same family were abolished.   (*Ibid*.: 151)

A field change indeed! Student numbers had increased, but rules of succession for their teachers and would-be-teachers prevented any rapid increase in staffing if "quality" – the requisite configuration of symbolic capital – was to be preserved. Bourdieu describes a reactionary mobilization in defence of what previously had been taken-for-granted practices and dispositions and a "profound transformation in the logic of the professors' collective action, by substituting concerted action deliberately orientated towards the preservation of the status quo for a spontaneously orchestrated ensemble of actions inspired by the solidarity with an 'elite' " (*ibid*.). Empirical analysis showed a separation between professors and lecturers – aspirations crushed by the crisis of succession which resulted from the change in recruitment practices and the newly structured *habitus* for aspirant lecturers. Those lecturers, often graduates of the *Écoles Normales*, who were already in the process of accumulating symbolic capital through doctorate study, were slow to recognize new opportunities and, in some cases, missed the boat, while a new

breed recognized the positions that had been intended for "normaliens" and took them. The dramatic transformation of the academic field therefore resulted in a differently configured *habitus* becoming necessary if academic staff were to be successful in this new world. Those participants who suffered the greatest effects from this crisis were the established lecturers, whose *habitus* had ensured a secure career pathway within the previous field structures, but who now found their aspirations literally destroyed within a newly structured academic field. This was a world in which Bourdieu himself was actively involved, directly affected by the *hysteresis* of this crisis in succession. Indeed, he suggested that his move from philosophy to the social sciences was in part explained by "the peculiar force with which I felt the need to gain control over the disappointment felt by an 'oblate' faced with the annihilation of the truths and values to which he was destined and dedicated" (Bourdieu 1988a: xxvi). For Bourdieu, this time lag between change in field structure and stabilization of the *habitus* was fortuitous. He took advantage of what he calls "Lévi-Strauss's rehabilitation of ethnology" to move to a new field position – from philosophy to the relatively young field of the social sciences "without stooping too low" (*ibid.*).

Example 4: Social suffering

In *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu 1999a), Bourdieu offers a series of studies of poverty in the late twentieth century. This book is in effect a series of heart-rending examples of individuals' struggles with the *hysteresis* effect – the mismatch between *habitus* acquired in one setting (*field*) and that needed for success within a different field. What each case shows is that *hysteresis* is experienced at a personal level.

For example, an Algerian family in Paris talk about the difficulties that they and their children experience as immigrants, albeit long-established ones. The older generation is caught between the expectations and dispositions that they acquired in Algeria (*habitus*) and the new and disturbingly different surroundings (*field*) in their adopted country. The social patterns of their extended family and friends – frequent evening and weekend visits accompanied by talk, cooking and eating, and, their more rural expectations – vegetable gardens, chickens and even pigs – are difficult to maintain in their new environment in apartment blocks with many close neighbours. They do not possess the configurations of capital (*habitus*) needed to claim desirable field positions and, like Don Quixote before them,

their struggles to find a sustainable way of living are misrecognized within the local field, their neighbourhood. What ensues? Their older French neighbours, who are equally dislocated from the world that gave rise to their dispositions (but, in their case, due in part to the generational shifts inherent in ageing), complain about smells, about noise, about children and family pets. As Mme Meunier, their "disagreeable" French neighbour, straightforwardly puts it: "We don't get along. We don't have the same tastes, the same habits. We don't live the same. We don't see the same things in the same ways. So we can't agree. We don't agree" (Bourdieu 1999a: 33). In this, she offers a succinct description of the mutual miscomprehension that is at the heart of the *hysteresis* that both she and her neighbours experience.

In a similarly disrupted social space, Jonquil Street (*ibid*.: 14–22), a middle-aged working-class French couple, the Leblonds, experience a double *hysteresis* – if such a thing can be said to exist. Their dispositions (*habitus*) neither match the changing population in their neighbourhood – a cultural *hysteresis* – nor the declining economic conditions of employment in the local factory – an economic *hysteresis*. The house may be the same one they have occupied for a number of years, but the surrounding population is now, as Monsieur Leblond claims, "80 per cent foreigners". With the decline of the steel industry, the conditions of the economic field have changed. The factory work-force is now typically 20–25 years old, often from the immigrant community. Monsieur Leblond, an experienced worker in his forties, no longer has a *habitus* that corresponds to the *field* in which he functions. He expects unenthusiastically that he will be given early retirement in his fifties like many of his peers. The configuration of social, economic and cultural capital (*habitus*) needed to be successful and happy in this local field has changed – for the Leblond parents almost beyond recognition.

The younger generation are no better placed. They are advised by their parents to seek education and qualifications – durable institutionalized cultural capital – as a vehicle for improvement to a more desirable field position. Study and qualifications do provide a means of acquiring objectified cultural capital, but the qualifications they can obtain in the local field, for example in catering or nursery work, may fail to provide the level of jobs they expect because the professional world has already passed them by as qualifications increasingly buy less professional standing (see Grenfell 2004b: ch. 3). The time lag associated with *hysteresis* is clear in one family's

story. The *habitus* of the Leblond family has changed little, but the both the local field and the larger-scale economic field have changed dramatically. As a consequence, their capital configuration results in less within the new field structures. In other words, these people "are stuck" and are aware that this is so.

Hysteresis, a disruption between *habitus* and *field*, does provide opportunities for improving field positions, but for many of the people described in *The Weight of the World* – those in dominated positions of society – remain in economically and culturally deprived field positions, despite the range of strategies they deploy or their clearly evident struggles to improve their lot. Changes in the field only worsen their position and move them further into the poverty trap – whether economic, social or cultural.

To make matters worse, all is not necessarily well either for those who do accumulate additional symbolic capital and achieve more desirable field positions. What is then at risk is the taken-for-granted membership of one's own community and the "familiarity with the game" that is acquired in early experiences in the family. In a further case example in *The Weight of the World*, Wacquant interviews a young man called Rickey from the "Zone", a Chicago ghetto (Bourdieu 1999a: 158–67). Rickey has recently become a professional boxer, following in the footsteps of the only person he knows who has "made it"– a previous world boxing champion. This aspirant boxer gives a stark socio-analysis of why his successful peer has not returned to the "Zone" and what his own position would be were he to return to his neighbourhood as a successful world champion. This account gives a vivid description of *hysteresis* as the lived experience of a particular individual:

> It wouldn't be so much as (friendly) "Hey, we glad you done made it".
> It would be more like (aggressive) "Hey, what you give me now?"
> "Member I gave you tha' dollar." "Man, Remember" . . . it be more, it won' be tha
> "can I have your autograph or can I take a picture of you." It won't be like that.
> It be more like (insistent) "Give me twenty bucks!" "Man, how can I get in your click (clique)?" You know, all tha' type of stuff, you know. (*Ibid.*: 167)

Rickey's role model may have escaped the "Zone", but the cost in terms of social capital, the dislocation from his originating community, is clear in Rickey's description of the potential for negative sanctions from within the local field.

A third example from *The Weight of the World* is of a different type. It is called a "Double Life" (*ibid*.: 470ff). On the surface, this is a success story. Fanny's father was a textile worker, her mother a second-generation Spanish immigrant who made it to the upper levels of primary school. Fanny herself had achieved academic honours in high school, studied humanities at university, teaching first in a junior high school, then in the suburbs of Paris. Fanny has a strong social trajectory with an improved and improving field position based on educational capital – on institutionally consecrated cultural capital. However, in Fanny's case, a steady move away from her working class roots in terms of her education and her employment, challenges both her close ties to her family and her husband's expectations of work – he is a postal worker. As Bourdieu himself indicates: "Habitus can, in certain instances, be built, if one may say so, on contradictions, upon tensions, even upon instability" (Bourdieu 1990c: 116).

When Fanny experiences a sudden change of *habitus* – broken marriage, daughters with problems – she is no longer sure who or where she is. Fanny reports that: "I kept to the path that she (mother) wanted, that she would have wanted to follow herself. When we would talk about it, I think she saw it as being something like . . . how to say it . . . for her, the instructor, the teacher was at the top" (Bourdieu 1999a: 470). However, the experience of "success" was not as she and her family had expected. The long hours she needed to undertake teaching with commitment – the marking, the planning – all have taken their toll on her marriage so that she now feels that, "I really invested myself in my job and I neglected my girls at a time when they really needed me" (*ibid*.: 471). Fanny's successful field position-taking leads to a situation that does not match her originating *habitus*, based on her early experiences in the family. Her mother's belief (and her own) that education is the route to success, sits uncomfortably with her later problematic experiences of teaching and of motherhood. In other words, Fanny's present *habitus* does provide her with a dominant position in relation to her school environment, while her education – the very route to her success – has set up a mismatch between her own *habitus* and that of her less well-educated husband and family. Bourdieu himself indicates that changes in *habitus*, however sought after, can result in instability in

field position and a painful struggle to maintain a desirable place in the field. He writes that

> as a result of heightened consciousness associated with an effort of transformation (such as correction of accents, manners, etc.), there is an inertia (or hysteresis) of habitus which has a spontaneous tendency (based in biology) to perpetuate structures corresponding to their conditions of production.
>
> (Bourdieu 2000a: 160)

These examples of *hysteresis* are all taken from Bourdieu's own empirical investigations in the second half of the twentieth century. The majority are situated in France and French societal change. Do these ideas apply equally to other countries and other times? This question is discussed in the third section of this chapter.

Practical applications

In the following, the concept of *hysteresis,* as a mismatch and time lag, is used to discuss three practical applications, and through these examples, to consider the strengths and limitations of the concept as a tool for analysis of socio-cultural fields.

State intervention and hysteresis

For a particular time and place, the relative values of different types of symbolic capital are determined jointly by the history of that field as it is reflected in existing field practices, and by those who occupy the most dominant positions within that field or within the field of power – most often, this is the state itself and its representatives. Field structures are the direct result of the successful strategies deployed by field participants in their struggles to use their accumulated capital (*habitus*) to occupy desirable positions within the field. When State intervention changes, what is legitimate, the relative values of symbolic capitals, is altered and the interactions between field structures and *habitus* are dislocated. The result is *hysteresis*. For example, when, in preparing for government, the Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair, declared that "Education, education, education" was to be his priority, the educational field was irrevocably changed, leading subsequently to a series of major structural reforms. For example, state intervention for English primary schools, in the shape

of the implementation of National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy, resulted in a major mismatch between teachers' attitudes, practices and dispositions (*habitus*) and government regulation and recommendation (field structures) – giving rise to *hysteresis* among many of those involved. The legitimacy of particular attitudes, dispositions and social and organizational structures were all at stake: even rubrics changed, as English became *literacy* and mathematics became *numeracy*. A change in vocabulary was used to signal new pedagogical legitimacy. Words like "Phonics, guided reading, independent group work, bridging, plenary, mental, informal and formal calculations" were given symbolic value as indicators of mastery of the "new game".

New opportunities resulted as organizational structures in schools and local government were modified to reflect the new *doxa* – advisers became *strategy managers* and *consultants*, mathematics and English co-ordinators in schools were reborn as numeracy and literacy *subject leaders*. Teachers and head teachers were retrained as *curriculum managers* – shown what was now valued and what was legitimate. With the introduction of the Primary Strategy and the resulting redefinition of good teaching (DfES 1999), the rules of the game were explicitly changed further. What many primary teachers experienced was confusion as they sought to modify their practice and dispositions to conform to the new orthodoxy. A few early "adopters" sought desirable positions within the new field structures, and were rewarded with promotion to new local and national appointments (a reproduction strategy). Others who tried to ignore, or actively resisted, the change were less successful in maintaining their previous field positions.

There was, consequently, a mismatch between teachers' dispositions and practices (*habitus*) and the new field structures. Individuals responded differentially to the new legitimacy, so that there was significant time lag before a new coherent pedagogical *habitus* was established. A decade after these field changes took place, the *hysteresis* effect continues for some. Teachers who have been out of the field – so-called "returners to teaching" – continue to be offered funded training to develop different skills and attitudes – an altered *habitus*. In many cases, the teachers' early visits to schools are difficult, since their established pedagogical understanding no longer resonates with colleagues' classroom practices or with school expectations and organization. For some of these teachers, the gap is too great, too distressing and teaching itself is abandoned rather than

modify long-held attitudes and dispositions. Here, there is a clear example of the experiences that Bourdieu describes:

> as a result of the hysteresis effect necessarily implicated in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that in which they are objectively fitted.   (Bourdieu 1977a: 78)

Only some field participants benefit from changes in the field. Structures change, but dispositions do not – at best they take longer.

Hysteresis and technological innovation – photography

Scientific and technological changes also disrupt field structures. Any new invention brings into being new possibilities in processes and product and hence, a revaluing of legitimated positions within the field. *Hysteresis* necessarily follows while field participants recognize the potential of new tools, learn new skills and reposition themselves within the field. Where a field is particularly dependent on technology, like photography where the camera is central, field structures are particularly mutable since change has been frequent – still photography, colour photography, moving images, hand-held cameras, the Polaroid process, video and digitization. Hence, the field of photography is rife with examples of *hysteresis* including those associated with the invention of photography itself.

Several different photographic processes were invented almost simultaneously in the 1830s in different parts of the world – Daguerre in France, Fox Talbot in England or Hercules Florence in Brazil. Certainly, cumbersome, messy, almost alchemical equipment was needed to produce these first scientifically realistic images, but this new technology disrupted the functioning of the scientific field, the field of fine art production together with the field of cultural consumption (see Grenfell & Hardy 2007: 151–7 for a more detailed discussion). Initially, only those in privileged positions in society could afford the time and money required to master the new process as producer or consumer. However, those who did so were sufficiently well placed in the broader social space to bring into being a new and distinct cultural field. It was not accidental that royalty, in particular Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the Royal Society, the Royal Institution, members of the French government and the French Academy of Fine

Arts, were among the early participants in the photographic field. These individuals were all sufficiently well placed within the field of power to recognize and occupy freshly created field positions and to consecrate these positions. Of course, others followed. Individuals' *habitus* changed as a consequence of their differential responses to these changes in field structures, but there is always a time lag – *hysteresis*. It was not until the invention of the Kodak Brownie camera in 1900 that photography became a popular activity. In the case of the photographic field, over half a century elapsed between the participation of the privileged few and the mass consumption and social institution of photographic practices (see Bourdieu *et al.* 1990a).

In the photographic field, a similar *hysteresis* has again been the result of technological inventions: in this case, the development of the now ubiquitous digital camera and mobile phone. As in the past, new technologies have reconfigured the field of photographic production, this time by digitization, mutability of image and the instant transmission of images. Dramatic changes in the field of consumption have followed, not simply in the ease and speed of communicating images or the new skills needed to handle digital images but also in a new product – reproduction rights. As in other field dislocations, those in the most dominant field positions are the first to occupy new field positions; for example, Bill Gates, who already occupies a consecrated and dominant position in the field of information technology and has been reported as purchasing 17 million images from press archives (Lévi Strauss 2003: 189) in order to digitize them. Field manoeuvres, like Gates' large-scale acquisition of image copyrights, both anticipate and shape irrevocable change in the consumption of photographic images – that is, in the structures of the photographic field. When a *field* is changed significantly, as in this case, *habitus* also changes because each individual responds in their own way to the unfamiliar situation. As Bourdieu writes "Habitus is not necessarily adapted to its situation or necessarily coherent. It has degrees of integration – which correspond in particular to degrees of 'crystallization' of the status occupied" (Bourdieu 2000a: 160). But, given time, *habitus* is transformed so that it matches new field structures. In other words, where Bill Gates leads we will inevitably follow.

Hysteresis *and international social change*

Change in one field can be the catalyst of change in a quite separate field. Where this happens, *hysteresis* will occur in both fields. Thus,

when large-scale social change occurs, it can often be the result of field changes in a different country or at an international level. The recent transformation of the international economic field, as the European Union has gradually expanded to include more countries, offers one example of *hysteresis* across a number of fields: international, national, economic, cultural and social. Here, as an increasing number of people have become eligible to live and work in other partner countries, changes in the international economic field have served to transform both national field structures and the individual *habitus* of both immigrants and their new neighbours. Although only the most informed and economically secure field participants are able to respond rapidly to such field changes, others slowly recognize the new opportunities open to them and may move to a new country – a new national field structure. If a new immigrant is to achieve a desirable field position in the new environment, transformation is necessary to fit an individual's *habitus* to the field structures of the country within which that person now lives and works. Where this process is a self-aware or consciously regulated one, Bourdieu argues that an altered *habitus* will result that matches the new field structures:

> Not only can habitus be practically transformed (always within definite boundaries) by the effect of social trajectory leading to conditions of living different from the initial ones, it can also be *controlled* through awakening consciousness and socio-analysis.   (Bourdieu 1994d: 116)

In the United Kingdom, for example, as the number of European immigrants increases and patterns of distribution between and within countries begin to stabilize, both British and European fields are themselves open to structural transformation in response to the altered *habitus* of its population. For instance, the increased number of ESL (English as a Second Language) speakers in the newly diversified population changes the language demands within the cultural and social fields in the UK, which in turn leads to changes in the educational field as the range of languages spoken increases. The *hysteresis* effect is experienced on a large scale geographically, socially and culturally, during the time it takes for national social and economic fields and individual dispositions to change differentially to achieve a match between *field* and *habitus* and to establish a new *doxa*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out both a definition of what Bourdieu intends by the term *hysteresis* and have drawn attention to the way it features – both explicitly and implicitly – in his work and elsewhere. The essential features of *hysteresis* have been shown: the mismatch between *habitus* and *field*, the time dimension associated with it – how *habitus* is out of synch with *field*. I have offered a range of examples that show some of the ways in which the time lag which is a characteristic of *hysteresis* can occur in practical contexts, and how differential responses of organizations and individuals lead to the dislocation and disruption of *habitus* which occurs with any field change. When *hysteresis* occurs, new opportunities are created by altered field structures. However, there is a high level of risk associated with *hysteresis*, since for a time at least, field struggles take place in the context of an unknown future. The outcomes of field change can therefore be loss of position, power and wealth because of the revaluation of symbolic capitals and sources of legitimacy. Often, it is those already well endowed with economic and symbolic capital who are able to achieve the desirable dominant positions within the new field structures. To summarize, *hysteresis*, as a thinking tool, provides explicit links between the objective nature of systemic change (*field* transformation) and the subjective character of an individual response to that change (altered *habitus*). In this way, it allows us to appreciate the nature and consequences of field changes as experienced personally and at a social environmental level.

Note

1. *Le bal des célibataires* (2002b) is a reprint of three separate articles by Bourdieu on the matrimonial practices of the Béarn peasant (see 1962b; 1972a; 1989c).

PART IV

Field conditions

Introduction to Part IV

Throughout this book, the integrated nature of Bourdieu's key concepts has been stressed. They are not single features of social systems but particular foci of the same thing; two sides of the same coin. Nevertheless, it is possible to alight on each individual concept for a particular view of social phenomena; especially with respect to individual aspects of them. Part III addressed four concepts under the title of "Field mechanisms", and the intention there was to examine terms which highlighted the structure of fields and how they operate according to Bourdieu's theory of practice. The focus there was towards objective mechanisms: the structures, medium of operation and features that arose from their procedures. Part IV of this book now turns towards the more subjective dimensions of fields. Accepting that the objective and subjective are always mutually implicated and expressed, it is nevertheless possible to move our orientation from one side to the other. The four concepts in the present Part all deal with the more individual or subjective nature of field conditions; in other words, how fields are present in individuals and their repercussions.

