

Introduction to Part VI

In the space of less than two decades, Pierre Bourdieu's (1930–2002) work has become remarkably influential in English-language sociology. There are two reasons for this, the most obvious of which is that Bourdieu has a great deal to say about how social life works and how it should be studied. At the same time, he has incorporated his insights into an incredible range of empirical investigations. In fact, Bourdieu bristled at being called a “theorist,” a label that he considered too confining. Of the major contemporary theorists, Bourdieu has had the most concrete impact on the work of other sociologists. This is not simply a matter of numbers of citations; Bourdieu's concepts are regularly adopted and used by empirically oriented sociologists in their own studies. As a result, terms such as “*habitus*,” “field,” and “cultural capital” have become commonplace in major sociological journals.

The second reason for Bourdieu's remarkable influence is that he occupies a unique position in the field of contemporary social theory. Bourdieu shares some intellectual roots with many of the “poststructuralist” or “postmodernist” French theorists, such as Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida. Like them, Bourdieu is interested in language and its connection to power. But in many ways, Bourdieu is a more profoundly *social* theorist – for him, language is always employed by particular actors for particular ends. He has also been more consistently engaged with the classical themes of sociological theory, particularly the connection between structure and action. In this, he has much in common with Anthony Giddens. But while Giddens has attempted to work out a more or less systematic theory of “structuration,” Bourdieu has instead preferred to develop conceptual tools intended to illuminate the process of social life in concrete settings.

Bourdieu was originally trained as an anthropologist working within the structuralist tradition of Claude Lévi-Strauss. His first published studies, based on his fieldwork in Algeria, were written in this perspective. Eventually, Bourdieu began to move away from these studies both topically and theoretically. His work came to be appreciated by English-language sociologists only toward the end of the 1970s, with the translation of *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), and it has grown with his major theoretical work, *The Logic of Practice* (1990). Bourdieu, however, did not want to be seen as just a theorist. In fact, he strongly criticized what he termed “theoretical theory” – that is, work that is more concerned with building

abstract systems of categories and concepts than with using them to understand the world. Instead, he chose to link his theoretical work to his empirical investigations. This includes the vast number of scholarly articles and many major books on diverse topics that he has produced. Among them are studies of the tastes of French social classes (*Distinction* [1984]), education (*Homo Academicus* [1988] and *The State Nobility* [1996]), and artistic and literary fields (*Free Exchange* [1995] and *The Rules of Art* [1996]). His recent work examines the threat of globalization to the achievements of social struggles and the building of relatively autonomous social fields.

Born in the Béarn region of southwestern France, Bourdieu studied at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. He spent time in Algeria, where he did his early fieldwork, and later began to gain academic notice in France. In 1981, Bourdieu was awarded a chair at the prestigious Collège de France, a position he held until his retirement. He remained active in a wide variety of research projects throughout his life, and was the subject of a feature-length documentary, *La sociologie est un sport de combat* ("Sociology is a Combat Sport").

False Divides

Central to Bourdieu's intellectual project was his attempt to overcome a chronic fault line in sociological theory. In Anglo-American sociology, this fault line creates a series of dichotomies, such as micro- versus macro-sociology, qualitative versus quantitative studies, and the study of action versus the study of institutions. Of course, there is no necessary connection among these pairs of labels. For example, some micro-sociology is quantitative and some qualitative sociology focuses on institutions. But in practice, this divide defines two relatively distinct models for sociology.

Bourdieu used yet another set of labels to invoke this divide – subjectivism versus objectivism. His use of these particular terms largely arose from the context of French social science in the 1960s, when the structuralist anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss was the dominant representative of the objectivist mode of thinking. Structuralism was in many ways the descendent of Durkheim's work, particularly his later examinations of culture as in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Bourdieu himself was trained as a structuralist, and elements of this tradition remain in his work. A good example of this was Bourdieu's enduring interest in examining the stable cultural oppositions that appear in language, physical space, and social space. But the structuralists attempted to understand the meaning of such oppositions by taking an objective, "scientific" point of view from outside of the action being observed. It thus tended to explain the structuring of action only as the result of external forces that either push people in one direction or constrain them from going in another. Bourdieu, in contrast, argued for a social science based on the study of the doings of actors who always have some practical knowledge about their world even if they cannot articulate that knowledge.