Chapter 9 deals with *interest*. Here, we consider the way field conditions make for the emergence of particular interests, whether these be class based or otherwise. The chapter draws out the implications of "interested" actions for both the researched and the researcher, and asks the question, "Can there be such a thing as a *disinterested* act"? Interests often express the most personal and deeply private, that raise issues of motivation and aim. At this point, we consider what is perhaps the most psychological of Bourdieu's concepts –

conatus. As elsewhere, this concept is not original to Bourdieu and our chapter shows a derivation going back to classical philosophy. Nevertheless, Bourdieu's was a particular take on *conatus* and this is highlighted in Chapter 10 with respects to aspects of individual psychology and sociological theory. *Interest* and *conatus* are conditions of fields. So is s*uffering*, and Chapter 11 highlights the centrality of this concept, together with *symbolic violence*, to Bourdieu's view of the social world. Chapter 11 examines the various manifestations of social suffering, their almost indigenous nature in fields, and the consequences they have. Bourdieu's is essentially a "reflexive approach". It is therefore apt that the final chapter deals with *reflexivity*. Chapter 12 sets reflexivity within a larger field of literature on the subject and shows how Bourdieu's version is distinct. Reflexivity is a particular pertinent issue for the would-be researcher, and Chapter 12 takes up issues raised in Chapter 9 and shows why, and, perhaps more importantly how, it needs to be operationalized in practice.

Interest

Michael Grenfell

Introduction

Bourdieu's use of the term *interest* is a good example of the way a particular concept arose and developed over the course of his professional career. In this chapter, we see the way it almost haunts his early work. Subsequently, it emerges as a key feature in his empirical analyses. Later, it is expressed as a fully-fledged concept and joins his other "thinking tools" as a major instrument of analysis. Later still, the concept evolves into different forms; Bourdieu renamed it as *illusio* or *libido*. Finally, the implications and ramifications of *interest* are considered theoretically, which leads to a philosophical exploration of its significance. The concept itself is present in the relationships Bourdieu investigates in his early studies. In this way, we see how practice services theory for Bourdieu: it is named and then its theoretical significance elaborated. This chapter shows this process at work.

An interest in practice

In earlier parts of this book, we have referred to the background to Bourdieu's intellectual worldview as well as to the climate that surrounded him as he set out on his academic career, and juxtaposed this with the strong personal experiences he had at this time in Algeria and the Béarn. Attention was drawn to predominant intellectual trends in France; most noticeably, existentialism and structuralism.

Earlier, we also considered the way by which issues of subjectivity and objectivity cut across various intellectual traditions, and how Bourdieu's theory of practice was developed out of an impulse on his part (both personally and professionally) to transcend this dichotomous view of knowledge. In the Béarn and in Algeria, social practice, for example in patterns of matrimony, was neither governed by free individual choice nor strict rules. We noted how Bourdieu argued that *strategy* was a better concept to indicate the ways individuals acted in orientating their social practice. But, such practice was based not only on the link between their individual *habitus* and the field conditions that surrounded them, but on unconscious calculation of profit (ultimately, the improvement of their own position in the field). In this, they had a personal *interest* in the outcome.

This realization of the place *interest* played in the relationship between *field* and *habitus* was to occupy Bourdieu for most of the rest of his career. Repeatedly, in his work in the Béarn, he returned to the point that individual social practice is never "determined" according to specific rules but is endlessly and variously negotiated according to personal circumstances. What exists are "regularities" and trends, not rules. Similarly, the early work carried out in Algeria was not simply a major part of his early substantive studies, but was revisited on subsequent occasions as he developed his theory of practice (for example, 1977b; 1990c). Behind all of this work is the notion that individuals have an *interest* which is defined by their circumstances and which allows them to act in a particular way within the context in which they find themselves in order to define and improve their position. In a way, *interest* is *habitus* incarnate, which itself is created by the *field* environments through which individuals pass. But, what is this *interest* and how does it operate?

Bourdieu describes *interest* thus:

> The notion of interest – I always speak of *specific interest* – was conceived as an instrument of rupture intended to bring the materialist mode of questioning to bear on realms from which it was absent and into the sphere of cultural production in particular . . . On this score, I feel very close to Max Weber who utilized the economic model to extend material critique into the realm of religion and to uncover the specific interests of the great protagonists of the religious game.   (1994d: 106f)

Interest is therefore a concept used to draw attention to social practices as a kind of game, and an economic game at that. In other

words, individuals act to maximize profit. Yet, such acts are more than simply calculated choices or conscious decisions, in the same way we might decide how to procure the best interest on our savings. In fact, in employing an economic metaphor, Bourdieu is seeking both to critique and break with economism as such:

> When one breaks away from economism in order to describe the universe of possible economies, one escapes from the spurious choice between purely material, narrowly economic interest, and disinterest; and one is able to satisfy the principle of sufficient reason according to which there is no action with *raison d'être*, i.e. without interest, or, to put it another way, without investment in a game and a stake, *illusio*, involvement.
>
> (1990c: 290)

So, *interest*, while being a medium of economic action, cannot be reduced to intentionality and conscious end-gaining according to specific material objectives – the usual approach in economics. Of course, rational calculation does occur but, Bourdieu argues, the vast expanse of social practice happens away from the direct apprehension of goals in a utilitarian and intentionalist way. How can this be so?

The route of this argument again returns us to *habitus*, *field* and *capital*; in other words, his three primary thinking tools – the ontological complicity between the former two and their medium of operation through the latter. As suggested in the Introduction to Part II, behind the concepts of *habitus* and *field* there is the notion of structural relations; but structure in both a subjective and an objective sense, and as both stable and dynamic – *structured* and *structuring*. The basis to such structure is the connection between an individual and both the material and social world. The intensional links of which we wrote need to be considered in terms of the relationship between human beings and the phenomena – both material and ideational – with which they come in contact. Everything we know about the world – the *noema* (to use a Husserlian term) – is both established and developed as a consequence of individual acts of perception – the *noesis*. However, because this primary experience does not take place in a value-neutral environment, in that logics of practice already exist, such acts of perception are formed according to certain environmental principles and, in many ways, grow to represent them. These acts are product and process of what "already-has-been" – the values that serve the status quo and/or emerging

social forms. Social practice arising from such structural (structured and structuring) experience therefore already has as its defining principle the expression of a certain way of viewing the world according to a particular value system with its specific interest.

Interest therefore goes to the heart of Bourdieu's philosophy in that we need to see primary phenomenological experience as occurring in a medium that is saturated with values – *interest* is there at human conception and subsequent socialization.

A similar approach can be taken to Bourdieu's critique of Kantian philosophy. For Kant, experience and knowledge can only be grasped through *a priori* forms: for example, of time and space. Understanding itself depends on the power to form concepts: of substance, quality, quantity, relation, place, time, position, possession, action and passivity. However, for Bourdieu, such concepts do not exist as primary and value-free universals, but rather always as an expression of certain interests – those of the fields through which individuals have passed and now find themselves (to a greater or lesser extent). As such, an individual's attitude to the past, present and future is shaped by this *interest*.

Indeed, for Bourdieu, time itself is *made*: human time is not the same as biological or astronomical time. He uses Husserl's distinction between *project* and *protension*: "project" is a conscious aiming at the future; "protension" is a, "pre-reflexive aiming at a forthcoming which offers itself as a quasi-present in the visible . . . as what is directly perceived" (2000a: 207). Bourdieu's point is that often, in retrospect, protension is mistaken for project; in other words, as an *a posteriori* interpretation of an event as calculated and conscious, when what actually occurred was simply an act immediately adjusted to a sense of the *forth-coming* of the game. In this sense, interest is a word used to grasp the logic of the *field*, which allows for instinctive and semi-conscious acts of behaviour in terms of a maximization of profit in accordance with current symbolic forms. In a way similar to economic interest, Bourdieu often uses the analogy of a "game" to describe a field: a social space where everyone has an interest in winning – that is, securing the most advantageous positions within it. Here, there are explicit "rules" of the game – the *nomos* – or what is and is not permissible within it. Nevertheless, the vast majority of social activity occurs implicitly, bounded by the rules but being played out according to an altogether different logic; for example, that of game players who only semi-consciously, if at all, know why they did this or that when faced with a particular choice of action or decision.

As noted, much of Bourdieu's early work in Algeria and the Béarn was based around this attempt to break from notions of rules and consciousness in the social sciences, or objectivity and subjectivity, or determinism and open liberty. *Habitus* and *field* offered him a mechanism whereby the interests of individuals and groups of individuals were defined according to the relationship between cognitive motivating structures, the socially structured (and structuring) context, and the immanent objective social functions of the field (see 1977b: 76). In Algeria, he saw interests as expressions of kinship. This is why marriage patterns could not simply follow rules and customs. It was not enough to unite individuals, especially in a socially turbulent world. Rather, individuals also needed "shared interests", which themselves could be expressions of the social collectivity, its property and strength, or vulnerability, with respect to the future. Conflicts of interest reflect conflicts of groups or individuals and their respective positions in the field, as well as their view of the future. Strategies are then developed to regularize these interests, so that the individual is adjusted to the collective interest – this occurs or the individual appears unreasonable.

Bourdieu saw significant differences between pre-capitalist and capitalist societies. However, he also saw that they resembled each other in the generating logic of their social practice. Inversely, he criticized any science of economics that applies contemporary modern methods to "archaic economies"; for example, by using a "restricted definition of economic interest", which understands it only in terms of the maximization of money wealth, rather than to recognize the essentially economic nature of all social practice: "practice never ceases to conform to economic calculation even when its gives every appearance of disinterestedness by departing from the logic of interested calculation (in the narrow sense) and for playing for stakes that are non-material and not easily quantified" (1977b: 177). In pre-capitalist societies – for example, Algeria and the Béarn – the *good-faith economy* operates to conceal the economic logic of social exchange. Gift, honour and virtue are placed above profit. The man of good faith takes pains to distribute the best fresh food to friends and neighbours rather than selling them to other peasants. In this way, social networking is built up – *social capital* – with the explicit expectation of reciprocality – and a symbolic currency established: "Thus the interest at stake in the conduct of honour is one for which economism has no name, and which has to be called symbolic, although it is such as to inspire actions which are very directly material" (1977b: 181).

The more impersonal the exchange becomes, the more money is likely to be the currency of exchange; in other words, when the more traditional ties are broken and capitalist modes of production take over. This trend could be seen across Europe during the process of industrialization in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Where this occurred, money – *economic capital* – replaced the exchange value of local networks and their systems of honour and virtue – *symbolic capital*. The irony for Bourdieu is, of course, that economic capital has itself now been displaced in the contemporary world where *cultural capital* (and increasingly *social capital*) takes precedence as the medium for expression field interests. The medium is symbolic, the substantive rationality is economic. As Bourdieu states, "most actions are objectively economic without being subjectively economic" (1994d: 90). Our interests ultimately have economic consequences, but are not always expressed in overt economic terms. In fact, the symbolic produces an effect to the extent to which it disguises the material. Indeed, this *misrecognition* is necessary in order to obscure the implicit logic of systems, with all their symbolic violence (see Chapter 11), acknowledgement of which would threaten their very survival. For Bourdieu, this leads to a "general science of the economy of practice". In the next sections, we consider the implications of this approach to specific areas of society.

Interests in education, art and economics

At one point, Bourdieu states that there are as many interests as there are field*s*, and presumably subfields, although these interests must also be seen, and partly define themselves, in relation to each other. Once he had established what interests were and how they operated, he was able to express the concept in a range of social contexts.

Education

For example, interests operate in all levels of the education system. Bourdieu constructs his analysis of education around concepts such as *pedagogic action*, *pedagogic authority*, *pedagogic work* and *school authority*. From his empirical analyses, he concludes that pedagogic action is not, as is normally claimed, aimed at equal opportunities within the education system; rather, it is constituted according to principles – upon which the forms and content of teaching and learning are created – that are grounded in a particular

class culture – that of the dominant classes. Such cultural prerequisites are arbitrary; they only need to operate as a medium through which the culture of the dominant acts in order to exclude the dominated. That this occurs in an implicit way is necessary to prevent the opposition of those excluded by the education system for not being "one of us". In other words, education, by imposing meanings, ways of thinking, and particular forms of expression, acts as a carrier for the culture of the dominant classes; it therefore operates to perpetuate specific power relations as they unfold and are expressed in the dynamic of social evolution. *Pedagogic action* – and the cultural arbitrary that underpins it – therefore becomes a form of *symbolic violence*, corresponding to the "objective interests (material, symbolic and . . . pedagogic) of the dominant groups or classes" (1977a: 7). Such interests can express themselves everywhere in education; indeed, they become even more pronounced as a student advances. For example, by the time French students are sufficiently tutored to enter one of the prestigious *Grandes Écoles* in French higher education, their success is conditional on them already sharing the *illusio* – interests – of the dominant classes or groups; and this will be according to the specialist focus of the particular school: *École Polytechnique* – engineering and military; *École Normale Supérieure* – teaching; *École des Mines* – industrial engineering; *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* – commerce and business; and, increasingly after the Second World War when it was set up, *École Nationale d'Administration* – public service management (cf. 1996b: 170). Such interests are also played out in terms of attitudes, dress, and cultural consumption as set out in Bourdieu's study of taste: *Distinction* (1984). It follows that any policy drawn up in order to open up accessibility to educational success – through, for example, the formation of a *rational pedagogy* (see Grenfell 2007: 77f) or the democratization of education – is bound to fail since it would entail a form of pedagogic work that runs counter to the "interests of the dominant classes who delegate its pedagogic authority to it" (1977a: 54). Any notion of a "general interest" is purely idealist since, "none of the functions of the educational system can be defined independently of a given state of the structure of class relations" (1977a: 184). For Bourdieu, therefore, interests in the educational field are constituted from objective class and group relations, that are expressed in the symbolic systems of the field; the logic of practice of which, is distinction through the medium of capital accumulation – especially *cultural capital*.

Art and literature

A similar process operates in the art or literary field. Above, I referred to Bourdieu's critique of Kantian philosophy and the notion of the *a priori* forms needed for experience and understanding. The same issues arise with our understanding of art and aesthetics. For Kant, experience can only be considered aesthetic when it exists in the realm of the "disinterested", that is free from any desires, needs and interests in the actual existence of the objects apprehended, all of which would distort "pure" appreciation (see Grenfell & Hardy 2007: 38ff). However, for Bourdieu, such disinterestedness can never exist since, as noted above, the most basic act of phenomenological engagement occurs in a context where interests are the defining *raison d'être*. Such desires, needs and interests might therefore be tacit, implicit, or unconscious, but they are no less (in fact more) powerful for that. Cultural consumption never exists in some pure realm of aesthetic appreciation, but is always an expression of a certain way of being in the world – of taste – and the ontological status this behaviour claims. In this way, the "disinterested" aesthetics (disguising class interests) of the "bourgeoisie" are juxtaposed with interests in the agreeable, the sensual – to popular taste. There is consequently an interest in being of a certain culture since it expresses a particular class position.

The same applies to artistic production – groups of writers, artists, musicians, etc. For Bourdieu, such "artists" construct their work in relation to the possibilities available within the field and the position they occupy within it. They have interests in preserving or transforming the field through their work according to their perceived position "in the game". This is why there are two fundamental forms of art; commercial art aimed at economic profit, and "pure" art defined in terms of "art-for-arts-sake". For the would-be artist, to claim commercial profit as the point of one's work is to sabotage any claim towards being in touch with the "pure visionary aesthetic" of talent and originality. These two forms of art therefore express themselves according to an explicit dichotomy; that between *autonomy* and *heteronomy*. Autonomy implies control over one's art and the exaltation of the values of disinterestedness. Heteronomy implies the opposite. This is why, Bourdieu argues, newcomers into the artistic field have most *interest* in a denial of interest (1993b: 82), since only this claim can legitimize their own sense of the value of their art *in itself*. In this way, disavowal of interest is itself a symbolic assertion of interest. Interest – the *illusio* – has all the appearances of being

natural, while it is indeed a product of the field, as a collective act, apprehended by individuals according to their own socially constituted *habitus*. There is an ontological thin line between objectivism and subjectivism; from seeing art, either as a spontaneous act of individual expression – the "contemplative attitude" – or a direct bi-product of socio-economic – material – conditions.

For Bourdieu, reality (common sense, for example) is a form of *illusion* because it does not explicitly acknowledge the interests – themselves *illusio* – that underlie it. In the literary field, fiction written to represent that reality therefore often offers a kind of double illusion: first, that it is *taken* as reality, and secondly that it operates as if to *express* that reality. In the work of a novelist such as Flaubert, Bourdieu finds that his romantic characters are those who take fiction seriously because they cannot take reality seriously, as it presents itself. The novelistic illusion conjured up by Flaubert is that the line between reality and fiction is blurred, so that reality may itself appear an illusion. The smooth running of social mechanisms depends on maintenance of the *illusio*, the interest, in economic and psychological senses. Where this breaks down, for example, commonly among adolescents not yet fully invested with the *illusio*, there is a reluctance to "play the game". This phenomenon itself is a reminder to all of us:

> To objectify romantic, fictional illusion, and above all, the relationship with the so-called real world on which it hinges, is to be reminded that the reality against which we measure all our imaginings is merely the recognised referent for an (almost) universally recognised illusion. (1993b: 160)

Bourdieu argues that writers such as Flaubert are powerfully convincing because they use the structures of the social world: they engage the very same structures that are present in the mental structures of the readers, who then "believe" in the fiction in the same way as they "believe" in their experience of the world. Yet, to act under this *illusio* – with interests undeclared – is to act under a form of sociological *mauvaise foi* or bad faith.

So far, we have seen that the concept *interest* allows Bourdieu to challenge the common-sense view of "free choice" and "free interpretation", even in our cultural practices. He takes the same approach to economic decision-making and all those who believe that individuals make "rational" actions.

Economics

Bourdieu notes the association he shares with the "new Economic Sociology". He acknowledges that he was developing the concept of *cultural capital* at the around the same time as the American economic sociologist Gary Becker was presenting the notion of human capital, but describes the latter term as "vague and flabby", and as "a notion heavily laden with sociologically unacceptable assumptions" (2005: 2). Bourdieu's and Becker's view of capital differ considerably. Both draw on economic metaphors in their theoretical constructions of social practice. As noted above, however, the nub of the argument for Bourdieu is an opposition to what he considers to be crude "economism". The argument goes as follows.

Since Adam Smith, men have been seen to be motivated by *self-interest* and to be acting accordingly for financial gain. Becker extended this economic approach, which defined action in terms of "rational choices" towards the maximization of financial profit, to all areas of life. However, for Bourdieu, Becker did so literally, while his use of the economic analogy was quite different. For example, both write about the "cost" of having children. Whilst Becker sees individuals acting according to "norms" of calculated costs and profit, Bourdieu understands actions in terms of *interests* (cultural and social benefits and loss, as well as economic) – again, the *illusio* – and *strategies*: "economists deserve credit for explicitly raising the question of the relationship between the profits ensured by educational investment and those ensured by economic investment" (1996b: 275). However, such a relationship is not simply expressed in terms of explicit rational choices over the economic but involves moves with respect to mobilizing the entire holdings (present and anticipated) and configuration of *social*, *cultural* and *economic capital*, as well as whole-scale orientation to the past, present and future. Thus, Becker is further criticized for not recognizing that social reproduction is involved – as well as individual monetary outlay and yield – in educational investment. "Ability" and "academic aptitude" depend on the home culture and the extent to which it matches that of schools such that the interests of schools and pupils are drawn together by a process of *elective affinities*. It is not, as Becker argues, simply a calculation of the material cost of schooling options.

In the case of having children (or deciding how many to have), Bourdieu (1966) uses his discoveries in Algeria to argue that decisions are made in terms of a whole attitude to the future. This attitude will vary according to individual groups and their collective sense of

security within the social system, and the degree to which the future threatens and/or offers opportunities. In a sense, this argument revisits the phenomenological position outlined above; in other words, individual economic practice is as much about *protension* as it is *project*. What occurs in practice is determined by the strength of interest when an individual is faced with objective social conditions: the past is projected into the future and is present in the present. It follows visible trends, and exists not simply for individuals but for whole classes. For example, in the 1960s, Bourdieu argued that the "Malthusian" tendences of the French middle classes were the result both of an interest in distinguishing themselves from the overly productive working classes and their own sense of cost in raising children according to the education to which they aspired (Bourdieu 1966).