Bourdieu's vision of social science challenged not only objectivist accounts, but also subjectivist ones. In subjectivist accounts the observer takes the individual's own motivations as the source of the action. The major representative of this approach

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in France was Jean-Paul Sartre, but it is also characteristic of the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz and some forms of interactionism and ethnomethodology. Bourdieu criticizes this way of thinking because it fails to grasp the cultural or material constraints that shape people's actions, making each action "a kind of antecedent-less confrontation between the subject and the world" (1990: 42). In short, objective accounts can help us understand structure, and subjective accounts can help us understand action. But both are one-sided in that they divorce action from structure. Bourdieu insisted that both structure and action are necessary components of any properly specified theory of social life: they are deeply interrelated. Structures are "structuring" in the sense that they guide and constrain action. But they are also "structured" in the sense that they are generated and reproduced by actors. Ultimately, Bourdieu called for a "genetic structuralism": a sociology that uses the intellectual resources of structural analysis, but approaches structures in terms of the ways in which they are produced and reproduced in action.

Relational Analysis

To understand the dynamic relationship between structure and action, Bourdieu contended, is to enter into a *relational analysis* of social tastes and practices. By "relational," Bourdieu meant that tastes and practices are organized by actors' relative locations in social space. This relational analysis is oriented by three central concepts – *positions*, *position-taking* ("practices"), and *dispositions* ("*habitus*"). The first two terms are relatively simple. Actors occupy positions in social space relative to one another. Such positions may be defined by, for example, occupation, education, or proximity to power. What matters, however, is not how positions are measured, but that people stake their claims to social status on such positions and therefore define themselves through them. Positions are maintained and signaled to others by a process of position-taking (Bourdieu sometimes refers to this in French as "*prises de position*"). Position-taking refers to the choices that actors make that signal their positions to one another in symbolic terms. For example, certain social positions are signaled by styles of dress, choices in leisure activities, or tastes in art and literature.

The third term, dispositions, or "*habitus*," is key to Bourdieu's analysis. Bourdieu stressed that there is no *direct* connection between positions and forms of position-taking. Positions are associated with certain sets of practices, but occupying a position does not cause a person to adopt these practices. There is also no *necessary* connection between the two. In different times and different places, different sets of practices work just as well to signal a given social position. Bourdieu argued that it is the *habitus* that mediates between positions and position-taking. In other words, the *habitus* is the site of the interplay between structure and practice. *Habitus* refers to systems of dispositions that are shaped by the experiences of actors in particular positions in the social structure. These dispositions therefore "generate and organize practices and representations" (Bourdieu 1990: 53). The *habitus* does not operate as a set of strict rules about what to do or not do, or what to like or not like. Instead, it works as a set of loose guidelines that orient

actors, though actors are not necessarily conscious of them. Because they are loose guidelines, these dispositions are very flexible, even though they are deeply rooted. They leave a great deal of room for improvisation and are easily applied to new settings. As the term suggests, *habitus* is acquired through repetition. In order for us to live in a social world, we require the kind of orientation and guidelines to action and awareness that *habitus* provides.

A former rugby player, Bourdieu often used the metaphor of the game to convey an understanding of social life. But by "game" he did not mean mere diversions or entertainment. Rather, he meant the experience of being passionately involved in an activity in which the mental and physical are merged in action. In a game, there are formal rules, but also a constant need to improvise strategy according to an unarticulated but ingrained "sense" of the game. Our experience teaches us characteristic ways of generating new actions. We incorporate into our *habitus* a sense of what we can "reasonably" expect in a given situation. This shapes how we choose careers, how we decide which people are "right" for us to date or marry, and how we raise our children. These taken-for-granted dispositions of the *habitus* can sometimes lead to partial or distorted understandings, or *misrecognition*. Bourdieu argued that participation in any set of social practices embeds us in characteristic misrecognitions. He observed this during his early research in Algeria. The French colonists understood themselves as part of a civilizing mission in which modern France would help traditional Algeria. But the French systematically misrecognized the power and exploitation that were endemic to the French presence. These sparked the Algerian struggle for independence and became manifest in the bloody French effort to repress it.

Bourdieu considered *habitus* to be the central object of analysis for sociology. It is on the basis of dispositions that Bourdieu defined social groups (including social classes) since those who occupy similar positions will have the same *habitus*. The problem is that while positions and position-taking can both be observed directly, *habitus* cannot. Because of this, Bourdieu's empirical studies often follow a common method. First, he outlines the "social space" of positions and the "symbolic space" of position-takings and shows how they map onto one another. Then, he uses this correspondence as a guide to reconstruct the collective *habitus* of key sets of actors in the particular field in question.

The Logic of "Fields"

Bourdieu's relational analyses are tied to fields. This is because the positions that actors occupy and the practices that signal and maintain their positions are specific to particular fields. What counts as a "field"? Broadly speaking, a field is a domain of social life that has its own rules of organization, generates a set of positions, and supports the practices associated with them. Bourdieu suggested that there is some connection between fields (a person occupying a dominant position in one field will often occupy a dominant position in another), but they are at least partially autonomous. One can think of social fields as analogous to sports fields. A soccer field, for example, is simply the terrain upon which the game is played.

The players' positions are those which the game must play out for a particular player. With improvisation and autonomy, the positions are arrayed within boundaries for action and reaction. And like players, actors occupy different positions. For example, both participants in the game have particular sets of opportunities. Bourdieu saw action in the field as the result of many of these

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Economic and Cultural

The possession of different forms of capital, organization of fields, and the practices associated with them. The field of culture is very different from the field of economic capital. Bourdieu often discusses – economic capital – the possession, control, and conversion of capital is a symbolic form of resources. Instead, it is a form of high educational achievement. Weber's discussion of capital: social and cultural capital. *Symbolic capital* is the capability of actors to occupy positions. Each of the forms of capital. Just as one can cash in economic capital to attain a job

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The players' positions are arrayed in this space and it provides boundaries within which the game must proceed. But the field itself cannot dictate the actions of any particular player. Within the boundaries set by the field, there is room for improvisation and autonomy. Similarly, social fields provide the terrain upon which positions are arrayed and within which position-takings occur. They provide boundaries for action, but within these boundaries they allow creative improvisation. And like players on a soccer field, participants in social fields occupy different positions. For example, a small-town lawyer and a Supreme Court justice are both participants in the legal field. Their particular positions in the field open particular sets of opportunities for them, as well as particular sites of contention. Bourdieu saw action in a field not as a static reflection of established positions, but as the result of many contending projects of position-taking.

Bourdieu's work has received such a wide audience in part because he has not constrained himself to the study of any one social field. Some of the fields that Bourdieu has studied in his empirical work include the political field, the literary and artistic fields, and the field of education. Because each field has its own structure, the oppositions that occur and the way they are signaled may vary. Bourdieu spoke of the "rules of the game" that accompany a particular field. People who have been connected with a field for a long time may not be conscious of the rules of the game because they seem so natural. But to a newcomer, the rules can seem strange. Higher education is a good example. Children of highly educated parents have a sense of how to pick an elite college and how to interact with their professors once they get there. To first-generation college students who have not internalized the tacit rules of the game, these things can seem very foreign and even mysterious. As a result, these students can have a much harder time adapting to and succeeding in college life.

Economic and Cultural Capital

The possession of different forms of "capital" provides the basic structure for the organization of fields, and thus the generation of forms of *habitus* and the practices associated with them. It should be noted, however, that Bourdieu's use of the term is very different from that of Marx. There are two kinds of capital that Bourdieu often discusses – *economic capital* and *cultural capital*. Economic capital rests on the possession, control, or proximity to wealth or property. In contrast, cultural capital is a symbolic form of capital in the sense that it does not refer to tangible resources. Instead, it designates the cultural knowledge or prestige associated with high educational achievement. This distinction is in many ways analogous to Weber's discussion of class and status. Bourdieu also discussed two other kinds of capital: social and symbolic. *Social capital* is based on social connections with others. *Symbolic capital* is the most complex of these concepts. It refers to the capability of actors to use practices as symbols in order to claim and maintain positions. Each of the forms of capital is at least partially transferable to other forms. Just as one can cash in stocks to buy real estate, a person can "cash in" social capital to attain a job that increases economic capital.

These forms of capital structure the oppositions that occur in any particular field. Although the exact nature of the oppositions vary from field to field, Bourdieu generally discussed two dimensions in which capital orders social space. The most basic dimension is what Bourdieu called *capital volume*, which distinguishes between positions with a great deal of capital overall (professionals, private-sector executives) and those without much capital of any kind (unskilled workers, small farmers). This opposition of positions corresponds to culturally opposed sets of practices and tastes (golf and champagne on the one hand, fishing and beer on the other). This contrast between the high and the low is so obvious to most members of any society that not much energy has to go into maintaining the social distance that goes along with it. Much more energy goes into maintaining the second dimension, which might be called the *capital composition*. This dimension distinguishes between positions that are relatively high in economic capital and those that are relatively high in cultural capital. Those positions with relatively high overall capital volume are generally the most invested in maintaining this opposition. This is interesting, because it shifts attention from the opposition between the elites and the masses to the struggle *between* different elites over the control of symbolic goods. As Bourdieu claimed, "minimum objective difference in social space can coincide with maximum subjective distance. This is partly because what is 'closest' presents the greatest threat to social identity" (Bourdieu 1990: 137).