Bourdieu's anti-economism, which placed interest over calculation as the prime motive of action, also extended to his critique of Rational Action Theory (RAT) or Rational Choice Theory (RCT). Advocates of this approach take individuals to act according to clear alternatives with visible, calculated outcomes. For Bourdieu, RAT and RCT are at best idealistic. They both overlook the fact that any individual *habitus* acts "rationally", or at least reasonably, because this is a precondition of possessing economic and cultural capital appropriate for a particular social time and place. Calculations of chance – what is probable, possible, and potential – are all made with respect to specific social and economic conditions and the consequential perceived opportunities: "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 interest" (1992a: 125). Bourdieu goes on to argue that, nevertheless, because it is an approach that "conceives of action as determined by conscious aiming at explicitly posed goals", it is a "well founded illusion" – a phrase coined from Durkheim and used elsewhere by Bourdieu (see 1996a: 335) to describe the granting of reality to fiction, and perceiving the *illusio* in its truthfulness, in the same way as in the operation of religion. The sense of the game implied in an anticipated adjustment to the future through *habitus*, when faced with the necessities and probabilities of the field, can be construed to be "aiming at" the future. Moreover, collective action can appear to represent a convergence attributable to common interest rather than a conscious group intention or plan. In this way, Bourdieu argues that teleological phenomena pose major problems for RAT, set as it is in explaining action in terms of direct efficacy of cause or the "choices of a pure mind commanding a perfect will" (Bourdieu 1992a: 125).

For Bourdieu, the essential problem is that RAT can be "empirically sound" while being "anthropologically false". In other words, those working with RAT are noting something that is true but are giving a wrong interpretation of it. The issue is epistemological and methodological. Such theorists (along with Becker) commit the fallacy of projecting the *sujet savant* (knowing subject) into the *subject agissant* (acting subject) – as noted earlier in this book, "to take the things of logic for the logic of things" (1990c: 49). He concludes:

> There is an economy of practices, a reason immanent in practices, whose "origin" lies neither in "decisions" of reason understood as rational calculation nor in the determinations of mechanisms external to and superior to the agents . . . this economy can be defined in relation to all kinds of functions . . . only one of which is monetary . . . In other words, if one fails to recognize any form of action other than rational action or mechanical reaction, it is impossible to understand the logic of all the actions that are reasonable without being the product of reasoned design . . . adjusted to the future without being the product of a project or a plan . . . And, if one fails to see that the economy described by economic theory is a particular case of a whole universe of economies, that is, fields of struggle differing both in the stakes and the scarcities that are generated within them and in the forms of capital deployed in them, it is impossible to account for the specific forms, contents and leverage points thus imposed on the pursuit of maximum specific profits and on the very general optimizing strategies (of which economic strategies in the narrow sense are one form among others). (*Ibid*.: 51)

In other words, "economic" practice needs to be understood in terms of the symbolic and strategic as well as the monetary and the conscious calculation of profit. Only if this broader understanding is adopted can researchers account for the place of the economic in a more comprehensive theory of social practice:

> Orthodox economics overlook the fact that practices may have principles other than mechanical causes or the conscious intention to maximise one's utility and yet obey an immanent economic logic. Practises 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.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 119)

Bourdieu sees commonalities between the case of Algeria in the1950s
and modern European countries today, despite their obvious diver-
gences. These commonalities lie not in the issues of monetary ex-
change rates, which are always different, but the existence of systems
of exchanges of symbolic capital, and the logic of practice that they
represent.

In conclusion – universal interest

Bourdieu's basic premise is that there is no such thing as a disinter-
ested act. Interest begins in childhood as a form of "investment in
the domestic space" (2000a: 166), in which the sexual and the social
are intertwined. The need for "recognition" is at the heart of this
process and socio-psychological transformation occurs through a
whole series of imperceptible transactions at the borders between the
conscious and the tacit: "Projection, identification, compromise,
sublimation" (*ibid*.). In the course of this development, impulses,
drives and desires are stimulated, but they are not individualistic or
idiosyncratic since they follow patterns conditioned by the social
environment. By the time individuals enter social fields – for example,
school – they are equipped with a whole set of dispositions, express-
ive of a particular social origin and trajectory. Because of affinities
and dis-affinities, they gravitate towards those social locales that
most share the values and interests of their own social provenance,
views and practices. In this way, interests and values are reaffirmed.
It is not so much that individuals occupy specific social fields but they
are occupied by them: the "good" school "chooses" the pupil as
much as the pupil chooses the school (cf. 2000a: 165).

Social agents are *pre-occupied* by dispositions that orientate
thoughts, actions and choices (Bourdieu quotes Heidegger and the
notion of *fürsorge* to designate the way that a certain preoccupation
can almost *haunt* individuals). This view of human practice is
intended to break with two opposing positions: that of free choice –
the utilitarian perspective; and that of rational calculation – the econ-
omistic perspective. For Bourdieu, people can have rational ends
without being rational, can be "economistic" without explicit calcu-
lation of profit. Interest is to see ends without posing them; a future

that is quasi-present because it acts there; a game that is so good that it forgets that it is a game. Stated aims and objectives are therefore never as they appear, but the epiphenomena of interest. Such interest is also *doxic* in that it corresponds (or not) to a particular orthodoxy and is expressed through *habitus* because of the immanent structure that constitutes it in its ontological relationship with field surroundings. Life trajectory is therefore never only a conscious plan but the result of response to what life throws up: "Habitus is a type of machine to pose values without having the need to pose the question of the value of what is posed as value" (1988b: 37). Bourdieu uses this quote to contrast the Sartrean view of man as a social agent who is subject to the values he cultivates through his actions – as authentic or *mauvaise-foi*. For Bourdieu, this cannot be the case: the *illusio* is knowledge born from within the field – "it is in my skin. I am caught: I did not choose that game I play, at the same time, I am not the subject of my actions". It follows that I can be violent "without knowing". In other words, I do not have to act to dominate or subjugate another. It is sufficient for me to express the interests of my social provenance – constituted as they are by class structures – in order for symbolic violence to occur, because they will privilege one view of the world over another, and I have no choice but to represent my own.

This view of social action might seem rather pessimistic, if not fatalistic. As noted above, even the most disinterested acts – for example, those of artists struggling to establish their practice as art-for-art's sake – are revealed as serving particular interests, of distinction, representation, challenge and implicit domination. Nevertheless, Bourdieu does explore the notion of *disinterestedness*, both apparent and in potential. If there is no such thing as a *disinterested* act, what of *disinterest*?

For Bourdieu, there is a monopoly over universality which is held by the dominant classes; in France, traditionally the bourgeoisie – whether traditional or modern. By universality, he means any act – on the part of, for example, philosophy, science, law and art – towards statements and practices claiming universal attribution or application. He sees such acts as simply a mystification of these statements to disguise an "imperialism of the universal" – this takes place in order to defend particular (usually social class) interests. Such universals are often expressed by social agents of the state and legitimize their claims in terms of the general interest. And, the state claims legitimacy in terms of acting for the public good. "*Sociétés d'honneurs*" – where their own particular interests are repressed –

were observed by Bourdieu, most noticeably in Algeria; for example, in families of nobility – *noblesse oblige* – where a "disinterested habitus" is cultivated. The aristocrat has to be generous and subordinate his own self-interest to that of those around him in order to justify his title. Here, there is a "privilege in disinterest". However, as a consequence, they can be seen to have an "interest in disinterest". The same might be said, Bourdieu argues, for modern-day bureaucratic systems. They legitimize their position as "servants of the state" while their interest lies in having the state at their service. Is virtue therefore possible in the world? Bourdieu re-poses the question as: "what are the social conditions of possible sites in which virtue pays, in which there is an interest in disinterest?" (1988b: 44).

Bourdieu is not discounting individual acts of altruism, or even heroism, but is looking for the expression of virtue as a routine occurrence. However, it is only within the domestic family situation that he sees a genuine "suspension" of interest. In the family, it seems, we no longer "play the game". In fact, Bourdieu sees the suspension of economic interests at the heart of the family as one of the two fundamental kinship taboos (the other being incest). Here, what exists is what Aristotle termed *philia* – liking or "friendship" – where those involved do not compete economically with each other. Within family trust, the market is suspended . . . but only for emotional profit (!). For Bourdieu, this applies only in the family. Other social groups – even those with a strong *esprit de corps* – do not obey the logic of the *philia*. For example, in the elite French *Grande Écoles*, the members do indeed share a common spirit. However, their interest is still essentially economic: through social networking – social capital – membership makes available advantageous social contacts in order to gain entrée into prestigious field positions. Nevertheless, this case illustrates what is possible in the way a quasi-mysterious relationship is set up between the individual and the group to which they belong. The body (group/field) is incarnated in each individual, incorporated, and each individual speaks in the name of the body. The question then becomes not "can such a body express virtue?" but can the conditions be created where it has an interest in virtue (1988b: 53). The intellectual body is a case in point. This exploration involves instances of apparent *disinterest* on the part of individuals and groups and moves towards staking out a space of possible "disinterest" as the potential contribution of intellectual endeavour of the sort that Bourdieu is advocating. What route does this argument follow?

As noted, for Bourdieu, the intellectual field has an interest in using reason with universalistic intent as a means of domination. Intellectual groups within the "scientific field", "transform interests associated with possession of a determinate type of scientific capital, and with a determinate position within the scientific field, into epistemological choices" (1993b: 139); for example, between theory and empiricism, formalism and positivism, indeed, between separate disciplines. In short, the scientific ambition to speak of things as they are, even when analysing what is for them an *illusio*, is another form of *illusio*. Extrapolating the argument about virtue above, the question becomes not one of whether universality is possible, but how is it that the conditions for access to that universality can be created:

> History can produce trans-historic universality only by instituting social universes which, by the effect of the social alchemy of their specific laws of functioning, tend to extract the sublimated essence of the universal from the often merciless clash between particular interests. (*Ibid*.: 191)

In effect, this is accomplished for Bourdieu by using his reflexive sociology. Universal law, science or art, cannot bring such universality about since they all are created according to particular field interests and field positions. However, Bourdieu reasons, there is also a legitimate struggle to defend the "exercise of reason":

> One therefore has to appeal to a *Realpolitik* of the universal, a specific form of political struggle aimed at defending the social conditions of the exercises of reason and the institutional bases of intellectual activity, and at endowing reason with the instrument which are the conditions of its fulfilment in history.
> (2000a: 80)

This argument amounts to an application of his theory of practice, which is aimed at going beyond such dichotomies and constructing an, "expanded and realistic rationalism of the reasonable and of prudence" – *phronesis*, in the Aristotelian sense, "capable of defending the specific reasons of practical reason without falling into the exaltation of practice and of the tradition which one kind of irrationalist, reactionary populism has opposed to rationalism" (*ibid*.).

For Bourdieu, "intellectualist universalism" is at the heart of the scholastic illusion: to take its own "interest laden" knowledge as

universal truths. The only alternative is to work "to universalise the conditions of access to universality" (1998c: 137). Only a Bourdieusian type of historicization, it is argued, is capable of revealing the intellectual biases inherent in intellectual activity, and the interests that give rise to them. The intellectual field, nevertheless, is capable of being more independent than most, and holds internal mechanisms of ethics and neutrality that uphold an interest in the universal. Bourdieu further argued that the intellectual field mechanisms of competition, critical verification, and search for acknowledgement are in effect interests which serve the interests of rationality, expressed in the sort of universes described above – capable, at least, of separating the economic from the social, and the general from the particular. In this way, the profits of universalism benefit those with an interest in disinterest as an expression of rationality, forming what Bourdieu speaks of as a "corporatism of the universal". In this case, the scientific *illusio* becomes reconstituted as a *libido sciendi universel*. The real role of intellectuals is indeed the formation of this state within them, as a kind of individual embodiment of "a community of truth". In fact, it is almost their destiny: "to assert themselves as an international power of criticism and watchfulness" (1996a: 348), but only if armed with the sort of theory of practice offered by Bourdieu, as only this is capable of freeing those involved of moral bad faith in their thoughts and words and deeds.

Bourdieu's vision of the social world is, in many ways, quite pessimistic and fatalistic. The concept of *interest* itself, which hardly allows for any act that does not have a calculation of profit – symbolic or otherwise – behind it, can lead to a disenchanted view of the world. Nevertheless, this "sociology of suspicion" can itself constitute a partaking in the profits of the universal:

> How can one fail to see that in its apparent nihilism, this critique does in fact encompass the recognition of universal logical or ethical principles, which it has to invoke, at least tacitly, in order to express or denounce the selfish, interested, partial, or subjective logic of strategies of universalization.
>
> (1998c: 143)

In this case, the production of *the universal* is transformed into a collective interest and a common enterprise. This enterprise is a form of "freedom", not in the Sartrean sense of individual choice, but as a collective practice to tear "the scientific" from the social and to objectify the empirical and scientific subject. Through the concept of

interest we see that society is the source of both domination and entrapment in what we think and do – personally, professional and collectively. However, Bourdieu's philosophy concludes by suggesting that it can also be the very source of escaping both. This view, finally, is the paradox of Bourdieu's *interest*.

Conatus

Steve Fuller

Although *conatus* appears infrequently in Bourdieu's corpus, it is of a piece with his theorizing more generally. The concept raises to philosophical self-consciousness a taken-for-granted attitude evinced in ordinary social research. Indeed, *conatus* is an arcane term even to most of today's philosophers, unless they happen to specialize in the history of physics up to the seventeenth century or metaphysics in the seventeenth century and afterward. It is also true that in most cases where Bourdieu invokes or alludes to *conatus* in his empirical work, the Latin term can be safely replaced by "life trajectory" without much loss of meaning. But, *conatus* is also meant to hold a mirror up to the researcher's own practice at least as much as to the object of research.

Conatus is the past participle of the Latin verb, *conari*, "to try (to do something)". It literally means "having tried," without any implication of success. In the original English translations of the seventeenth-century continental rationalists Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, *conatus* was rendered as "endeavour", the term preferred by their great English contemporary and intellectual fellow traveller Thomas Hobbes in his writings. While it was during this period that *conatus* received its most sustained analytic treatment, the concept had already been in use for two millennia, from the time of the Stoics, to refer indifferently to the inertial motion of physical bodies and life's general tendency towards self-preservation.

Among more metaphysically minded thinkers of the Scientific Revolution, it was thought that *conatus* might serve as a unifying concept for all science, a general principle of motion emanating

ultimately from God, that avoided the empirically self-contradictory consequences of Aristotle's theory of motion. Aristotle had a confused understanding of many physical concepts because of his principled refusal to subject them to mathematical treatment. For example, he confused the average and the instantaneous velocity of a moving object. Yet, at the same time, Aristotle's overall strategy of presuming that all motions were susceptible to a general theory of change (or, as we might say today, "difference") remained attractive – at least until Newton. *Conatus* kept this dream alive. The metaphysical picture implied by *conatus* was one in which God originally imparted motion or, more specifically, breathed life, that would continue to animate a body unless altered by other bodies or friction in the physical environment, which, until Einstein, was theorized as "aether". However, as in Aristotle, aside from this moment as *primum mobile*, God never reappears (at least not in his own name) to intervene in the physical interplay.

Although *conatus* began in physics, it lingers longest in sociology. Nowadays the image of a body moving through an aether persists in "folk physics" – that is, the understanding of physical motion presupposed by common sense. But, it plays no role in scientific physical theory, which sees only the interplay of bodies of indefinitely many sizes and shapes, ideally according to the same finite set of forces, that physics is trying to unify. In this context, what gets called a "body" is completely relativized. Turning to biology, the image of an organism adapting to its environment for purposes of survival retains currency in more ecologically oriented branches of the discipline that focus on how life appears to the naked eye. But, in molecular biology, this imagery at best serves as shorthand for capturing how particular cells or bits of genetic material respond to various externally induced changes in specific, experimentally defined settings. Finally, in sociology, the image of a person's life trajectory proceeding against the backdrop of particular society is still accorded considerable weight as an empirical frame of reference. Corresponding ideas that people might be "burdened", "relieved", "held back", "pushed forward", and so on, in the course of their lives by aspects of the ambient social context testify to the continuing relevance of *conatus*.

Three major versions of *conatus* were proposed between Aristotle and Newton, each of which can also be treated as a sociological model of a life trajectory (the last coming very close to Newton's concept of gravity).

John Philoponus (sixth century)

The *conatus* imparted to an object dissipates spontaneously the further it gets from its origin. This is the version that probably finds least favour in Bourdieu's corpus, given his understanding of the highly stratified nature of French society, whereby one's origins are easily flagged up even in very small matters of self-expression. In this respect, to use Bourdieu himself as an example, one may acquire a new status (e.g. as a professor) without ever quite being allowed to relinquish one's old status (e.g. as the son of a postman). However, there is evidence that generalized and repeated exposure to the mass media has homogenized certain class markers, such as accent, enabling people of different backgrounds to see themselves as part of a common audience/market (see below in connection with the *7 Up* films). However, Bourdieu (1998c) remained sceptical about the extent of transformation wrought by this apparent convergence in *conatus*.

Averroes (twelfth century)

The *conatus* imparted to an object is maintained and guided as it passes through the aether. Bourdieu registers this possibility as the competition that exists among members of, say, the academic field, all of whom are similarly motivated and reinforce each other through mutual recognition of that fact. In this respect, for any given academic, all the other academics function as the aether that facilitates his or her progress, regardless of its ultimate outcome (Bourdieu 1988a: 174–9). This point highlights what Bourdieu (with a nod to Johann Huizinga's *homo ludens*) regarded as the game-like character of meaningful social relations that are properly conceptualized as *fields*. They presuppose the presence of other players whose engagement (*illusio*) is required to sustain one's own engagement, since in principle one could be investing one's cultural capital in other activities (Bourdieu 1998c: 76–9).

Jean Buridan (fourteenth century)

The *conatus* imparted to an object remains constant unless actively interfered with. Although Bourdieu does not believe that the marks of one's origins can (or need) be fully extinguished in the course of one's life, he acknowledges that they can be knocked off their default settings. Consider the case of someone very much like Bourdieu himself, but less self-reflective – someone born to working-class parents, who by a series of competitive examinations, manages to move with

relative ease from the ludic activities of childhood to the more refined versions allowed to the professional academic. Such a person is prone to lose the Marxist intuition that one is entitled to a certain amount of money for a certain amount of work because his or her own activities are not held accountable to fixed outcomes produced on fixed schedules. Rather, employment is maintained simply by how one comports oneself in the workplace (e.g. appearing diligent) that signals overall competence (Bourdieu 2000a: 14–15).

As noted, the concept *conatus* appears sporadically in Bourdieu's work. For example, in *Homo Academicus*, he defines it as

> that combination of dispositions and interests associated with a particular class of social position which inclines social agents to strive to reproduce at a constant or an increasing rate the properties constituting their social identity, without even needing to do this deliberately or consciously. (1988a: 176)

This passage appears in a chapter entitled "The Critical Moment", in which he argues that the 1968 troubles in France can be explained in terms of the social schisms in French society – in particular, the academic world – caused as a result of postwar expansion, and the consequent uneven development of particular factions in society. In some ways, from what he describes, *conatus* seems to amount to *habitus*. However, the key aspects of the above quotation are surely the "rate of reproduction" of properties of social identity and the extent to which they are unconscious. This definition makes *conatus* a particular psychological concept: those impulses that develop and express themselves (more or less) in response to particular aspects of the social conditions. At once, *conatus* appears to be deeply personal and yet collective and rooted in its social environment; yet such an environment is not simply class derivative, but is immanent in the domestic space. Perhaps recalling his work on matrimonial strategies in the Béarn, Bourdieu further writes of *conatus* as "the unconscious desire of the family or the household to perpetuate itself by perpetuating its unity against divisive factors, and especially against those inherent in competition for the property that underlies family unity" (1998c: 107). Yet, at the same time, such "unconscious desire" can have a destructive consequence for those caught in its matrix. For example, the father–son dynamic is examined by Bourdieu in *The Weight of the World* where he opens up the burden of inheritance and expectation: "The father is the site and the instrument of the 'project' (or better yet, of a *conatus*) inscribed in inherited dispositions or attributes" (1999a: 508). The point is that such dispositions

are transmitted unconsciously as a "whole way of being". To inherit them is to perpetuate it. In this case, the son is caught in the "double bind" of satisfying his father's expectation of inheritance and lineage while defining his own "being in the world": whether to preserve his father's genealogical "project", or to define his own. Unsurprisingly, the potential for conflict is ever present; especially when the son does not identify with his father's desire and refuses to be "inherited by the inheritance", as occurs in the case presented by Bourdieu (1999a).

A good way for Anglophones to imagine *conatus* on display is to watch Michael Apted's documentary series *7 Up*, which follows the lives of a dozen children from the high and the low end of the British class system, starting in 1964 at age seven, and then subsequently every seven years. Apted (1999) has noted some convergences of fate – especially in terms of accents – but for the most part the class differences remain intact and recognized as such, albeit in somewhat attenuated terms. Moreover, the subjects tend to rationalize both personal failure and personal success so as to uphold the overall logic of the social order from which they emerged. This is what Bourdieu, now drawing on Nietzsche's Latin (especially in *The Gay Science*), called *amor fati*, literally "love of fate" (Bourdieu 1998c: 216). The mark of *conatus* is that people adjust their subjective expectations to match their objective chances, what one of Bourdieu's critics, Jon Elster (1983), has called "adaptive preference formation". The word *amor* is appropriate in this context because Apted's subjects do not credit/blame either themselves or others for their fate. Rather, they come to accept their fate as how it was meant to be, such that they believe that everyone is best served by how they turned out.

This deployment of *conatus* also evokes the seventeenth-century science of "theodicy", which was literally concerned with the ascertainment of divine justice. "Science" is used deliberately here because in its heyday, theodicy was regarded as the most rational branch of theology. Theodicy attempted to integrate a myriad of suboptimal states of affairs, ranging from natural disasters to monstrous births, into an overall account of our world as the optimal solution to the problem God faces in trying to realize his design in a recalcitrant matter – what Voltaire satirized in *Candide* as "the best of all possible worlds" (Schneewind 1997: 215–60). Some theologians today see in theodicy's pronounced functionalism and historicism the religious backdrop to modern social theory (e.g. Milbank 1990; cf. Fuller 2006a: 141–56).

In Bourdieu's sociology, we can detect the influence of Spinoza's particular brand of theodicy. For Spinoza, *amor fati* is tantamount

to *amor dei* because God is no more or less than the ultimate resolution of countervailing natural forces in a single cosmic order. In his day, Spinoza was accused of atheism for which both "pantheism" and "naturalism" were coined to capture the coincidence of God and nature (Israel 2001). Thus, to be reconciled to one's fate is to be reconciled to God. Spinoza even supplies his own sociology in *Ethics*, Book IV, proposition 18. He believes that all rational agents would wish to maintain the social order just as it is because it is exactly under those conditions that their selfish interests can be expressed together. Spinoza presumes that any other state might be beneficial for some but detrimental to others, perhaps disallowing their self-expression altogether. Here we see the flipside of "sour grapes", what Elster (1983) calls "sweet lemons", whereby the status quo looks great given how much worse things could be.

It is worth stressing that Spinoza's influence on Bourdieu here is empirical rather than normative. Bourdieu does not endorse Spinoza as the final word on the human condition, but he theorizes as if humans do spontaneously rationalize their condition in Spinozist terms. Yet as Israel (2001) observes, Spinoza's seemingly quiescent stance towards one's lot in life was in fact a source of considerable subversive and even revolutionary activity for the 150 years following his death. This was because Spinoza was taken to have demystified people's acceptance of their fate. Whereas in the past they would have attributed their sense of fate to a transcendent and ultimately inscrutable God, which might then be elevated as *amor fati*, Spinoza's metaphysics prohibited just this recourse. Rather, Spinoza suggested that each person as a constituent of the divine body is complicit in his or her acceptance of how things are. Once put that way, it was plausible to conclude, as Rousseau did nearly a century later, that humans remain enslaved only because they fail to see that they are collectively the sole masters of their fate. There is no supreme entity called "God" holding them back.

Kant drew the obvious conclusion from Rousseau's argument, namely, that in matters of morality, it makes no sense to imagine how we would have others act if we do not start by imagining ourselves as the legislators of our actions. In that case, rationality is something to be judged prospectively, not retrospectively – in terms of what is implied by what we decide rather than what we infer from what others have decided (even if on our own behalf). Modern normative ethics and politics begin from this Kantian premise. Indeed, it is how the Kantians' scholastic foes – the utilitarians – are most obviously marked as modern normative theorists. After all, for Bentham and

Mill, unlike Spinoza and Leibniz, "the greatest good for the greatest number" was meant mainly as a slogan for improving the future, as opposed to interpreting the past. Bourdieu's use of the term *conatus* appears to conform to these philosophical transformations. But, in the end, although he lived after Marx and through Marxism, Bourdieu did not fully articulate a normative sociology that broke with such a social theodicy.

As implied by the easy historic movement of *conatus* through the fields of biology, psychology and sociology, the ordinary sense of "will" fails fully to capture the meaning of *conatus*. This was already clear from Spinoza's original definition of *conatus* in *Ethics,* Part III, propositions 7–8, where *conatus* is equated with "will" only when it is rationalized or pursued self-consciously. When *conatus* is merely recognized but not pursued self-consciously, it is "desire"; and when it is not recognized as such and hence pursued only unconsciously, it is "appetite". Following Bourdieu, we might say that even when one's *conatus* is thwarted by life's vicissitudes, one's *habitus* is nevertheless reproduced as a kind of general orientation to the social world, which publicly demonstrates one's sense of engagement, indeed, gamesmanship that in its turn is acknowledged by others (Bourdieu 2000a: 150–52). From a Spinozist standpoint, perhaps the presence of desire but the failure of will in the individual allows *conatus* to be reconciled in the social world. But, once again, Bourdieu would regard this as an empirical not a normative sociological claim.

Despite this range of meanings across the entire gamut of our mental ontology, the sense of agency implied in *conatus* remains quite different from that suggested by *liberty* or *freedom*. "Liberty" historically referred to those who lived without having to use their hands, i.e. released from slavery or drudgery, more generally. "Freedom", in contrast, historically implied a "domain", typically a piece of land but also perhaps a human being, over which one enjoyed absolute control. Expressed in these terms, "liberty" and "freedom" are complementary concepts: a move away from control (that others have over one) versus a move towards control (that one has over others). Behind both is a clear distinction between the controlling and the controlled entity.

In contrast to all this, *conatus* treats agency as a pure process, its various activities appearing as mere phases of that process, not defining moments in the relationship between two separate entities, one that controls and the other that is controlled. There are at least two obvious sociological advantages to this concept, that Bourdieu exploited. First, *conatus* endows people with certain propensities, via

the *habitus* accumulated by them, that evolve into personal life-projects. This endowment is clearly biological in its expression – in terms of one's physical comportment – and even partly biological in nature, in so far as social status can be claimed to be somewhat predictable by hereditary criteria. However, what is transmitted across a family's history is not so much genetic as cultural *capital*. Here, Bourdieu appears to have been influenced by Gilles Deleuze's, rather than a Leibnizian, reading of David Hume as having distinguished humans by their natural capacity to acquire non-natural capacities (Bourdieu 2000a: 136). Secondly, *conatus* suggests that one may be enabled to act in particular ways, and recognized by others as possessing such capacities, even without much forethought by the social agent and independent of the social agent's self-declared life project.

In this second respect, *conatus* provides *habitus* with its dynamic character by drawing attention to its operation within a *field* of social relations in terms of which individuals are engaged in an ongoing process of mutual orientation. Sometimes Bourdieu draws upon Leibniz's relational theory of space, according to which space is brought into existence through the mutual exclusion of simultaneously moving objects, each endowed with *conatus* and presenting itself to the others as *habitus* (e.g. Bourdieu 2000a: 134). In terms of early twentieth-century electromagnetic field theory, the most scientifically developed version of the Leibnizian vision, *habitus* is to *conatus* in a living human as position is to momentum in a moving body. Consider two examples from opposite ends of a complex stratified society. On the one hand, there is the phenomenon of *noblesse oblige*, whereby it is expected that higher status individuals will perform or permit actions *vis-à-vis* others without direct recompense (Bourdieu 1998c: 86–7). On the other hand, there is the general expectation that those of ignoble birth will not end up very far from their starting point in life, notwithstanding pervasive neoliberal, post-colonial ideologies of self-improvement. This breeds a sense of tolerance informed by fatalism (Bourdieu 1999a). From a strict Marxist standpoint, this is bound to breed indignation, since people are being encouraged to do much more (in the former) or much less (in the latter) than they *should* in order to be regarded as functioning members of society (cf. Gouldner 1973: 260–99). But this, of course, is to presume that each person's contribution to society counts equally – which, on the strict physicalistic analysis implied by *conatus*, would mean that all objects are attracted by the same forces equally. However desirable such a situation might be, it

is not the only, nor the most likely, means by which a complex society maintains overall equilibrium.

The day-to-day operation of actual modern capitalist societies presupposes a profoundly asymmetric psychic economy, one that expects magnanimity from the top and abnegation from the bottom, yet the overall effect remains social equilibrium. At an ideological level, this may reflect a common theodicy expressed in terms of mutual compensation for the fates of individuals in what is ultimately an arbitrary distribution of individuals across the social strata – aka "life's lottery". Physics helps here to flesh out the underlying intuition. One way to maintain equilibrium in a system of moving bodies is by the mutual cancellation of opposing forces via Newton's third law of motion: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Thus, *noblesse oblige* works only because the intended lower class recipients do not treat the "gifts" of the upper class as acts of condescension but as acknowledgements of genuine value. This in turn inhibits those recipients – or, more precisely, members of their class who witness and know of such "gifts" – from more general, and typically violent, forms of redressing persistent class differences. On the contrary, their acceptance of the gifts serves to reproduce the field that maintain these asymmetrical relations.

In short, Bourdieu provides insight into how people are "bought" into the social system. He was to Parsons as Marx was to Ricardo. In other words, the French social system of today, like the political economy of early nineteenth-century Britain, retains its stability through complementary illusions about one's sphere of action. However firm one's expectations of what people will do in certain situations, gifts work their magic only if they are given and received with "grace" – that is, as if they need not have been given or received. It is here that *conatus* can be most easily confused with liberty and freedom, as libertarian political commentators often do. Bourdieu offers an interesting insight into the fine-tuned nature of such a social system by observing the implications of even slightly raised consciousness on the part of complementarily poised social agents. He points to the celebrated maxims of François de La Rochefoucauld, a noble in the court of Louis XIV (Bourdieu 1998c: 87). La Rochefoucauld's wit reflected a society of honour in crisis, whereby, say, nobles did not give generously but only as little as could still force a grateful response from those materially dependent on their handouts. Here, one could witness one of La Rochefoucauld's signature maxims, "Familiarity breeds contempt", in play on both sides of the gift relation, that would intensify over the next century, culminating in

the French Revolution of 1789 (cf. Fuller 2006b: 127–8). In most general terms, this corruption of the social field involves the reduction of a shared sense of a functionally differentiated social order to individual calculations of marginal utility. Bourdieu originally observed this phenomenon as characteristic of Algeria in transition from colony to nationhood, in which the traditional agrarian-based norms that had been already in crisis under colonialism, came to be completely "uprooted" (*déraciné*) in nationhood. Thus, he characterized Algeria as a "self-alienated" society (Bourdieu & Sayad 1964).

Here, we see the value of sticking to physics as Bourdieu's frame of reference. Bodies left to their own devices without the constraint exerted by other bodies simply do what they are already inclined to do. *Conatus* differs from Newton's inertia in that the former implies that bodies contain the capacity of mutual orientation in motion, whereas the latter implies no such capacity, instead requiring an external force – what Newton called "gravity" – exerted through other bodies to bring a given body into line. The sociological implications of the two ideas are significantly different as answers to the question: Why does a society's normative order break down? In the *conatus* view, it is because no one else in the society is maintaining the order in terms of which one's own actions might be oriented to bring about an overall equilibrium. In the inertia view, it is because there is no higher authority uniformly respected among all the relevant individuals that anyone can invoke to bring a wayward individual into conformity. The difference is illustrated as follows: on the one hand, you are not likely to act as a Christian if others do not do as well; on the other, you are not likely to act as a Christian if there is no Christianity to which others can hold you accountable. Metaphysically speaking, this distinction reinvents the medieval battle between nominalists and realists *vis-à-vis* the existence of "universals" – that is, properties that apply in the same sense to all cases regardless of context. Here the relevant "universal" is some overarching sense of "society" ready to pass judgement on what its constituent members do. This idea, a mark of sociology's Durkheimian heritage, presupposes that the state is the ultimate source of society's "gravity". For Bourdieu, this ignored the spontaneous forms of mutual social control captured by *conatus*, which do not rely on the prior existence of the state or any such self-avowed societal guarantor and, as in the case of Algeria, could even come to be distorted by it (cf. Grenfell 2004b: 15–16). However, it must be said

that over the course of his career, especially in light of the overall increase in human misery ascribed to neo-liberalism, Bourdieu came to appreciate the value of just such a Durkheimian entity (see Fuller 2006c).

Suffering/symbolic violence

J. Daniel Schubert

The names which construct social reality as much as they
express it are the crucial stakes of political struggle.

(Bourdieu 1994d: 134)

Introduction

We can say that Pierre Bourdieu was preoccupied with how societies
work throughout his career. The concepts he developed, such as
habitus, *field* and *cultural capital* have had tremendous heuristic and
ontological value for those who study society. While I do address
how societies function in this chapter, the emphasis here is on what
Bourdieu implicitly tells us about *why* we should bother studying
society at all. According to Bourdieu, contemporary social hier-
archies and social inequality, as well as the suffering that they cause,
are produced and maintained less by physical force than by forms of
symbolic domination. He refers to the results of such domination as
symbolic violence. Although explicit reference to such violence is not
present in all of Bourdieu's publications, I follow Wacquant (Bour-
dieu & Wacquant 1992a: 15; Wacquant 2005b: 133) in arguing that
the concept informs his entire body of work. In fact, the notion of
symbolic violence follows on, and is a consequence of, his under-
standing of language. He sees language as, "an instrument of power
and action" as much as communication (see Eagleton, in Bourdieu
& Eagleton 1992e: 111). Language itself is a form of domination. I
argue that while symbolic domination may be seen to have played a

part in all social formations, it is becoming more and more significant in contemporary, advanced capitalist societies.

Bourdieu's analyses of these societies are essentially concerned with processes of classification and domination. His argument is as follows. Categorizations make up and order the world and, hence, constitute and order people within it. Political struggle is found in efforts to legitimize those systems of classification and categorization, and violence results when we misrecognize, as natural, those systems of classification that are actually culturally arbitrary and historical. Symbolic violence is thus a generally unperceived form of violence and, in contrast to systems in which force is needed to maintain social hierarchy, is an effective and efficient form of domination in that members of the dominant classes need exert little energy to maintain their dominance. They need only, "*let the system they dominate take its own course* in order to exercise their domination" (Bourdieu 1977b: 190). In other words, members of the dominant classes need only go about their normal daily lives, adhering to the rules of the system that provides them their positions of privilege. Hierarchies and systems of domination are then reproduced to the extent that the dominant and the dominated perceive these systems to be legitimate, and thus think and act in their own best interests within the context of the system itself.[1]

Symbolic violence may in some ways be "gentler" than physical violence, but it is no less real. Suffering results from both forms of violence. The social origins of this suffering are often misrecognized and internalized by members of society, a fact that only serves to exacerbate suffering and perpetuate symbolic systems of domination. As such, symbolic violence tends to be a "more effective, and (in some instances) more brutal, means of oppression" (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu & Eagleton 1992e: 115). Bourdieu turns to sociology because it enables him to focus on and name symbolic violence, and because it can identify the sites where political action might best be effective. The best sociology will seek to locate the ways in which this less obvious form of violence works to both produce and protect dominant interests, while at the same time inflicting suffering and misery among dominated segments of the population. Sociology's greatest value, then, is that it can provide the "weapons" to see and combat the symbolic violence that leads to socially distributed suffering (see Bourdieu 1993a: 60).

This chapter addresses both *suffering* and *symbolic violence*. It is in three sections. In the first, I look at the suffering that Bourdieu focused on in his early works on French colonialism in Algeria,

arguing that it was in part his witnessing of that suffering that led him to sociology in the first place and, in particular, to the engaged version that he practised. While there were, of course, other forms of violence taking place during this period, Bourdieu offers accounts of the ways in which modernization and changes to social structure led to suffering for those raised in a more traditional society. In the second section, I focus on symbolic violence *per se*, looking first at his accounts of the expansion of the French educational system. This system marginalized many members of the working classes at the same time that it served to reproduce class hierarchies in postwar France. The institution of a supposedly meritocratic system – and the credentials that it bequeathed – resulted in symbolic violence against those left behind by it. Not only did pupils suffer as a consequence of their marginalization, they were taught that their failure to per-form well academically and to reap the benefits of academic success were a result of their own lack of natural talent. I also examine the ways in which symbolic violence occurs in processes of consumption, acknowledging Bourdieu's significant impact on the growing field of consumerism studies. An important contribution of these studies is Bourdieu's observation of the ways in which those who suffer from symbolic violence are usually willing and "invested" or "interested" participants in the systems that harm them (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 167). They are, of course, because there are homologies between (and within) the system, the *field*, that produces them. It is then often in the best interests of agents, within the context of a given field, to act in ways that end up both lending credence to, and repro-ducing, the very symbolic systems of domination that are resulting in symbolic violence. Finally, I turn attention to *The Weight of the World* (1999a), Bourdieu's later collaborative work on social suffer-ing, describing it and the ways in which it can contribute to the growing field of the sociology of suffering.

Studying suffering in Algerian society

In describing Bourdieu as an academic and intellectual "agent pro-vocateur", Grenfell (2004b: 15–16) suggests that Bourdieu's early trajectory within the academy – from philosophy to anthropology and ultimately to sociology – was informed in part by his experiences in the form of first-hand observations, extensive photographic work, and interviews in Algeria.[2] Indeed, Bourdieu had a mixed response to academia, regardless of discipline, prior to leaving to do military

service in Algeria in 1955 (*ibid*.: 33–4). Witnessing, at first hand, the terror and suffering that came at the hands of French colonialists, Bourdieu turned to sociology as a means of understanding and articulating the ways in which the destruction of a traditional economy and society were experienced by those who lived through it. As Grenfell has pointed out, the influence of Algeria was to inform Bourdieu's work throughout his career.