Reading Bourdieu

Bourdieu constantly tried to signal his theoretical positions to his readers. He did this not only in his arguments, but also in his writing style. This can make it difficult to read his work for the first time. Understanding what Bourdieu is doing and why he is doing it can help, however. There are two stylistic elements that are most baffling to new readers. The first is the self-conscious circularity of the sentences. English-language readers who are used to a more linear writing style are often bothered by this, though the style will seem more familiar to those who have some practice reading French social theory. By writing in this manner, Bourdieu wanted to show where his argument might diverge from the reader's assumptions. The second element that causes some confusion is the use of what Bourdieu called a "hierarchy of text." The main text is interspersed with passages printed in a smaller font. This is meant to break the formal façade of scientific argument with less formal asides and examples that show the development of the ideas. It is also intended to bridge the distance between author and reader by making the text more like a conversation.

The readings that follow are not meant to cover the entire range of Bourdieu's writing. Instead, they illustrate key points of his theoretical arguments, particularly regarding *habitus*, capital, and field. The first selection, "Social Space and Symbolic Space," is an argument for the importance of relational analysis. It is the most plainly written of the four essays, since it was originally presented as a lecture to introduce his work on French society to a Japanese audience. The second reading, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practices," from *The Logic of Practice*, is a more theoretical treatment of

the concept of *habitus* and the symbolization of social space. *Habitus* is oriented to practice, and tells us, that we can see it in the way it stresses the social nature of the field of an individual rather than the positions that result from the same way as is the case with the field.

The last selection, "The Field of Cultural Production," shows the way different fields of power are organized as an example of the way in which this field has its own considerations of power and status, simultaneously by reference to the field. High status in the field of art is not to "art for art's sake" but to the field of art, rather than to the artist.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. "The Division of Labor by Richard Nice. (Class structure and social capital: A study of the class structure of French society.)" (pp. 1-100.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *Practical Reason: Toward a Common Sense of Reason*. Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Practical Reason: Toward a Common Sense of Reason*. Thompson. (Translated by Richard Nice. Harvard University Press.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1995. "The Logic of Practice: The origins of the concept of habitus." (A sustained development of the concept of "art for art's sake.")
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1995. *Practical Reason: Toward a Common Sense of Reason*. University Press. (Translated by Richard Nice.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2000. *Practical Reason: Toward a Common Sense of Reason*. Loïc Wacquant. (Translated by Loïc Wacquant. Especially on the importance of the concept of habitus.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Pierre Bourdieu. 2000. *Practical Reason: Toward a Common Sense of Reason*. IL: University of Chicago Press. (Expanded in question form.)
- Calhoun, Craig. 2000. *Practical Reason: Toward a Common Sense of Reason*. *Theorists*, ed. George Y. Tompkins. (Introduction and overview of Bourdieu's work.)

the concept of *habitus* and the way it mediates between the social space of positions and the symbolic space of position-taking. The stress is on the way that the *habitus* is oriented to concrete practices. It is only by studying practices, Bourdieu tells us, that we can see the connection between structure and action. Bourdieu also stresses the social nature of the *habitus*. Even when we are speaking of the *habitus* of an individual rather than a group, we are talking about a set of internalized dispositions that result from social interaction. The *habitus* is therefore social in the same way as is the concept of "self" in the writing of George Herbert Mead.

The last selection is example of Bourdieu's interest in analyzing distinct fields. "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed" discusses the way different forms of capital structure the literary field, which Bourdieu uses as an example of artistic production more generally. Bourdieu shows that while this field has its own organizing logic, it is not completely separate from considerations of power. Oppositions between different sets of positions are structured simultaneously by relation to the economic market and by claims to artistic purity. High status in the field demands not just talent, or vision, but also a commitment to "art for art's sake." This means producing works specifically designed for the field of art, rather than the market.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (An analysis of the French class structure focusing especially on the connection between positions and position-takings.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (Bourdieu's most systematic statement of his theory.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Edited and introduced by John B. Thompson. Translated by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (A collected series of essays on language, politics, and their connections.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1996. *The Rules of Art*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (A study of the origins of the French literary field in the work of Flaubert and Baudelaire. A sustained development of Bourdieu's concept of field and his analysis of the notion of "art for art's sake.")
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (A series of lectures that provides the most accessible point of entry to Bourdieu's ideas. This is a particularly important source for those new to Bourdieu.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2003. *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market (2)*. Translated by Loïc Wacquant. London: Verso. (A collection of Bourdieu's recent political analyses, especially on the threats neoliberal globalization poses to culture and intellectuals and the importance of an alternative form of internationalism.)
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (A clarification of various questions about Bourdieu's work, expounded in question and answer form.)
- Calhoun, Craig. 2001. "Pierre Bourdieu," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Major Social Theorists*, ed. George Ritzer, pp. 696-730. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. (An introduction to and overview of Bourdieu's sociology.)