Perhaps most influential for Bourdieu, were his observations of "dispossessed" former Algerian peasants (*ibid*.: 34). Although he does not speak at this point in terms of symbolic violence, his account of the temporal and spatial ruptures that resulted from the imposition of a capitalist economic system anticipates this later conceptual addition to his work. Bourdieu focuses not on the physical violence that took place during the period of colonization, but rather on the "domination which forces the colonized to adopt the law of the colonizer as regards the economy and even their lifestyle, *denying the dominated society the power of selection*" (1979a: 64, emphasis added). Using language that evokes Durkheim's (1964 [1893]) notions of the differences between mechanical and organic solidarity, Bourdieu suggests that a different way of knowing and being in the world, and hence a different world, was imposed by French colonists. The more traditional Algerian peasant orientation – their *habitus* – was disrupted because of rapidly changing social and economic conditions, resulting in a *hysteresis* effect: different conditions of existence were imposed that provided "different definitions of the impossible, the possible, and the probable" (Bourdieu 1977b: 78). The suffering that Bourdieu witnessed resulted from a disjunction between the *habitus* structured within a more traditional society and that inherent in the structures of a rationalized capitalist economic system.[3] The old ways of being no longer fit the new economic system, and the new economic system that provides intermittent employment and unemployment produces: "a disorganization of conduct which it would be a mistake to see as innovation based on a conventional outlook. The traditionalism of despair and the absence of a life-plan are two faces of the same reality" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979b: 49). It is worth noting here, in anticipation of the discussion of *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu 1999a), that the violence as a result of a change in economic systems during colonization manifests itself in a variety ways. Suffering was experienced not only economically and physically, but also in terms of relations to the land, relations between genders, and relations within the home. Its impact can be seen in the "resigned passivity" and in the "elementary explosions

devoid of explicit purpose" that Bourdieu found among many residents of colonized Algeria (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979b: 93).

Symbolic violence in education

As I have noted, a concern with symbolic violence runs throughout Bourdieu's oeuvre. But, it is nowhere more prevalent and important to his arguments than in his works on education. Early commentaries in works such as *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* and *The Inheritors* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a; 1979b), however, tended toward a structuralist interpretation that looked at the relationships between systems of education and the reproduction of the class structure in France, paying much less attention to symbolic violence.[4] While educational systems – primary, secondary and higher – are certainly important in this regard (see for example, Bourdieu 1973: 71), this was not Bourdieu's principal focus. Reproduction does not occur through some mechanistic relation between social structures, as might be imagined by systems theorists. Nor does it occur organically, as might be argued by structural functionalists. The reproduction of social order occurs only "through the strategies and practices via which agents temporalize themselves and make the time of the world" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 139). These strategizing and practising agents are "situated", however, within a variety of social fields that are constitutive of, and also constituted by, the *habitus* – individual and group. Thus, Bourdieu's analyses of educational institutions parallel his research on the people of Kabylia in that he looks at the ways in which the structured and structuring *habitus* of agents are positioned within the fields in which they strategize and act. Speaking of both *habitus* and *field* as structured and structuring structures calls for a sociology that is historically aware and informed (Bourdieu 1984: 170). The structuring of structures is a historical process.

In order to understand the difficulties that many lower- and working-class students were having in school in the 1950s and 1960s, and to explain the fact that relatively few secondary school graduates from these classes were attending university, Bourdieu looked to the dramatic changes that French primary and secondary education underwent earlier in the century, particularly after the Second World War. There was a general expansion of the system and a democratization of access so that more children from the lower and working classes could gain entry. In addition, in anticipation of the

less than stellar performances that were soon to come from large segments of the student body from working-class origins, there was an increased vocationalism within the system, meaning that significant portions of the secondary system were oriented toward the work world (see Grenfell 2004b: 60).

Ostensibly, the function of schools is to teach and socialize students, but Bourdieu emphasizes that schools teach students *particular* things and socializes them in *particular* ways. Only certain subjects are taught, and only in certain ways and with certain forms of judgement. Only language of a certain type is used to teach.[5] School days, weeks, and years are structured in certain ways and school children are academically and spatially grouped and disciplined according to the particular logic that defines them. Surely, other subjects, languages, temporal arrangements, and tracking and disciplinary systems could be used?[6] Thus, there is a need to, "question the underlying social and political functions of a teaching relationship which so often fails" the students it is supposed to help (see Bourdieu *et al.* 1994a: 3). And, let us recall that, all "pedagogic action is objectively a symbolic violence to the extent to which it is an imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a: 18).

In its post-war expansion, the French educational system extended seemingly merit-based admission (at the secondary level) and evaluation standards. At the same time, it implicitly imposed rules on the ways in which communication and behaviour could occur in school, ways that were already familiar and relatively comfortable for members of the upper and middle social classes, exactly because these rules were modelled on upper- and middle-class communication and behaviour. Raised, as they were, in privileged home environments, these students therefore possessed the appropriate cultural capital to succeed in school. By exemplifying the culture of the middle classes, the school system in effect "consecrated" them, and the medium for this process is language:

> all institutionalized pedagogy . . . aims to implant . . . rules which grammarians have laboured to extract from the practice of the professionals of written expression (from the past) . . . One cannot fully account for the . . . social effects of the legitimate language unless one takes account, not only of the social conditions of literary language and its grammar, but also of the social conditions in which this scholarly code is imposed

and inculcated as the principle of the production and evaluation
of speech.   (Bourdieu 1991a: 60)

In addition to coming from the very culture from which scholas-
tic culture is taken, the perceived threat of increased competition
resulting from democratized education led many upper- and middle-
class parents to increase their investment in their children's edu-
cation, further widening the gap between those literally "prepared"
to succeed and those not (see Bourdieu & Champagne, in Bourdieu
1999a: 422). The children from groups that had previously been
excluded from primary and secondary education entered school
without the appropriate cultural and linguistic capital to succeed.[7]
As a result, academic performance was all the more difficult. The
social conditions in which the unfamiliar scholarly code were
imposed, and under which performances were evaluated, were con-
sequently very different from the social conditions with which these
children were familiar. The fact that entry to school was now open
to all, and that achievement in schools was based on merit-based
standards for everyone, meant that discomfort in school and poor
performance in assessments were interpreted as signs of personal
inferiority. Prior to the democratization of education, the state could
be held responsible for educational exclusion. Once school was made
available to all, individuals were to blame. The fact that there were
relatively fewer successes among children from working-class groups
only served to reinforce the belief that those who did poorly were
intellectually and/or socially inferior. Children were to blame for
poor performance through lack of talent, and their parents were to
blame for not providing the appropriate background – that is, the
appropriate cultural capital – to succeed in school. The lack of fit
between lower- and working-class *habitus* and educational *field*, and
the blaming of the individuals involved for their poor performance,
is a form of symbolic violence through which social class hierarchy
is reproduced. Those who were less than successful in the recently
expanded French system of education usually quickly fell out of the
academic track prior to entering secondary school. They spent their
secondary years filling the seats of the new vocational schools that
the state built during the period of postwar expansion to provide
trained workers for the modern industrial economy.[8]

Lest one think these practices cease upon completion of secondary
education, Bourdieu offers comparable descriptions of symbolic
violence in the academy in *Homo Academicus* (1988a), and *The State
Nobility* (1996b). Although he does not use the term itself in the

former, he describes the varieties of symbolic currency that govern interactions among academics, the dominated segment of the dominant class, and the ways in which careers are made or broken along the way because the "university field is, like any other field, the locus of a struggle to determine the conditions and the criteria of legitimate membership and legitimate hierarchy" (Bourdieu 1988a: 11). In *The State Nobility*, Bourdieu describes the ways in which elite French educational institutions consecrate emerging generations of political administrators. Ultimately, Bourdieu tells us that the entire system of educational and cognitive classifications used in academia – which might include academic titles such as *master of arts*, *doctor of philosophy* and *professor*, but also consist of evaluative terms such as *bright*, *brilliant*, *interesting*, *talented, intelligent*, and, more negatively and dismissively, *hard working* and *diligent* – are merely "euphemized versions of social classification, a social classification that has become natural and absolute" (Bourdieu 1993b: 178; see also 1996b: 376, 387; Swartz 1997: 202).

It is not surprising that *hard working*, for example, is a characterization used within academia to belittle and dismiss. The elites that emerged with the ascendancy of the academy were not of the working class. Ryan and Sackrey (1984) describe this in the American context, pointing out that new educational elites did not do manual labour, and they presumed themselves naturally superior to those who did. Their intellectual successes were considered the result of natural ability and comportment rather than the consequences of hard work. From a Bourdieusian perspective, they were wrong. Success was the result instead of the social position and privilege that exempted them from such labour. It is worth noting, though, that misrecognition of social privilege as natural superiority in this way serves to solidify that privilege and, for members of subordinated groups, exacerbate symbolic violence and intensify social suffering. But, those who are successful in the academy can today expect to reap great benefits inasmuch as there is, "an ever-increasing role played by the educational institution in the reproduction and legitimation of power" (see Bourdieu 1996b: 387). And we can expect their children to enter the same academies.

Symbolic violence and consumer culture

While the most extensive portion of Bourdieu's writings on symbolic violence deals with educational systems, such violence is found in

other fields as well.[9] One place where it is present, but frequently misrecognized, is in the field of consumption.[10] Writers in a growing sub-discipline within sociology, and other fields of cultural studies, suggest that class and other types of social relations in contemporary modernized societies are determined not so much in terms of the relationship to the means of production in the Marxian sense. Heavily influenced by the work of Bourdieu, such writers are looking instead at the ways in which class hierarchies are maintained within systems of consumption. Bourdieu indeed argues that class distinctions and hierarchies are maintained through consumption practices; although he does point out that there is a "functional and structural homology" in the logics of production and consumption (Bourdieu 1984: 232). *Distinction*, Bourdieu's most influential work in studies of consumerism, is subtitled *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, a reference to the Kantian critique of aesthetic judgement. Bourdieu discredits the idea of a *disinterested* sovereign judgement described by Kant, arguing that the aesthetic sense is *never* apart from any interest. He expands upon insights of Durkheim and Mauss (1963 [1903]) that categories of mind are social in origin to argue that, while aesthetic classifications are certainly generated, developed, and maintained socially, it is also the case that they are used to maintain and expand a system of domination in society – the categories encode power differentials within and between social groups:

> *Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.* Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984: 5–6, emphasis added)

The point here is that, whereas taste would seem to be a personal quality, it is actually social. Each time a member of society makes a purchase in a store, or makes a decision about which store to enter, or expresses a preference for a particular kind of music or film or art, they are expressing, however unwittingly, the predispositions of the "structured structure" that is the *habitus*.

The symbolic violence resulting from this process can be seen even in seemingly trivial practices, such as might occur when an "uncultivated" petit-bourgeois or working-class diner sits in an expensive restaurant with members of the upper class, not knowing which fork to use with the salad or which spoon to use with the soup. This

imagined scenario is non-trivial. Just as "gift exchange" reproduces social structure, identity, and morality in the less-developed societies (see Mauss 1967), the anxiety and embarrassment that arise with the misuse of a salad fork signify and reproduce both the agent's position in an existing social structure and the legitimacy of that structure.

Misuse of a fork probably means that the "miss-user" is not in a comfortable social setting. However, it also implies that such a distinctive setting does exist. We do not *just* misuse silverware. We *distinguish* ourselves as members of certain classes and we reproduce the differences between classes that are marked by silverware misuse. The *miss-user* will most likely defer to the "expertise" of others on the proper use of the fork, thus recognizing the superiority of the latter, and perhaps in future even preventing the painful experiences of similar situations altogether by avoiding those situations. In their avoidance of this discomfort, and in their misrecognition that the "proper" use of a fork is somehow superior, the social hierarchy is reproduced and social limits are established for the subordinated agent. Those who know how to use the fork are somehow better than those who do not; just as those who know how to negotiate an educational system are somehow superior to those who do not. What everyone at the dinner table has misrecognized is that:

> What makes the petit-bourgeois relation to culture and its capacity to make "middle-brow" whatever it touches . . . is not its "nature" but the very position of the petit bourgeois in social space, the social nature of the petit bourgeois. It is . . . the fact that legitimate culture is not made for him (and is often made against him), so that he is not made for it; and that it ceases to be what it is as soon as he appropriates it.
>
> (Bourdieu 1984: 327)

In this trivial example of restaurant anxiety, we see the ways in which the "gentleness" of symbolic violence works. There is, of course, nothing inherently superior in the use of one fork or spoon or another. There is only a social superiority because of the relative class position of various culinary practices. Once again, it is important to remember that though the symbolic violence that characterizes late capitalist societies is indeed in some ways "gentler" than other forms of violence, its manifestations in terms of the ways in which people suffer are many and can be severe. We can see the gentle in things as mundane as the ostracization that comes as members of different social classes chew their food and maintain their posture

differently during meals. We can see the severe and the brutal by looking at differing morbidity and mortality rates for different categories of agents. The violence is symbolic, but the suffering and the reproduction of class hierarchies that result are very real.

A return to suffering

Bourdieu's emphasis in much of his work is on symbolic violence rather than the suffering that results from that violence. Indeed, David Swartz (1997: 83) suggests that, for the most part, Bourdieu pays relatively little attention to "subordinate cultural systems" or the suffering that subordinated peoples endure. Bourdieu's focus is epistemologically and politically reasonable, however, given his beliefs that dominant symbolic systems work as instruments of symbolic violence and social reproduction and that members of subordinate groups tend to adopt the cultural beliefs, values, and fashions of the groups above them in social space (see Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu's early work on Algeria is to some degree an exception, but it is in the collaborative *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* that Bourdieu and his colleagues bring the experiences of members of subordinated groups to the foreground. Whereas in the earlier works on Algeria, Bourdieu had looked at the ways in which French colonialism impacted on traditional Algerian cultures, in *The Weight of the World* the effects of post-industrialization, European unification, immigration, and changing gender and ethnic relations in late twentieth-century France are examined by interviewing those who best know the destructive effects of these processes.

Durkheim (1938 [1895]) identified a methodological dilemma that faces sociologists. In *The Rules of Sociological Method*, he argued that sociologists study *social facts*, real social *things*, that exist external to, and are coercive over, individual members of society. The dilemma was that social facts could not be studied in and of themselves, they could only be studied by looking at their effects on members of societies. In *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (1952 [1897]), Durkheim studied variations in suicide rates, not because he necessarily had an inherent interest in suicide but because varying rates were the result of varying degrees of social integration and regulation. Data about individuals (and the rates of individual events within and across populations) informed him about societies. In *The Weight of the World*, Bourdieu and his colleagues also collected data

about individuals. They conducted extensive interviews over the course of three years, collecting stories from people who have suffered through the dramatic social and cultural changes taking place at the end of the twentieth century. The book contains extensive excerpts from these interviews, in which individuals describe their experiences in their own words of, among other things, social isolation and loneliness, disillusionment and displacement, marginalization and exclusion, domestic violence and family disintegration, drug and alcohol use and abuse, depression, unemployment, silence, ghetto life and housing deterioration, illness, stigmatization, poverty, sexism and racism.[11]

Although the accounts in the book are personal stories of suffering, their value to the reader is that they speak to the social and cultural origins and distribution of that suffering. They tell of *personal* details in *personal* voices that speak of the ways in which symbolic violence manifests itself in everyday life. Thus, they are also *social* stories, told in *social* voices. For example, co-author Rosine Christin states that in the process of speaking with a narrator named Maryse:

> I realized that you have to listen differently to people like Maryse, *who can talk about a life saturated with collective history only through a personal language*, "little things," women's things, which are invariably excluded from official history, even if it's written by women.
>
> (Christin, in Bourdieu 1999a: 360, emphasis added)

This occurs in a social setting. Research is itself a social act and, as Christin's example illustrates, must be conducted with a reflexive ethical and political awareness about the importance of listening. There are, potentially, benefits to the narrator in this kind of research, especially when conducted with those who are suffering. If it is true that the self is itself constructed narratively, then selves are being told in the process of doing research. Subjectivities are emerging.[12]

The work that Bourdieu and his colleagues did in *The Weight of the World* is an important contribution to the growing field of social suffering studies. In naming symbolic violence as a "real" form of violence that is unequally distributed within and across societies, their work complements that done by researchers such as Arthur Kleinman and colleagues (Kleinman 1988; Kleinman *et al*. 1997), Veena Das and colleagues (Das 2006; Das *et al*. 2000) and Paul Farmer (2001; 2004), who are examining the effects of socially

distributed violence (both physical and, although it is not named as such, symbolic) on marginalized populations.[13] Bourdieu's work serves as further encouragement for such researchers to examine the social and structural changes that will result in symbolic violence in a rapidly globalizing world. *The Weight of the World* is an example of this project, for it documents the dramatic social changes that took place in France in the second half of the twentieth century and their dangerous consequences – both for agents whose *habitus* was formed largely in the period immediately after the Second World War, and for their children, who have witnessed the suffering of their parents as well as experiencing the effects of social change on their own lives and futures.

Some readers might assume that a focus on the suffering that results from symbolic violence belittles the actual suffering experienced by those who are victims of "real" violence. However, the dismissal of the reality of symbolic violence is itself an act of symbolic violence. To deny such suffering because it is not genuine compounds the effects of symbolic violence by leading sufferers to question the legitimacy of their own pain and misery. Such a denial in effect blames the victim:

> using material poverty as the sole measure of all suffering keeps us from *seeing* and understanding a whole side of the suffering characteristic of a social order which . . . has multiplied the social spaces and set up the conditions for an unprecedented development of all kinds of ordinary suffering.
>
> <div align="right">(Bourdieu 1999a: 4, emphasis added)</div>

Conclusion

Having symbolic violence as a concept with which to identify and name social phenomena is valuable not only within academic fields such as sociology, anthropology and philosophy, but also within the field of politics (broadly defined). Bourdieu has identified a particularly insidious form of violence. Inasmuch as it is both frequently misrecognized and (in some ways) gentler than other forms of violence, resistance to it is especially difficult. "Symbolic domination . . . is something you absorb like air, something you don't feel pressured by; it is everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult" (Bourdieu, in Bourdieu & Eagleton 1992e: 115). It is *everywhere* in that we all live in symbolic systems that, in the process of

classifying and categorizing, impose hierarchies and ways of being and knowing the world that unevenly distribute suffering and limit even the ways in which we can imagine the possibility of an alternative world. It is also *nowhere* because, in its gentleness and its subtleness, we fail to recognize its very existence, let alone the way it is at the root of much violence and suffering.

However, we now possess an entire body of work to draw on to help us remember that symbolic domination is indeed both "everywhere" and "nowhere". Bourdieusian sociology identifies symbolic violence and the suffering it causes. For Bourdieu, sociology is a means by which symbolic violence is rendered visible as violence and, while such sociology cannot change the world, it can identify the, "critical moment when, breaking with the ordinary experience of time . . . all things become possible" (Bourdieu 1988a: 182). While this sociology does not prescribe particular ways of acting, it does encourage a "becoming aware" of the arbitrary nature of symbolic domination. Bourdieu reminds us that the world is socially and historically constructed and that, in its construction, hierarchies are created and reproduced which result in violence that is symbolically expressed. It is in the very *constructedness* of such hierarchies that political action becomes possible. If worlds are constructed, then they can be re-constructed in other ways and *in other words*.[14] Resistance to symbolic domination and violence is then possible in the form of heterodoxy because:

> Heterodox discourse – insofar as it destroys the spuriously clear and self-evident notions of orthodoxy, a fictitious restoration of the *doxa*, and neutralizes its power to immobilize – contains a symbolic power of mobilization and subversion, the power to actualize the potential power of the dominated classes.
>
> (Bourdieu 1991a: 277, n. 8).

Notes

1. As Wacquant (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 168, n. 122) points out, this is one of the primary differences between Bourdieu's notion of *symbolic violence* and Gramsci's theory of hegemony: "the former requires none of the active 'manufacturing' of the work of 'conviction' entailed by the latter". For more on this, see Schubert 2002.
2. This is certainly not to argue that this experience was the only influence on Bourdieu's move to sociology. A number of writers, including Grenfell (2004b), Robbins (1991), and Swartz (1997), describe other important

influences in Bourdieu's personal trajectory, not the least of which was Bourdieu's own experiences as an outsider throughout his educational career.

3. While society, or social space, is multi-dimensional and consists of many relatively autonomous fields, Bourdieu often acknowledges the subordination of those fields to the economic field. See, for example, Bourdieu 1991a: 245.

4. Robbins (1998: 29) provides an account of this "misrepresentaion" of Bourdieu's work, focusing in particular on the structuralist interpretations of the reproduction of social class offered by Young (1971) and Swartz (1977).