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Chapter 19

Social Space and Symbolic Space [1994]

Pierre Bourdieu

I think that if I were Japanese I would dislike most of the things that non-Japanese people write about Japan. Over twenty years ago, at the time when I began to do research on French society, I recognized my irritation at American ethnologies of France in the criticism that Japanese sociologists, notably Hiroshi Mamiya and Tetsuro Watsuji, had levied against Ruth Benedict's famous book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. Thus, I shall not talk to you about the "Japanese sensibility," nor about the Japanese "mystery" or "miracle." I shall talk about France, a country I know fairly well, not because I was born there and speak its language, but because I have studied it a great deal. Does this mean that I shall confine myself to the particularity of a single society and shall not talk in any way about Japan? I do not think so. I think, on the contrary, that by presenting the model of social space and symbolic space that I constructed for the particular case of France, I shall still be speaking to you about Japan (just as, in other contexts, I would be speaking about Germany or the United States). For you to understand fully this discourse which concerns you and which might seem to you full of personal allusions when I speak about the French *homo academicus*, I would like to encourage you to go beyond a particularizing reading which, besides being an excellent defense mechanism against analysis, is the precise equivalent, on the reception side, of the curiosity for exotic particularism that has inspired so many works on Japan.

My work, and especially *Distinction*, is particularly exposed to such a reading. Its theoretical model is not embellished with all the marks by which one usually recognizes "grand theory," such as lack of any reference to some empirical reality. The notions of social space, symbolic space, or social class are never studied in and for themselves; rather, they are tested through research in which the theoretical and the empirical are inseparable and which mobilizes numerous methods of observation

Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Space," pp. 627-38 from "Social Space and Symbolic Space: Introduction to a Japanese Reading of *Distinction*," *Poetics Today*, 12: 4 (1991). Copyright © 1991 by the Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, Tel Aviv University. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the publisher, Duke University Press.

and measurement – quantitative and qualitative, statistical and ethnographic, macrosociological and microsociological (all of which are meaningless oppositions) – for the purpose of studying an object well defined in space and time, that is, French society in the 1970s. The report of this research does not appear in the language to which certain sociologists, especially Americans, have accustomed us and whose appearance of universality is due only to the imprecision of a vocabulary hardly distinguishable from everyday usage (I shall mention only one example, the notion of “profession”). Thanks to a discursive montage which facilitates the juxtaposition of statistical tables, photographs, excerpts from interviews, facsimiles of documents, and the abstract language of analysis, this report makes the most abstract coexist with the most concrete, a photograph of the president of the Republic playing tennis or an interview with a baker with the most formal analysis of the generative and unifying power of the habitus.

My entire scientific enterprise is indeed based on the belief that the deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as a “special case of what is possible,” as Bachelard puts it, that is, as an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations. Concretely, this means that an analysis of French social space in the 1970s is comparative history, which takes the present as its object, or comparative anthropology, which focuses on a particular cultural area: in both cases, the aim is to try to grasp the invariant, the structure in each variable observed.

I am convinced that, although it has all the appearance of ethnocentrism, an approach consisting of applying a model constructed according to this logic to another social world is without doubt more respectful of historical realities (and of people) and above all more fruitful in scientific terms than the interest in superficial features of the lover of exoticism who gives priority to picturesque differences (I am thinking, for instance, of what has been said and written, in the case of Japan, about the “culture of pleasure”). The researcher, both more modest and more ambitious than the collector of curiosities, seeks to apprehend the structures and mechanisms that are overlooked – although for different reasons – by the native and the foreigner alike, such as the principles of construction of social space or the mechanisms of reproduction of that space, and that the researcher seeks to represent in a model aspiring to a *universal validity*. In that way it is possible to register the real differences that separate both structures and dispositions (habitus), the principle of which must be sought not in the peculiarities of some national character – or “soul” – but in the particularities of different *collective histories*.

The Real is Relational

In this spirit I will present the model I constructed in *Distinction*, first cautioning against a “substantialist” reading of analyses which intend to be structural or, better, relational (I refer here, without being able to go into detail, to the opposition suggested by Ernst Cassirer between “substantial concepts” and “functional or relational concepts”). The “substantialist” and naively realist reading considers

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the belief that the deepest logic hinges into the particularity of but with the objective of concepts as Bachelard puts it, that is, as durations. Concretely, this means that it is comparative history, which is comparative history, which is comparative history, which focuses on a history to grasp the invariant, the

appearance of ethnocentrism, according to this logic to another historical realities (and of people) the interest in superficial features and the difference (I am thinking, in the case of Japan, about more modest and more ambitious structures and mechanisms - by the native and the foreigner) the space or the mechanisms of which seeks to represent in a model possible to register the real differences (habitus), the principle of the national character - or "soul" stories.

in *Distinction*, first cautioning that they intend to be structural or, to go into detail, to the oppositional concepts" and "functional" naively realist reading considers

each practice (playing golf, for example) or pattern of consumption (Chinese food, for instance) in and for itself, independently of the universe of substitutable practices, and conceives of the correspondence between social positions (or classes, thought of as substantial sets) and tastes or practices as a mechanical and direct relation. According to this logic, naive readers could consider as a refutation of the model the fact that, to take a perhaps facile example, Japanese or American intellectuals pretend to like French food, whereas French intellectuals like to go to Chinese or Japanese restaurants; or that the fancy shops of Tokyo or Fifth Avenue often have French names, whereas the fancy shops of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré display English names, such as "hairstylist." Another example which is, I believe, even more striking: in Japan, the rate of participation in general elections is highest among the least educated women of rural districts, whereas in France, as I demonstrated in an analysis of nonresponse to opinion polls, the rate of nonresponse - and of indifference to politics - is especially high among women and among the least educated and the most economically and socially dispossessed. This is an example of a false difference that conceals a real one: the apathy associated with dispossession of the means of production of political opinions, which is expressed in France as simple absenteeism, translates, in the case of Japan, as a sort of apolitical participation. We should ask further what historical conditions (and here we should invoke the whole political history of Japan) have resulted in the fact that conservative parties in Japan have been able, through quite particular forms of clientelism, to benefit from the inclination toward unconditional delegation deriving from the conviction of not being in possession of the *statutory* and *technical* competence which is necessary for participation.

The substantialist mode of thought, which characterizes common sense - and racism - and which 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*, leads to the same kind of error, whether one is comparing different societies or successive periods in the same society. Some would thus consider the fact that, for example, tennis or even golf is not nowadays as exclusively associated with dominant positions as in the past, or that the noble sports, such as riding or fencing (or, in Japan, the martial arts), are no longer specific to nobility as they originally were, as a refutation of the proposed model, which figure 19.1, presenting the correspondence between the space of constructed classes and the space of practices, captures in a visual and synoptic way. An initially aristocratic practice can be given up by the aristocracy - and this occurs quite frequently - when it is adopted by a growing fraction of the bourgeoisie or petit-bourgeoisie, or even the lower classes (this is what happened in France to boxing, which was enthusiastically practiced by aristocrats at the end of the nineteenth century). Conversely, an initially lower-class practice can sometimes be taken up by nobles. In short, one has to avoid turning into necessary and intrinsic properties of some group (nobility, samurai, as well as workers or employees) the properties which belong to this group at a given moment in time because of its position in a determinate social space and in a determinate state of the *supply* of possible goods and practices. Thus, at every moment of each society, one has to deal with a set of social positions which is bound by a relation