5. See, for example, the wonderful opening pages of Bourdieu, Passeron & de Saint Martin (1994a [1965]: 2–3), in which it is suggested that academic discourse has the "eminent function of keeping the pupil at a distance".

6. For a particularly enjoyable account of this argument in Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a: 169–70), see his response to Jenkins' (1989) critique of the writing in *Homo Academicus*.

7. Bourdieu (1991a: 83) identifies *linguistic capital* as a component of cultural capital. It would be incorrect to say that these students had no cultural capital. We all have cultural capital. The question is, do we have the appropriate kinds of sanctioned cultural capital? Will the cultural capital that we possess allow for a trouble-free fit between our *habitus* and the educational *field*?

8. Lest one attribute this development to the benevolence of the state, keep in mind that capitalism's next generation of manual labourers was now being trained at state expense.

9. Particularly relevant here, but not included in this essay because of space limitations, is Bourdieu's (2001a) account of symbolic violence within the field of gender. A number of feminist scholars, most notably Judith Butler (1997) have criticized Bourdieu for his descriptions of the contributions of women to their own domination within patriarchal society, and for his failure to acknowledge the subversive potential of the performativity of practical activity. For accounts of this debate and Bourdieu's description of the symbolic violence of gender categories, see the essays in Adkins and Skeggs (2007).

10. I have been following Bourdieu in using the term *misrecognition* to describe the process by which people fail to see the social origins of social and cognitive categories, but it is worth pointing out here, especially in a chapter on symbolic violence (and especially in a section of that chapter that is on aesthetic taste), that these categories are themselves socially produced. Social categories and cognitive categories are homologous. Caution should be taken in speaking of "misrecognition" because a superficial understanding of the term would seem to blame individuals for their failure to see the social origins of categories, and thus may in itself be a form of symbolic violence. Indeed, such misrecognitions are actually accurate recognitions, to the extent that agents' cognitive categories align with the social categories of a particular field. We might say that such agents are culturally literate. Bourdieu (1998c [1994]: 103, italics added) recognizes this, saying that "the theory of symbolic violence rests on a theory of belief or, *more precisely, on a theory of the production of belief*, of the work of socialization necessary to produce agents endowed with the schemes of perception and appreciation that will

permit them to perceive and obey the injunctions inscribed in a situation or discourse".

11. That these stories are told in the words of narrators themselves, rather than in the voices of the researchers involved in the project, speaks to the concerns Bourdieu (see, in particular, 1991a) and others have about representation and the symbolic violence that academic researchers and other professionals can do to research subjects by speaking on their behalf.

12. For more on the ethics of voice as it pertains to those who are suffering, see Frank (1995; 2004).

13. One author who has made explicit reference to the contributions that Bourdieu's work offers to the study of suffering is Iain Wilkinson. In *Suffering: A Sociological Introduction*, Wilkinson (2005: 94) claims that Bourdieu addresses the "ordinary suffering" that results from marginalization and powerlessness.

14. The collection of English translations of a number of Bourdieu's essays (1994d) is aptly titled and has at least three meanings. *In Other Words* refers first to the translation of the words of one language into another; second, to the attempt to further explain theoretical ideas; and third, to the fact that other worlds can be created using other words. *Other words* make other worlds.

Reflexivity

Cécile Deer

Introduction

From *Sociologie de l'Algérie* (Bourdieu 1958) to *Pascalian Medita-
tions* (Bourdieu 2000a) and *Science of Science and Reflexivity*[1]
(Bourdieu 2004b) the notion of *reflexivity* is both at the origin and
the heart of Pierre Bourdieu's work. As a methodological concept,
reflexivity occupies a central role in the evolution of his work, not
to say a defining one if it is to be understood within the intellectual
field:

> Bourdieu has been insistently pointing at the possibility of a
> unified political economy of practice, and especially of symbolic
> power that fuses structural and phenomenologically-inspired
> approaches into a coherent, epistemologically grounded, mode
> of social enquiry of universal applicability . . . but one that is
> highly distinctive in that it explicitly encompasses the activity
> of the social analyst who sets out to offer accounts of the
> practice of others.
>
> (Wacquant, in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 26–7)

A concept is defined according to how it is understood and extended.
As such, *reflexivity* in Bourdieu's intertwined empirical and theoreti-
cal work is the moving representation of an object through the
constant (re)formulation–expression of its use and its meaning. This
is accompanied by parallel illustrations of its practically-grounded
scientific and epistemological relevance and significance (Bourdieu

1977b; 1988a; 1990c; 1994e; 1998c). Certain concepts gain in applicability through the extension of the way they may be understood and used – often at the cost of coherence. However, reflexivity, as defined in Bourdieu's work, has followed a different path as he has sought to explain and refine its meaning and its multiple applicability, not least in relation to its evolving environment. Because reflexivity spans the whole of Bourdieu's work, ranging from the beginning of the 1960s to the beginning of 2000, and because this period is one of significant intellectual, political and economic change, it is not surprising to find that the concept has developed. In this sense, Bourdieu can justifiably be said to have shifted his ground to suit social and intellectual evolutions, but this would be a superficial explanation of what has probably been one of the most difficult of his intellectual journeys, not only conceptually but also personally and politically.

Reflexivity in Bourdieu's work

Reflexivity as a methodological concept in Bourdieu's work stems from a critical theory based on a phenomenological questioning of knowledge creation: whether, how, and to what extent a research process allows the subject of knowledge to grasp the object of his or her study in its essence. As such, the notion of reflexivity pertains to two interrelated domains: a scientific method (sociology) and a critical discourse (philosophy).

As a scientific method, Bourdieu's understanding of reflexivity can be defined as a critical epistemological process that consists of objectifying the very conceptualization and process of scientific objectification. In short, it is not only the object of research but the very elaboration of the research object itself and the conditions of its elaboration which need to be scrutinized and reflected upon. Bourdieu perceived obstacles to scientific knowledge both in methodologies based on "participant observation" and in methodologies too remote from the object of study. He considered the excessive proximity of the former as an artificial familiarization with a foreign social environment, whereas the latter relied too much on a transcendental intellectual understanding pertaining to the scholastic *doxa*. In order to overcome this, Bourdieu insisted on the epistemological importance of *participant objectivation* (Bourdieu 2000j) which should allow social scientists to analyse methodically and control the pre-reflexive elements of their method, classifications and observations.

In Bourdieu's view, this kind of reflexive approach would allow social scientists to control and reduce the influence of an important source of discrepancy with regard to knowledge, namely the unconscious failure by most to recognize and control the effects and influence of their own relation to the object of their research (e.g. social positioning, internalized structures – see Chapter 7 on *doxa*). This criticism is levelled at several areas of knowledge – and first to anthropology, ethnology, linguistics and the history of art – when Bourdieu discusses how observers and analysts in these fields project their own vision of the world onto their understanding of the social practices that are the object of their studies (jungle communities, grammar, language, aesthetics). Thereby, they unconsciously attribute to the object of their observations characteristics that are inherently theirs and those of their own perception and comprehension of the world (Bourdieu 1990c).

Stronger criticism is directed at the philosophical vision that seeks to provide a transcendental explanation of the world (*la prétention du fondement*) without acknowledging the social conditions that shape and allow possible observations, discourses and theories. This criticism is aimed more generally at the scholastic viewpoint for failing to reflect upon and take into account the historical conditions of the appearance of a relatively autonomous academic field, the practical conditions of its existence, the social structures and conditions that underpin the dominance of its discourse and the mechanisms of its reproduction. Sociological research is also found to exhibit similar flaws and its production is said to contain a wide range of subjective, unanalysed experiences and feelings (resentment, envy, social concupiscence, unconscious aspirations, fascinations or hatred) (see Wacquant, in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 33).

For Bourdieu, reflexivity means that all knowledge producers should strive to recognize their own objective position within the intellectual and academic field. This is why sociologists, like others – and possibly more than others – should work to objectify their practice by engaging in a "sociology of sociology" that would account both for what is at stake for them and for the implicit conditions and structures of their practice. For Bourdieu, this *objectivation* of the knowing subject is the *sine qua non* condition of any scientific attempt at making sense of the social world. Reflexivity should contribute to the construction of a research object devoid of any unconscious projection of the scientist's relation to it. As such, a genuine reflexive approach is, according to Bourdieu, hardly within reach of lay people because the scientific conditions of practice as well as the

mobilization of knowledge it requires fall necessarily beyond the scope of the day-to-day experience and pre-reflexive knowledge of non-specialists (Bourdieu 1977b; 1990c). The common-sense intuition of practitioners has little to do with the objectified and rational demonstration of the analyst. On the other hand, reflexivity as a scientific reflex by intellectuals within the intellectual field represents the extra-epistemological dimension that helps to move beyond common-sense categories and dualisms (for example, micro versus macro, agency versus structure, normative versus rational, synchrony versus diachrony, and so on) that are only part of the prevailing *doxa* that they contribute to reinforce. It is therefore not surprising to find that Bourdieu is particularly scathing about what he sees as the narcissistic, pseudo-reflexive productions of postmodernists, as he considers that they have entered the field of sociology cheaply and easily without abiding by the epistemological and methodological rules of the social scientific field (see Bourdieu 2004b).

In Bourdieu's view, reflexivity cannot be an exercise carried out individually. It has to be a common and shared effort, aiming at making explicit the "unthought" categories, perceptions, theories and structures that underpin any pre-reflexive grasp of the social world. When Bourdieu himself reverts to discussing and theorizing at length upon his own personal trajectory (Bourdieu 2000a), he stresses that this should only be considered as an illustration of how the social scientist can objectify his own position and practice.

As a critical discourse in Bourdieu's work, reflexivity is both and at the same time a critical *mise en abyme* of the intellectual field in which it is embedded and within which it is produced, and an empowering tool for making sense of the social world and acting effectively upon it in a truly informed manner. Bourdieu developed these two interrelated aspects empirically and theoretically at a later stage of his work, mainly as a result of a combination of the evolution of his own personal trajectory and that of the intellectual field and its environment.

Reflexivity as an "un-reconstructed" practice

Interestingly for a sociologist who sought to ground his research in a theory of practice, Bourdieu's need, as a young philosopher in the 1960s to adopt a reflexive dimension in his intellectual strategy originated more in the un-theorized practice of a self-taught anthropologist, striving to achieve genuine scientific objectivity (as distinct

from the artificial objectivism of mainstream anthropology as epitomized by Lévi-Strauss) than from any attempt at articulating a principle of universal epistemological relevance. At a later stage, Bourdieu himself recognized that reflexivity was something he first *felt* he had to do, rather than something he thought he should do, and he only came to theorize this approach at a later stage:

> These questions have been thrust upon me, outside of any intent or taste for pure speculation, in a number of research situations where to understand my strategies or materials I was compelled to reflect upon the scholarly mode of knowledge.
>
> (Bourdieu 1998c: 30)

At this stage in his own life's trajectory, Bourdieu had already gone through two rapid transitions from traditional to modern societies and back again: chronologically, from rural France as a child to Paris as a philosophy student at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, and then from Paris to rural Northern Algeria where he was posted as a soldier during the Algerian war (see Part I). Simultaneously, Bourdieu was going through an intellectual journey that had all the ingredients of a transition, not to say of an opposition: from philosophy to sociology via anthropology. He experienced the need for reflexivity – *Erlebnis* – during his ethnographic research in Algeria, in particular, as a response to his unease regarding the accepted dichotomy between what is regarded as "familiar" or mundane by the social scientist (and, as such, an unquestioned internal experience) and what is perceived as "unfamiliar", exotic, the practice "out there" worthy of being the object of research (Bourdieu 1977b [1972]: 222). He then experimented epistemologically with reflexivity in his ensuing ethnographic study of peasant life in the Béarn (Bourdieu 2002b[2]), and then defined, theorized and systematized it – *Erfahrung*[2] – as a central concept informing his research on French class, culture and politics in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

 The successive publication of *The Inheritors* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1979b [1964]), *Reproduction* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977a [1970]) and *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]) echoed and relayed many of the theoretical themes and conceptualizations that were set out in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977b [1972]) and further developed in *The Logic of Practice* (1990c [1980]). Reflexivity is present as an epistemological background in all these studies, the object of which was closely related to Bourdieu's personal experience. However, the emphasis was less on epistemological issues than on developing,

refining and experimenting with major conceptual tools and, in particular, those of *habitus*, *field*, *doxa, cultural capital* and *symbolic power*, in order to unveil forms of social arbitrariness and processes of social legitimization in various social fields. It may be said – and Bourdieu himself recognizes it (Bourdieu 2000a) – that at this particular period of time, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, his practice and conceptualization of reflexivity shared a similarity with what he would eventually describe as a partial and limited form of reflexivity. Compared with the multi-layered concept of reflexivity elaborated on and implemented throughout the 1980s and 1990s with respect to the scholastic point of view and to the epistemological *doxa* of the intellectual field, his earlier practice/conceptualization of reflexivity lacked the systematic and elaborate self-objectivization that he would come to advocate at a later stage. From then onwards, the notion of reflexivity was also conceived as being embedded in the specific intellectual and political environment from which it had emerged and in which it had developed. It became conceptualized as a critical discourse competing with other discourses for the truth, as part of the *realpolitik* of truth mentioned in earlier chapters.

Reflexivity as a critical epistemology: from the unveiling of modern *doxa* to participant *objectivation*

The original use of reflexivity as a means to seek "the other" emerged from the approach adopted by Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques*, and initially allowed for the development of many of Bourdieu's key concepts (see Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a; Reed-Danahay 2004). In a second stage, the use of reflexivity was further developed to become an epistemological premise: any piece of social scientific research should be critically reflexive so as to unveil the un-thought categories of thought that predetermine and delimitate what is thinkable (see Bourdieu 1982a). This is what Bourdieu set out to do in his empirical research and analysis of various social fields and related *habitus* and *doxa* (e.g. education, cultural/aesthetic, intellectual/academic, power) highlighting, in the process, how what is commonly considered to be appropriate and accepted practice in various fields is made of unrecognized and unformulated forms of received wisdom, censorship, accepted ignorance or unknown ones (*illusio, nomos, logos*). This is a dominant aspect of his extended work on higher education (the students, the academic profession, the elites) that has been variously received and interpreted. Similarly, Bourdieu

developed a critical, and contended, understanding of the cultural and/or aesthetic field in which he sought to highlight the "questions that we do not ask of aesthetics because the social conditions of possibility of our aesthetic questioning are already aesthetic" (Bourdieu 1998c: 130).

At the heart of this approach is Bourdieu's reflection upon and reaction towards his philosophical background and his wish to shun any pretence of transcendence in objectivism and the generation of truth. Bourdieu considered that too many past and present philosophers (for example, Kant, Pascal, Sartre, Heidegger) and social scientists (Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Chomsky) had adopted this kind of position in relation to their object of study, but that it bore little relevance to any rational construction of knowledge. In fact, it has more to do with the orthodox power to judge conferred by the statutory ownership of authorized discourses that define, classify and categorize the social world and contribute to the creation and re-creation in minds and things of the divisions of the social order: *rex cum regere fines et regere sacra*. We sense here the obvious influence of structural linguistics, and in particular that of Émile Benveniste. In relation to this influence, a truly reflexive social-scientific approach would, on the contrary, aim at unveiling the mythologies that found accepted forms of social arbitrariness in reason. It would strive to make explicit the anthropological presuppositions that are inscribed in the language which social agents, and especially intellectuals, most commonly use to account for practice (Bourdieu 1998c: viii). This requires above all a critical understanding of the academic vision, a critical epistemology of the scholastic (*skholè*) viewpoint so as to account for the effects of the fact that such thoughts are produced in the academic field, which has its own game rules, its own *habitus*, *ethos*, *nomos* and *doxa* (*ibid*.: ch. 7). This is what Bourdieu sets out to do theoretically and empirically in *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1988a).

As noted in earlier chapters, the empirical data used in *Homo Academicus* were gathered at a time of upheaval in French academia (1968). The analysis and interpretation of these data, published twenty years later, may be regarded as the implementation and testing of the epistemologically reflexive approach laid out in Bourdieu's theoretical production. The objective was to produce a reflexive sociological understanding of the academic field by operationalizing the dual sociological *objectivation* advocated by the sociologist: that of the object of study *and* that of the observer's relation to the object (see the first chapter of *Homo Academicus*). The latter

is achieved by the sociologist considering his or her own academic and intellectual field as an unfamiliar object so as to uncover what is implicit and taken for granted in day-to-day social exchanges within the studied field. This is why *Homo Academicus* represents both a certain continuity and an inflexion in Bourdieu's epistemological and theoretical use of reflexivity. It demonstrates continuity both in relation to *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977b) and *Le bal des célibataires* (2002b) in that it is another instance where Bourdieu uses a familiar environment as an object of study to reflect upon the possibility of making explicit structures and beliefs, *habitus* and *doxa*, that are implicit in the practice of the agents in the field. It also demonstrates continuity in relation to *Distinction* (1984) and *The Inheritors* (1979b) and in relation to his work on language and power (Bourdieu *et al.* 1994a) because it deepens and it fleshes out in a reflexive manner the theoretical framework and the understanding of the various guises in which cultural, social and symbolic capital can be accumulated. On the other hand, in trying to put into practice the kind of reflexive research methodology that Bourdieu advocates for social scientists, *Homo Academicus* (1988a) is also a book that signals Bourdieu's perceived need to clarify his own thoughts, positioning and practice in relation to various fields (academic, intellectual and at a later stage sociological and political) and their evolving discursive and *doxaic* characteristics.

Reflexivity is Bourdieu's philosophy of action applied to social scientists. It aims to make explicit the two-way relationship between the objective structures of the intellectual, academic and social-scientific fields and the incorporated structures (that is *habitus*) of those operating within these fields. This is why referring to the social positioning of the cultural producer – that is a "white, male, bourgeois who is inscribed in a historical context" – is for Bourdieu a superficial, and not a radical, way to objectivize the objectivizing point of view. What is also important is to objectify the position of the cultural–intellectual producer in the world of cultural–intellectual production, which is made of fields that are relatively autonomous social spaces. This understanding of the reflexive approach is emphasized in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a), a publication that set out to clarify Bourdieu's epistemological positioning in relation to the increasingly prominent "postmodern" agenda. In *Pascalian Meditations* (2000a) – using his own intellectual and professional trajectory – Bourdieu set out to provide a further illustration of how sociologists can work to achieve an *objectivization* of their own stance and position via the use of the

concept of field, thereby achieving a reflexive understanding of both (Bourdieu 2000a: 33–44). The parallel between the philosopher-turned-sociologist's reflexive approach with regard to his own trajectory and point of view within the intellectual field, and his work on Baudelaire's, Flaubert's or Manet's trajectories in relation to their own respective artistic field (literature and the visual arts) (Bourdieu 1993b), helps us to understand just what Bourdieu means when he refers to reflexivity as being a "sociology of sociology".

However, for the process of reflexivity to be as comprehensive as possible, the social scientist needs to look into another aspect of his or her practice, namely the invisible determinations inherent in the intellectual posture itself (Bourdieu 1998c; 2001a), what he calls the "ethnocentrism of the scientist", when observations and discourses about the social world are made by intellectuals who have retired from it. As such, theoretical knowledge owes a number of its defining properties to the fact that it is produced under specific conditions that are not those of practice (Wacquant, in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 69–70). This aspect is discussed at length in *Practical Reason* in the chapter entitled "The Scholastic Point of View", which is itself the transcription of a presentation made in 1989 (Bourdieu 1998c: 127–45). Materially and practically freed from contingencies, urgencies and necessities, intellectual producers can play their intellectual game seriously according to sets of rules that are specific to the cultural field they inhabit and in which they operate and interrelate professionally. In the most extreme case, this remoteness of the scholarly gaze cast upon the social world can take a subversively conservative political form, a situation illustrated by Bourdieu's analysis of Martin Heidegger's philosophy in relation to the rise of Nazism in Germany (Bourdieu 1991c). This follows directly from Bourdieu's earlier criticism of the philosophical field and in particular his persistent warnings concerning the fallacy of transcendental truth.

At this stage, however, Bourdieu also had to recognize that a multiplicity of viewpoints on the object of study can co-exist and that he himself had to objectivize his own temptation to speak from an absolute point of view. This is why his final works represent three different attempts at putting into practice the kind of "participant *objectivation*" and reflexive research practice he advocated, so as to test their scientific validity (Bourdieu 1999a), illustrate their epistemological relevance (Bourdieu 2000a) and, finally, engage with the ideas of other producers in the intellectual field through the mediation of his epistemological and theoretical understanding (Bourdieu 1998b; 2004b). Part of this later engagement was political in scope

and purpose, and was perceived at the time as conflictual by those cultural and intellectual producers operating in the fields that were investigated. In this sense, the reception by journalists of Bourdieu's work on the media (Schneidermann 1999) was not any warmer than that of his work on higher education by academics. Yet, after *Homo Academicus* (1988a) and *Practical Reason* (1998c), this was arguably Bourdieu's second inflexion regarding the definition and use of reflexivity as part of a theory of practice and action. This time what was at stake was objectivized knowledge as a source of empowerment and informed action (see Bouveresse 2004). This represented a significant evolution, and certainly a gap-bridging exercise, with regard to Bourdieu's early conceptualization of reflexivity as a social-scientific tool largely separate from and outside the reach of the observed "practicners", and radically different from the spontaneous intuitionism of the layperson. This has led to criticisms of self-closure, elitism, stasis, and even anti-humanism which Bourdieu sought to rebut both empirically and theoretically by showing how the social scientist could engage with the world from within and beyond the academic field and contribute to action upon it through his or her work by unveiling the unknown mechanisms of the established order, of *symbolic violence*, and sharing this knowledge in a reflexive and political alliance with the dominated – the "downtrodden" – as a counter-power. This echoed his stance that reflexivity is the only source of truly informed actions that could, beyond orthodoxy, break with *doxa* (Bourdieu 2001a).

Reflexivity as a reconstructing concept and its epistemological limits

Isn't sociology, which apparently undermines the foundations of reason and thereby its own foundations, capable of producing instruments for forging a rational discourse and even offering techniques for waging a politics of reason, a realpolitik of reason? (Bourdieu 1998c: 127)

Bourdieu's election to the *Collège de France* and his inaugural lecture provided him with a unique opportunity – not to say "need" – to clarify his understanding of *reflexivity*, in particular in relation to *doxa* and symbolic power (Bourdieu 1982a). These clarifications were all the more necessary as the partial interpretation of his theoretical corpus and, in particular, his notion of reflexivity as applied to

the generation of true social-scientific knowledge, had led to the questioning of the position of his work, thoughts and understanding in relation to the increasingly influential ultra-relativism of the "post-modern" discourse that radically called into question any claim of scientific objectivity. This had culminated in the Sokal hoax in the mid-1990s (Sokal 1996).

> The "postmoderns" in the humanities rely on the fragmentary and random nature of experience. Sociologists, historians, and philosophers see the laws of nature as social constructions. Cultural critics find the taint of sexism, racism, colonialism, militarism, or capitalism not only in the practice of scientific research but even in its conclusions.
>
> (Wacquant, in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 31)

Bourdieu's reflection on the matter resulted in the publication of diverse books and articles on reflexive sociology in the late 1980s to early 1990s (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992a, for example). It coincided with an inflexion in the focus of his research work and theoretical thinking, away from anthropological studies based on an objectified theoretical interpretation of empirical observations towards an understanding whereby the sociological object becomes the fight for the monopoly of legitimate representation. This announced the main themes that would be covered in more detail in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000a) and in his final lecture at the *Collège de France* (Bourdieu 2004b).

For Bourdieu, a reflexive sociology that would fully objectivize forms of rationality as linked to body and practice, themselves related to fields and *habitus*, did not lead to an understanding whereby the scientific field itself would and should dissolve in a "thinly-veiled nihilistic relativism" (Wacquant, in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 35), as in the "strong programme" of the sociology of science epitomized by Bruno Latour in France (Bourdieu, 2004b). On the contrary, a reflexive epistemological approach was first and foremost part of a scientific structuro-genetic project embedded in an autonomous intellectual field with its own *scientific* rationality and socio-historical conditions of emergence where discourse and practice are those of qualified scientific practitioners. A controversial aspect of Bourdieu's approach is that it would be a mistake to attribute similar reflexive qualities to the common-sense perception of "ordinary" people and, by extension, that any critical self-perception of laypeople caught in everyday practice was likely to

reflect, and thereby reinforce, the prevailing order and prevailing categories. Any true emancipation from the prevailing *doxa* has to be mediated by the reflexive social scientist.

It is along similar lines that Bourdieu has sought to rescue *in reason* his concept of reflexivity by differentiating it from the "postmodern" discourse and practice, on the basis that what is at stake is not who is right or wrong but the truth of the fight for truth. This is why Bourdieu declared that sociologists would have to deal increasingly in their object of study with the social sciences of the past (Bourdieu 1982a: 15–17). For Bourdieu, a truly reflexive and critical analysis of the academic field – and the sociological field within it – is not an exercise *per se*, nor is it a pure intellectual endeavour, or a self-reproducing discourse folding upon itself. It is not a complacent and narcissistic self-analysis of the knowledge producer either. When referring to his own personal trajectory and experience, Bourdieu always stresses that the purpose is to illustrate how the reflexive approach may be used by the scientist to objectivize his or her relations to the object of study as well as his or her own position and action within a field. This is particularly well explained in the first chapter of *Homo Academicus* (1988a), in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000a) and in the last chapter of *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004b). In order to bolster one's position of power in the intellectual field, one has to play the game according to the rules, that is to say that one has to find rational arguments to justify one's own understanding. *Pascalian Meditations* is, to a large extent, a theoretical attempt at reconciling reflexivity as a source of understanding (epistemic) and as a source of informed action (existential). This use of one's social past through self-socio-analysis was announced in *In Other Words: Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (1994d) and we know that at the time of his death Bourdieu was involved in such a project. Crucially, however, Bourdieu considered that reflexivity cannot be an exercise carried out individually and that it should be a common and shared endeavour (Bourdieu 1986b). This explains why, alongside the findings and theorizing of his own research publications (for example, Bourdieu 1988a), he has been active developing a "school of thought" strategy via the publication of specific academic journals such as the *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, multilingual translations, independent publishing and, eventually, direct interventions in public debates.

Bourdieu's last major published empirical and theoretical works, *The Weight of the World* (Bourdieu 1999a), *Pascalian Meditations* (2000a) and *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (2004b) demonstrate

this evolution. *The Weight of the World* is an attempt to put into practice, in the difficult context of direct sociological interviews, the reflexive social scientific approach advocated by Bourdieu. One of the purposes was to show how the theory may be applied in practice by giving precedence to the logic of the agents over the concerns of the observers so as to diminish the inherent relational imbalance that pervades all research methodologies:

> How can we claim to engage in the scientific investigations of presuppositions if we do not work to gain knowledge [science] of own presuppositions? We can do so principally by striving to make reflexive use of the findings of social science to control the effects of the survey itself and to engage in the process of questioning with a command of the inevitable effects of that process . . . the crucial difference is not between a science that effects a construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce.
>
> (Bourdieu 1999a: 608)

The difficulty is that the interviewer/observer must be able to include in his or her vision a description of the interviewee's experience from his or her own point of view (see Bourdieu & Eagleton 1999c: 273). In the end, however, the actual research methodology and the confidence in the capacity of the interviewers to self-objectify their understanding of the interviewees' points of view, clearly put the social scientists in a privileged position to decipher the discourse of others (see Myles 2004: 91–107). Beyond any sense of critical regression, elitism or even anti-humanism that can result from a certain interpretation of Bourdieu's writing, participant *objectivation* brings back the question of the origin of knowledge and the socio-historical conditions of its production and justification, which is a running theme in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000a). From reflexivity, as a methodological and epistemological pre-condition of knowledge, to reflexivity as a philosophical and almost ontological condition of truth, it is as if the concept has gone full circle. Ultimately, reflexivity suffers from its own methodological and theoretical *mise en abyme* which contains easily targeted aporia for those who have sought in turn to criticize Bourdieu's reflexive unveiling strategy (see, for example, Alexander 1995).

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In its attempt to depict the conditions of the socially dominated via the methodology of participant *objectivation*, *The Weight of the World* has much in common with Bourdieu's earlier work on the field of cultural production via the use of photography as an art form (Bourdieu *et al.* 1990a). It was not simply an intellectual endeavour, a piece of social research designed to test the feasibility of and implement epistemological best practice. It was also part of a conscious form of engagement in the political field; it is not by chance that the publication of the book in France coincided with the increasing presence of Bourdieu in public debates[3] and with the publication of controversial pamphlets that engaged critically with the modern *doxa* and symbolic power that Bourdieu saw as being reproduced in the discourse and practice in the media and in the political and economic field (Bourdieu 1998a; 1998b; 2000c; 2001a; 2001b). This prompted interesting comparisons with Sartre and the tradition of the *intellectuel engagé* and rekindled questions concerning Bourdieu's relation with Marxism. This more direct engagement took place at the same time as Bourdieu engaged with other fields of cultural production and with parts of the intellectual/academic field, trying to illustrate in the process how critical objectification could contribute to emancipation.

The concept of reflexivity is based on a phenomenological understanding of practice and action. As such it should be considered as a horizon, a guiding principle rather than a well-defined goal. Finally, reading the prefaces and post-faces, the re-editions and the English translations, we may also wonder if Bourdieu's pioneering use of reflexivity in the sociological field is not similar to that of Rousseau's pioneering use of autobiography in the literary field.

Notes

1. See an interesting review (Mialet 2003).
2. A collection of three texts published in 1962, 1972 and 1989.
3. As was the case when Bourdieu publicly supported strike action by French public servants in the mid-1990s.

Conclusion

Michael Grenfell

In the course of the four parts and twelve chapters of this book, a selection of Bourdieu's key concepts has been put under the microscope. In Part I, the key words were *biography*, *theory* and *practice*. Chapter 1 gave a sketch of Bourdieu's own life trajectory and related personal events to both the socio-historical environment that surrounded him throughout his career and the intellectual currents of which he formed a part. The emphasis here was on the ways Bourdieu's ideas must be understood in terms of his own personal background and the very real world events that presented themselves to him. It is worth insisting again that Bourdieu's work needs to be understood in terms of its *socio-genesis* and as an attempt to comprehend current practical social phenomena. Chapter 2 extended this discussion by showing how issues of *theory* and *pactice* were ever present in Bourdieu's method. His own theory of practice can be traced back to both the radical tradition from which he emerged and the particular philosophical currents that resonated most with his personal and intellectual impulses.

In these concepts, issues of *subjectivity* and *objectivity* emerge, and these were confronted directly in the Introduction to Part II. Here, it was necessary to draw attention explicitly to Bourdieu's philosophical approach to the primary foundations of human experience. *Structure* provided the key concept in linking the subjectivity of individual lives with the objectivity of what they shape and are shaped by. Phenomenology and anthropological structuralism provided the main focus for this discussion, together with other philosophers in the philosophy of the history of science. Subjectivity and objectivity

were in fact two sides of the same coin for Bourdieu and, in one sense, his entire oeuvre can be seen as an attempt to go beyond the common dichotomous realization of them in the social sciences. His was a science that was founded on the ambition of reconciling these two. The two chapters in Part II considered his primary "thinking tools" – *habitus* and *field* – as the fundamental foundations of his approach. The two are co-terminus in expressing the subjective and objective aspects of human facticity. Moreover, they can be operationalized in research practice (see Postscript). There are two points to emphasize. First, such concepts as these did not appear in a pre-formed way. They were developed in the face of the necessities arising from Bourdieu's engagement with empirical social problems. Secondly, not only did they evolve and develop as Bourdieu worked on a range of research projects, but their respective relationship to each other also changed. In the chronology of Bourdieu's output, *field* appears relatively late, but becomes perhaps the single most significant concept in his work.

The four concepts in Part III – "Field mechanisms" – took the nature and workings of fields a step further. The issues of theory and practice covered by Bourdieu are pertinent to any area of science – both human and physical. However, his own focus was on questions of society and its operations, in which social classification will always hold a defining position. The chapter on *social class* set Bourdieu's own understanding of the concept against those of others. How classes operate in and as an expression of field systems in Bourdieu's work is a crucial feature here. But, fields appear in many manifestations, other than socio-economic groupings. Some are microcosms; or, locally, semi-autonomous site contexts. Others join up and cross a range of fields: for example, the art field is best understood as an amalgamation of the artistic, commercial and political fields. Here lie issues of the form and content of various logics of individual field practices, as well as field boundaries and public and private representation. Such representations are articulated through the symbolic and material systems of fields.

The chapter on *capital* strongly argued that this concept allows for an understanding of the medium of field operations in which the economic, symbolic, social and cultural are in many ways interconvertible as part of the social world in flux. Capital is what oils the wheels of social mechanisms. Because the nature of any logic of practice is at base to produce distinction and differentiation, some forms of capital will always be valued more than others. These legitimate forms of capital constitute an orthodoxy; also implying an

opposing heterodoxy. *Doxa* is the concept Bourdieu uses for this "moral force" of setting the standards against which everything else is to be valued and judged, albeit implicitly and unconsciously. Field systems are mostly about how such orthodox forms – perhaps of the dominant social groups – are reproduced. There is a circularity in such an argument that might suggest an overly deterministic model of social systems. Nothing could be further from the truth for Bourdieu, and dynamic change is at the heart of his theory. The chapter on *hysteresis* shows what can happen when *habitus* and *field* get out of synch; in particular, the devastating effect there can be for the individuals when they find that "the world has passed them by" and their own capital no longer works in the field as it is presently constituted. The inherent inflation built into academic qualifications – more and more buys less and less – is a good example of the way field calculations might not end in anticipated profit in terms of the procurement of an improved social position in the (for instance, the employment) field.

Finally, in Part IV – "Field conditions" – the focus changed to looking more at individual aspects of fields; how fields were experienced and the potential this knowledge has for the way the world is viewed. The chapter on *interest* takes further the notion that fields operate according to dominant, orthodox forms of thinking and doing things, and explores how this is expressed through individual motives and actions. Such interests are always formed in anticipation of serving a particular end-goal, albeit unconsciously and implicitly. The implications of this insight are explored in order to test the extent of its effect and, indeed, where and when the principle does not apply. The chapter connects interest with interest in knowledge and science and develops Bourdieu's view of the way interest itself can be used to raise levels of objectivity in the science. The notion of universality is also considered in this chapter. The following chapter on *conatus* explicitly considers the way that the personal and collective can be expressed in a particular individual, including their psychological impulses. Further, this chapter addresses the way that Bourdieu, by adopting a term from antiquity, reconnects with a whole philosophical tradition in elucidating the private, the social, the religious and the scientific.

Implicit in Bourdieu's view of the world is that differentiation and distinction results in a kind of violence being perpetuated on those not belonging to the dominant social groups. The chapter on *suffering* presents the way in which such *symbolic violence* is manifest in the contemporary world and the very real effects for those who are

victims of its consequences. The main point here is that suffering can be either symbolic or material, or both, but each form is no less real. Part IV is brought to a close with a chapter on *reflexivity*. This aspect of Bourdieu's work is central – his is above all a reflexive method – and so it is apposite that it forms the focus of the final concept. The chapter sets out just what reflexivity meant for Bourdieu and, indeed, the way it took on an increasing profile as his work progressed in response to both his political and intellectual engagement. Above all, perhaps, reflexivity is a critical dimension to scientific research.

All these words – all these concepts. It must be stressed that this list of concepts is only a selection – albeit of the most significant – and others could have been included. For example, legitimacy, logic of practice, hexis, consecration, disposition, recognition (and mis-recognition), universal and others. It is a seeming paradox that such a developed and complex vocabulary should emerge from a sociologist who warned the would-be researcher to be "beware of words". The remainder of this Conclusion explores this paradox and finally offers further thoughts on what these individual concepts add up to.

Bourdieu wrote at a time when language itself was under scrutiny and, as noted in Chapter 1, the philosophy of man became a philosophy of language. The term "discourse" itself became a analytical metaphor for social systems, both material and ideational, and words were "interrogated" for their arbitrary signification. Bourdieu's hostility to postmodernism has been noted in this book, and one way of reading his project is to see it as an attempt to integrate notions of the arbitrary nature of language and social phenomena (probably most explicitly expressed in the concept of *cultural capital*) into a framework which is stable enough to be expressed in objectifiable terms. In other words, his methodology and concepts offer a language that stabilizes the terms of analysis so as to avoid a descent into the kind of hyper-relativity to which so many postmodern texts are prone. In this sense, Bourdieusian language, as expressed in the concepts presented in this book, can be read as an attempt to break with everyday language, to put common-sense interpretations of social phenomena under scrutiny, and uncover the generating structures in their emergent forms. However, that very same language is also intended to target the language of analysis of social scientists themselves, in order to attempt at least to purge resultant knowledge of its own socially biased constructions. This is why, for Bourdieu, the "truth is that truth is at stake". Bourdieu's own appropriation of antique words – for example, *habitus* and *conatus, hysteresis* – immediately renders the language "strange" and reminds the reader

of the full sense of these concepts. Others are expressed in more everyday language – *interest*, *field*, *capital* – and there is consequently greater care needed in their usage – to keep in mind what they imply. It is almost necessary to write these terms in italics in order to keep this point at the very forefront of our thinking with them. Not to do so is to run the risk of reifying the concepts themselves, making any particular interpretations of them its own orthodoxy, and to end in that ultimate act of Bourdieusian *mauvaise-foi* – to treat the concepts as more real than the things they are meant to represent. Such a way of working with them is no less than a transgression of the entire theory of practice as it falls into the "substantialist" trap referred to in the Introduction to Part II where aspects of social phenomena are taken to have concrete properties inscribed for all time as some kind of cultural essence (see Bourdieu 1998c: 4) rather than being analysable in terms of their relations within and between activities and people. At the same time, it is a mistake simply to take the concepts as loose terms which can be added to or developed in any convenient manner.

Each of the chapters in this book has been offered from an individual perspective, and it is clear that the separate authors have their particular concerns and interpretations. There is often a sense of the writers attempting to work out in their own terms an understanding of the implications of each concept and its practical exemplification. It is worth stressing again that the concepts are not stand alone, but rather need to be understood as integrative, as different facets of the same social process. Nevertheless, each concept has it own historical background, practical illustration, and particular usefulness. And, underlying each one is the necessity, both practical and philosophical, which gave rise to the concepts in the course of Bourdieu's work itself – first and foremost a practical engagement. Bourdieu insisted that he never "invented" a concept as the result of some sort of theoretical musing, but only employed a particular concept when it was needed. In practical terms, "thinking with these concepts" allows for insights and interpretations that are not available elsewhere and enables us to elucidate a range of social phenomena, not least the activity of conducting enquiries in the social and physical sciences itself. Nevertheless, it is also necessary to keep in mind the importance of acknowledging the philosophy that underlies them, both collectively and individually. As noted above, the notion of structure – in its subjective and objective sense – provides just such a link, and is the basis of Bourdieu's "existential analytics". In other words, these concepts are not just "metaphors" for interpreting data in a

loosely constructivist way: for example, that *habitus* is simply a way of considering individual biography and field is concerned with site contexts; and using the two together is a way of acknowledging the interaction between social agents and their environment. Such an approach overlooks the structural homologies between *habitus* and *field* and their common constituting logics of practice, the site-specific interplay between the two, the medium of that interaction, the way fields connect and evolve over time, and the relationship between orthodoxies and interests within and across fields. In other words, these concepts are not simply narrative tools to structure ethnographies, but epistemologically charged matrices brought to bear on social phenomena as they occur.