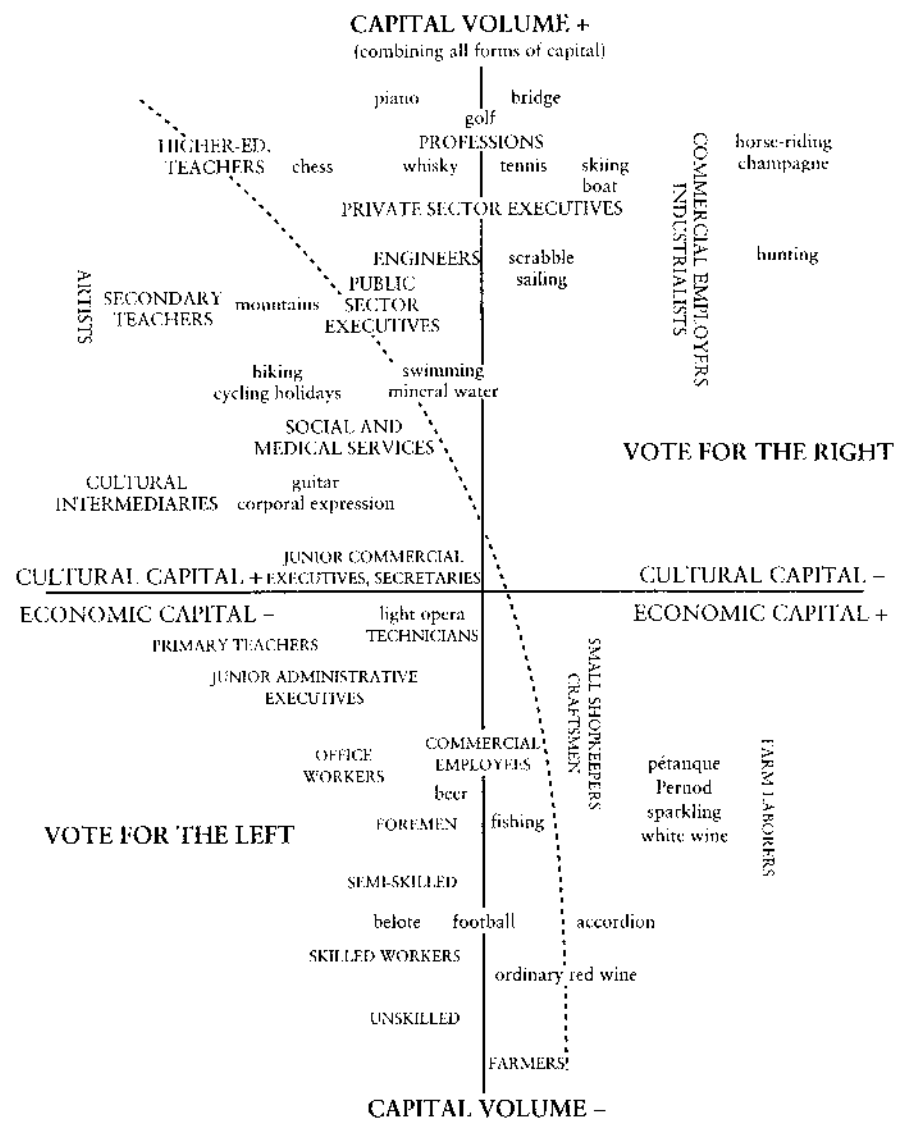


Figure 19.1 The space of social positions and the space of lifestyles (the dotted line indicates probable orientation toward the right or left)

of homology to a set of activities (the practice of golf or piano) or of goods (a second home or an old master painting) that are themselves characterized relationally.

This formula, which might seem abstract and obscure, states the first conditions for an adequate reading of the analysis of the relation between *social positions* (a relational concept), *dispositions* (or habitus), and *position-takings* (*prises de position*), that is, the “choices” made by the social agents in the most diverse domains of practice, in food or sport, music or politics, and so forth. It is a reminder that comparison is possible only from *system to system*, and that the search for direct

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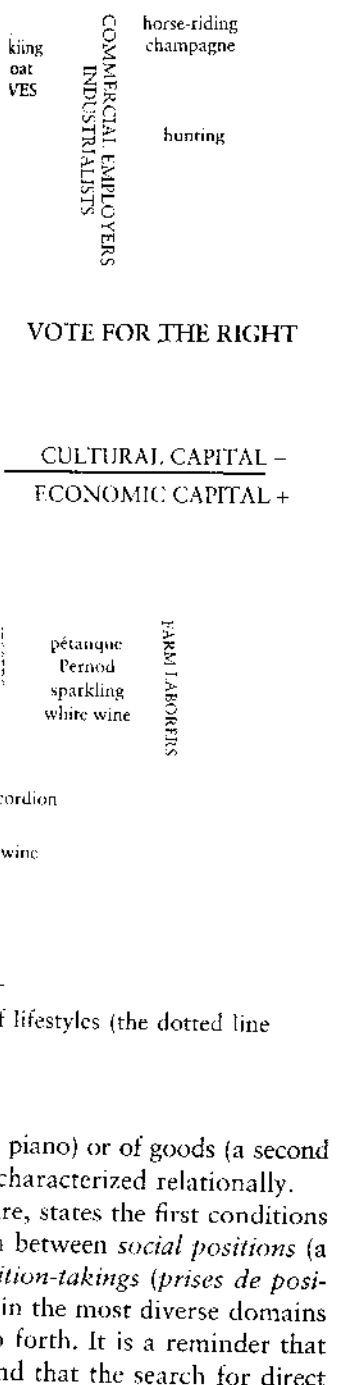
equivalences between features grasped in isolation, whether, appearing at first sight different, they prove to be "functionally" or technically equivalent (like Pernod and *shôchû* or saké) or nominally identical (the practice of golf in France and Japan, for instance), risks unduly identifying structurally different properties or wrongly distinguishing structurally identical properties. The very title *Distinction* serves as a reminder that 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.

This idea of difference, or a gap, is at the basis of the very notion of *space*, that is, a set of distinct and coexisting positions which are exterior to one another and which are defined in relation to one another through their *mutual exteriority* and their relations of proximity, vicinity, or distance, as well as through relations of order, such as above, below, and *between*. Certain properties of members of the *petit-bourgeoisie* can, for example, be deduced from the fact that they occupy an intermediate position between two extreme positions, without being objectively identifiable and subjectively identified either with one or the other position.