To think in these terms – these *key concepts* – is perhaps to begin to construct the kind of "new gaze", or *metanoia*, to which Bourdieu referred. It is to see the world through the eyes of one man – a French man who lived in the second half of the twentieth century and who expressed his surroundings through the disciplines of philosophy and sociology. There is a modernist project in this vision which takes us all the way back to the eighteenth century and the Age of Enlightenment, with its focus on rationality and the establishment of human rights. But, it requires a kind of reflexivity which immediately discloses the active biases in social processes that men and woman use to their advantage – for better or worse. It challenges academics and intellectuals to be reflexive in fields that are not renowned for self-disclosure. Moreover, it poses the question of the level of activity that needs to be mounted and the strategies for action on the part of radical intellectuals in raising a similar level of awareness in society at large. This, surely, is the final substantive aim behind Bourdieu's *key concepts*.

Methodological principles

Michael Grenfell

As noted in the Introduction to this book, it is rather unusual to deal with Bourdieu's concepts as discrete entities. Nevertheless, in doing so, each chapter has enabled an in-depth consideration of each term from a theoretical and practice perspective. However, it has been stressed on various occasions how Bourdieu's *theory of practice* is essentially a "theory of research practice". In other words, his key concepts only make sense when applied to practical research, and the whole *raison d'être* of the approach is that they should be used in new projects. The following sets out, in note form, the principal stages (or principles) for such a Bourdieusian approach to the analysis of social phenomena. It is offered almost as an *aide-memoire* for anyone setting out to use these concepts in practice. By *stages*, I wish to signify their chronological specificity in practice. However, that is not to imply any linearity and, in a sense, each is continually co-terminus in the course of conducting research. In this sense, *principles* may be a better word; although they are actualized in real time, and it is important not to lose the notion of their operationalization in practice. What is presented here is not meant as a prescription – these "thinking tools" need to be worked with creatively! At the same time, it is my conviction that any research project that does not include some element of each principle, or stage, will not be fully realizing the potential of Bourdieu's method.

A Bourdieusian approach to research practically depends on the adoption of three guiding principles:

1. The construction of the research object.
2. A three-level approach to studying the field of the object of research.
3. Participant *objectivation*.

A discussion of each of these follows.

The construction of the research object

The way in which the *object of research is constructed* is central to Bourdieu's approach. Bourdieu states:

> The *summum* of the art, in social science, is, in my eyes, to be capable of engaging very high "theoretical stakes" by means of very precise and often mundane empirical objects. We tend too easily to assume that the social or political importance of an object suffices in itself to grant importance to the discourse that deals with it. What counts, in reality, is the rigor of the *construction* of the object. I think that the power of a mode of thinking never manifests itself more clearly than in its capacity to constitute socially insignificant objects into scientific objects.
>
> (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 51)

Here, Bourdieu is encouraging researchers to approach any major significant object in an unexpected manner. He offers an example of the way he studied the effects of the monopoly of the state over the means of symbolic power in something as mundane as certificates of illness, invalidity and schooling. *Thinking relationally* is central to this "reconstruction". This includes the topography of the object of research: and is as true in making the everyday "strange", and thus breaking from the pre-constructed, as it is in objectifying the field of research which is targeting it, with all the presuppositions it possesses. Bourdieu follows Cassirer in making a distinction between *substantialist* and *relational* thinking. The former: "is inclined to treat the activities and preferences specific to certain individuals or groups in a society at a certain moment as if they were substantial properties, inscribed once and for all in a sort of biological or cultural *essence*" (Bourdieu 1998c: 4). In contrast, a relational way of thinking accepts that such activities and preferences as our research uncovers, are understandable only in terms of social spaces, positions

and relationships pertaining in a particular time and place. Bourdieu's own illustration is very helpful here:

> what is commonly called distinction, that is, a certain quality of bearing and manners, most often considered innate (one speaks of *distinction naturelle*, "natural refinement"), is nothing other than *difference*, a gap, a distinctive feature, in short, a *relational* property existing only in and through its relation with other properties. (*Ibid*.: 6)

Thinking relationally in research means seeing events in relation to people, organizations, time and place (for example, Who? When? Where?); in other words, the field site or context. Rather than taking the validity or utility of specific individual or institutional definitions at face value, it is necessary to understand them in terms of their location among a series of possible socially-positioned definitions and in relation to other definitions in use.

The object of research is often taken for granted by ordinary positivism, whereas with Bourdieu it should be seen as socially produced. This is equally true for what occurs in qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. Bourdieu gives several examples of the way a signified object of research become literally "more real" than the thing it is meant to represent. For example, the word "profession" (1992a: 241ff) which, when taken as an instrument rather than an object of research, leads to all sorts of assumptions grounded in the pre-constructed, and thus socially sanctioned – even by researchers.

Bourdieu fully acknowledges the methodological difficulties at stake. While you remain within the realms of the socially constructed, the orthodox view, there is no difficulty. However,

> as soon as you undertake to work on a genuine object, everything becomes difficult: "theoretical" progress generates added methodological difficulties. "Methodologists", for their part, will have no difficulty finding plenty to nit pick about in the operations that have to be carried out in order to grasp the constructed as best one can. (*Ibid*.)

In Bourdieu's approach, we might regard these operations as constituting a kind of *pre-reflexive* reflexivity – the *objectivation* of the research which is the object of the knowing subject – except, of course, it is not "pre-" but everywhere present in the research

process. This process of objectifying the construction of the research object is carried out through the use of the "conceptual tools" which Bourdieu has developed: *habitus*, *field*, *capital*, etc. Bourdieusian language is here used as an antidote to accepting everyday classifications and categories; as a means of breaking from orthodox language. Bourdieu saw that this break needed to occur not simply in terms of common everyday sense and language, but in the actual language of science. However, it is not enough to adopt these concepts as metaphors of analysis. A much more systematic engagement between the researcher and their data is necessary. Central to such a study is to regard the object in terms of field theory and to analyse it accordingly in relation to events, people and institutions.

A three-level approach to studying the field of the object of research

When asked explicitly by Wacquant (1992a: 104–7) to sum up this methodological approach, Bourdieu described it in terms of *three distinct levels* (see also Chapter 4):

1. Analyse the position of the field *vis-à-vis* the field of power.
2. Map out the objective structure of relations between the positions occupied by agents who compete for the legitimate forms of specific authority of which the field is a site.
3. Analyse the *habitus* of agents; the systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a deterministic type of social and economic condition.

It is possible to see how these three levels represent the various strata of interaction between *habitus* and *field*.

In level one, it is necessary to look at a *field* in relationship to other fields; in particular the recognized field of power. Ultimately, this is political power and government; although there are a number of mediating institutions and fields – royalty, international business, etc.

In level two, the structural topography of the field itself is considered: all those within it and the positions they hold. This positioning is expressed in terms of *capital* and its configurations. *C*apital can be expressed in terms of three forms: economic, social and cultural. "Economic" refers to money wealth; "social" to useful or prestigious network relations; and "cultural" to symbolically powerful cultural

attributes derived from education, family background and posses-sions. They are all *capital* because they act to "buy" positioning within the field. *Capital* therefore has value derived from the field as the recognized, acknowledged and attributed currency of exchange for the field so that it is able to organize itself and position those within it according to its defining principles. The generating prin-ciples of a field have a logic of practice, a common currency expressed through the medium of its *capital*. It defines what is and is not think-able and what is doable within the field by systems of recognizing, or not, which give differential value according to principles of scarcity and rarity. In other words, that which is most valued is most rare and thus sought after and therefore valuable; that which is most common is of least value.

In level three, individual agents within the field are analysed; their background, trajectory and positioning. This level is expressed in terms of individual features of the characteristics of individuals, but only in so far as they relate to the field, past and present. In other words, we are interested in how particular attributes, which are social in as much as they only have value in terms of the field as a whole. We are not concerned with individual idiosyncrasies. *Habitus* then directs and positions individuals in the field in terms of the capital configuration they possess and how this resonates, or not, with the ruling principles of logic of the field. We can then compare individuals, groups and the way structures intersect and resonate in the homologies set up in the course of the operations of this field with other fields. This implies greater attention being given to such aspects as biography, trajectory (life and professional) and site practice with respect to the logic of practice of field*s* in which they occur. The struc-ture of field*s*, their defining logic, derivation, and the way such logics are actualized in practice are important; especially those of official discourses, etc. Finally, it is the links between individuals (*habitus*), field structures, and the positionings both within and between fields, that form a conceptual framework for research (see Grenfell 1996 for an application of this three-level analysis to the area of teacher education; and Grenfell & Hardy 2007 to the study of art and edu-cational aesthetics).

Of course, there is a question about whether the researcher begins with level one, two or level three. In a sense, data collection possibly presupposes an initial gathering of personal – *habitus* – accounts (level three) as a way of building up an ethnography of field par-ticipants. However, it must be stressed that biographical data are not enough on their own. They also need to be analysed with respect

to field positions, structures, and their underlying logic of practice; and, most importantly, the relationship between *field* and *habtitus* – not just the one and/or the other. Finally, field analysis, and its interactions with individual *habitus*, need to be connected with a further analysis of the relations between the field and its position in the overall structures of fields of power. All three levels are then needed.

In order to construct such a field analysis, the issue of the traditional dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative approaches become less significant. Indeed, the researcher needs to obtain the best data analyses to undertake the construction of a relational analysis, both within and between fields. This may be Multiple Correspondence Analysis; documentary analysis; biographical studies; ethnographic case studies, etc.

What this three-level analysis amounts to in effect is a methodological application of a "theory of situatedness" or "existential analytics". Bourdieu did, however, anticipate criticism:

> The questioning of objectivism is liable to be understood at first as a rehabilitation of subjectivism and to be merged with the critique that naïve humanism levels at scientific objectification in the name of "lived experience" and the rights of "subjectivity". (1977b: 4)

However, he argued that such an approach was absolutely essential if we are to free ourselves of the mistakes of the past and "to escape from the ritual either/or choice between objectivism and subjectivism" (*ibid.*). Bourdieu's way of doing this was expressed in terms of this playing back and forth between *habitus* and *field*.

For Bourdieu, any theoretical view of the world, by the specialist or non-specialist, involved a symbolic assertion of truth in the struggle for *legitimation*; that is, for recognition of authenticity. This is why any theory of knowledge for Bourdieu had to be both ontological *and* political, since it represented a particular worldview or, *raison d'être*, together with the latent *interests* presented there. What Bourdieu's *theory of practice* is attempting to do is to look at the logic of these "points of view" in terms of the epistemological complementarity of objective structures and cognitive structures – but to do so in a way that applies the same epistemological approach to the researcher/philosopher as to the researched/theory of knowledge. It is one thing to make sense of practical action and knowledge in this

way, it is another to make sense *of this* making of sense. This leads us to the issue of *reflexivity*.

Participant *objectivation*

Reflexivity is at the heart of Bourdieu's method:

> One has to look into the object constructed by science (the social space or the field) to find the social conditions of possibility of the subject (*researcher*) and of his work in constructing the object (including *skholè* and the whole heritage of problems, concepts, methods, etc.) and so to bring to light the social limits of his act of objectivism . . . By turning the instruments of knowledge that they produce against themselves, and especially against the social universes in which they produce them, they equip themselves with the means of at least partially escaping from the economic and social determinisms that they reveal.
> (2000a: 120–21)

Skholè here refers to the "leisure time", the "pure gaze" of the intellectual researcher, disposed to study the world rather than be a part of it.

It is necessary to take the social conditions of objectifying thought into account in order to have the possibility of gaining freedom from them. The way to do this is through a reflexive method, but Bourdieu's approach has a particular character. It was not, for example, a simple awareness of socio-historical context, as encouraged in most qualitative research (*ibid*.: 183). Nor was it the self-referential and self-conscious habit of reflecting on the constructs employed in the research topic. He argued that this was pushed to an extreme in certain postmodernist approaches where the researcher becomes the object of the research rather than the thing itself (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1989d: 35):

> In order to free our thinking of the implicit, it is not sufficient to perform the return of thought onto itself that is commonly associated with the idea of reflexivity; and only the illusion of the omnipotence of thought could lead one to believe that the most radical doubt is capable of suspending the presuppositions, linked to our various affiliations, memberships, implications, that we engage in our thoughts . . . the most effective

> reflection is the one that consists in objectifying the subject of objectification. I mean by that, the one that dispossesses the knowing subject of the privilege it normally grants itself (and) to bring to light the presuppositions it owes to its inclusion in the order of knowledge. (2000a: 10)

For Bourdieu, objectivist or scholastic knowledge was formed in field contexts which shaped and influenced the means of expression themselves. Indeed, it was a fallacy to believe otherwise; that knowledge formed of a particular field was the *truth*. He argued that the bias in field knowledge had three principal forms: the position of the researchers in the social space; the orthodoxies of the field itself; and the simple fact of having "free time", liberated from the exigencies of having to act in the world – *skholè*. The only way of limiting the effects of such bias was to engage in an epistemological critique of this knowledge. In short, there was a necessity to employ the same epistemological approach to the objectifying subject that was used to produce knowledge about the object of research in the first place; in other words, to direct his or her own epistemological "thinking tools" to those who produced the research knowledge:

> I cannot comprehend this practical comprehension unless I comprehend both what distinctively defines it, as opposed to conscious, intellectual comprehension, and also the conditions (linked to the positions in social space) of these two forms of comprehension. (2000a: 130)

In case this should again suggest an extreme state of personal self-referential introspection, the same principle applies to attempts to grasp the practical knowledge of others: the need to understand the conditions of those attempts that actually sets the limits on what is "thinkable and unthinkable".

For scholarly or academic knowledge, the way to avoid such a fallacy was first to operate an *objectivation* of the object of study: why it was chosen and what brought it about. This objectification is particularly important where State sponsorship of research funding influences outcomes. Secondly, there is the need to position the particular terms of the discipline used in the research; how the object of research is constructed and the limits of the terms employed. This objectification also implies an "epistemological reading" of research. Rather than "crush ones rivals" through an alternative paradigmatic position, there is the need to consider research on its own terms or

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contest those terms with alternatives. In other words, the responsibility rests with the reader as much as the writer to objectify the processes of objectification and in so doing objectify themselves. Finally, as above, there is the recognition of *skholè*, or leisure, inherent in scholastic *fields*, and its effect in terms of separating out practical from theoretical knowledge. Only the latter is produced in the academic space which infuses it with the symbolic values and, thus, structures and dispositions dominant within that space. This understanding further leads to a *misrecognition* of such knowledge and its functional role (see Grenfell 2004a: ch. 7 for further discussion).

Reflexivity therefore involves the use of Bourdieu's concepts in the process of academic discourse, *as an objectivation of the knowing subject – participant objectivation*. It amounts to the use of such terms as *habitus* and *field*, not only in analysing a particular context, but in analysing the construction of the analysis as it is occurs. Bourdieu's approach, and the language represented by it, is itself product of a certain position in the academic space which needs to be understood in terms of the socio-historical structure of his academic *field* at a particular time. Current research needs to build a similar understanding into the formulation of its practice, both in terms of data-handling techniques and the presentation of resultant findings.

Conclusion

I have set out this three-stage/principle methodology in a linear way. However, as noted above, in reality all three parts are somehow co-terminus, they anticipate, assume, and acknowledge each other at one and the same time. Bourdieu himself never offered his own analyses in this systematic fashion. Nevertheless, we do find that they are each present in his empirical work. In fact, the method itself only emerged in a comprehensive form in the course of many years of working with the *theory of practice* and applying his conceptual thinking tools *in* practice. These principles (or stages) can consequently be understood as the bedrock of the "realist third way" (2004b: 200) he sought to establish within the scientific community and, finally, the public at large.

Chronology

The following sets out a chronology of significant life and professional events, together with principal publications. (For further details see Grenfell 2004b)

1 August 1930	Born in Denguin (Hautes-Pyrénées), France.
1941–47	Lycée de Pau.
1948–51	Lycée Louis-le Grand, Paris.
1951–54	École Normale Supérieure, Paris.
1954	Agrégé de philosophie.
1954–55	Teacher at the Lycée, Moulins.
1955	Goes to Algeria as part of military service.
1958	Publication of *Sociologie de l'Algérie*.
1960–61	Teacher at the Faculté des lettres, Paris.
1961–64	"Maître de conferences" at the Faculté des lettres, Lille.
2 November 1962	Marries Marie-Claire Brizard (three sons: Jérôme, Emmanuel and Laurent).
1963	Publication: *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie*.
1964	"Directeur d'études", École Pratique des Hautes Etudes (subsequently (1977) Écoles des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)), Paris. Director of *Centre de Sociologie Européenne*.
1964	Publication of *Le déracinement, la crise de l'agriculture traditionelle en Algérie*; and *Les héritiers*.
1964–84	"Chargé de cours", École Normale Supérieure, Paris.
1964–92	Series Editor: "Le sens common" (*Éditions de Minuit*).
1965	Publication of *Un art moyen*.
1966	Publication of *L'amour de l'art*.
1968	Publication of *Le métier de sociologue*.
1970	Publication of *La reproduction*.
1972	Publication of *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*.
1975	Founder and Director of *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*.

1979	Publication of *La distinction*.
1980	Publication of *Le sens pratique* and *Questions de sociologie*.
13 December 1981	Organizes a petition and campaign with Michel Foucault and other "intellectuals" against the military take-over in Poland and the suppression of "Solidarnosc".
1981	Following the election of a Socialist President (Mitterand) and parliamentary majority, invited to participate in a Collège de France committee on education reform.
1982	Nominated Chair of Sociology at the Collège de France. Publication of *Leçon sur la leçon* (Inaugural lecture at the *Collège de France*) and *Ce que parler veut dire*.
1984	Publication of *Homo Academicus*.
1985	Publication of "*Proposations pour l'enseignement de l'avenir*" (Collège de France report).
1987	Publication of *Choses Dites*.
1988	Publication of *L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger*.
1989	Publication of *La noblesse d'état*; and of the report of a commission set up by François Gros (Minster of Education) and chaired by Bourdieu – *Princples pour une réflexion sur les contenus d'enseignement*.
1992	Publication of *Réponses*; *Les règles de l'art*.
1993	Awarded the Gold Medal from the CNRS
1993	Publication of *La misère du monde*.
1994	Publication of *Raisons pratiques*.
4 December 1995	Support for strikers against the "Plan Juppé" (welfare reform). Support for striking miners.
1996	Sets up the publishing house, *Liber-Raisons d'agir*. Publication of *Sur la télévision*.
1996–97	Support for the British author Salman Rushdie, who had been condemned to death by Iranian leaders.
1997	Publication of *Méditations pascaliennes*.
1998	Publication of *Contre-feux*.
2000	Publication of *Les structures sociales de l'économie*.
28 March 2001	Final lecture at the Collège de France.
2001	Publication of *Science de la science et réflexivité*; *Contre-feux 2*; and, the film, *La sociologie est un sport de combat*.
23 January 2002	Death from cancer.
2002	Publication of *Interventions: Science sociale et action politique*.
2003	Publication of *Images d'Algérie*.
2004	Publication of *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse*.

Bibliography

The following list contains all the works cited in this book. In the case of Bourdieu, it also contains other references which will be of interest to the reader. I have stressed at various parts of the book that it is important to read Bourdieu's texts against the background of the socio-historical period from which they arose. In a professional output that covered some fifty years this context changed remarkably; especially as it represented the second half of the twentieth century. It is consequently always important to set the date of works translated into English against their original French publication date. However, in each case in the text and below, as a convenience to the reader who is most likely working in English, the date of the English version is given first. The French date then follows as a way of indicating its original date of publication. References given in French only indicate works not yet in published translation. It is noted in the text if the French version is being cited by the author. Furthermore, rather than separate out single authored works by Bourdieu from those which he co-wrote and collaborated with others, I have set the work in its chronological place and followed this with details of the other authors involved.

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