Social space is constructed in such a way that agents or groups are distributed in it according to their position in statistical distributions based on the *two principles of differentiation* which, in the most advanced societies, such as the United States, Japan, or France, are undoubtedly the most efficient: economic capital and cultural capital. It follows that all agents are located in this space in such a way that the closer they are to one another in those two dimensions, the more they have in common; and the more remote they are from one another, the less they have in common. Spatial distances on paper are equivalent to social distances. More precisely, as expressed in the diagram in *Distinction* in which I tried to represent social space (figure 19.1), agents are distributed in the first dimension according to the overall volume of the different kinds of capital they possess, and in the second dimension according to the structure of their capital, that is, according to the relative weight of the different kinds of capital, economic and cultural, in the total volume of their capital.

Thus, in the first dimension, which is undoubtedly the most important, the holders of a great volume of overall capital, such as industrial employers, members of liberal professions, and university professors are opposed, in the mass, to those who are most deprived of economic and cultural capital, such as unskilled workers. But from another point of view, that is, from the point of view of the relative weight of economic capital and cultural capital in their patrimony, professors (relatively wealthier in cultural capital than in economic capital) are strongly opposed to industrial employers (relatively wealthier in economic capital than in cultural capital), and this is no doubt as true in Japan as in France (although it remains to be verified).

The second opposition, like the first, is the source of differences in dispositions and, therefore, in position-takings. This is the case of the opposition between intellectuals and industrial employers or, on a lower level of the social hierarchy, between primary school teachers and small merchants, which, in postwar France and Japan alike, translates, in politics, into an opposition between left and right (as is suggested



in the diagram, the probability of leaning politically toward the right or the left depends at least as much on the position in the horizontal dimension as on the position in the vertical dimension, that is, on the relative weight of cultural capital and economic capital in the volume of capital possessed at least as much as on the volume itself).

In a more general sense, the space of social positions is retranslated into a space of position-takings through the mediation of the space of dispositions (or habitus). In other words, the system of differential deviations which defines the different positions in the two major dimensions of social space corresponds to the system of differential deviations in agents' properties (or in the properties of constructed classes of agents), that is, in their practices and in the goods they possess. To each class of positions there corresponds a class of habitus (or *tastes*) produced by the social conditioning associated with the corresponding condition and, through the mediation of the habitus and its generative capability, a systematic set of goods and properties, which are united by an affinity of style.

One of the functions of the notion of habitus is to account for the unity of style, which unites the practices and goods of a single agent or a class of agents (this is what writers such as Balzac or Flaubert have so finely expressed through their descriptions of settings – such as the Pension Vauquer in *Le Père Goriot* or the elegant dishes and drinks consumed in the homes of different protagonists of *L'Éducation sentimentale* – which are at the same time descriptions of the characters who live in them). The habitus is this generative and unifying principle which retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, goods, practices.

Like the positions of which they are the product, habitus are differentiated, but they are also differentiating. Being distinct and distinguished, they are also distinction operators, implementing different principles of differentiation or using differently the common principles of differentiation.

Habitus are generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices – what the worker eats, and especially the way he eats it, the sport he practices and the way he practices it, his political opinions and the way he expresses them are systematically different from the industrial owner's corresponding activities. But habitus are also classificatory schemes, principles of classification, principles of vision and division, different tastes. They make distinctions between what is good and what is bad, between what is right and what is wrong, between what is distinguished and what is vulgar, and so forth, but the distinctions are not identical. Thus, for instance, the same behavior or even the same good can appear distinguished to one person, pretentious to someone else, and cheap or showy to yet another.

But the essential point is that, when perceived through these social categories of perception, these principles of vision and division, the differences in practices, in the goods possessed, or in the opinions expressed become symbolic differences and constitute a veritable *language*. Differences associated with different positions, that is, goods, practices, and especially *manners*, function, in each society, in the same way as differences which constitute symbolic systems, such as the set of phonemes of a language or the set of distinctive features and of differential "écarts" that constitute a mythical system, that is, as *distinctive signs*.

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The Logic of Class

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Here I open a parenthesis in order to dispel a frequent, yet disastrous, mis-
understanding about the title *Distinction*, which has led some to believe that the
entire book was limited to saying that the driving force of all human behavior was
the search for distinction. This does not make sense and, moreover, it would not
be anything new if one thinks, for example, of Veblen and his notion of conspicu-
ous consumption. In fact, the main idea is that to exist within a social space, to
occupy a point or to be an individual within a social space, is to differ, to be dif-
ferent. According to Benveniste's formula regarding language, “to be distinctive, to
be significant, is the same thing,” significant being opposed to insignificant, or to
different meanings. More precisely – Benveniste's formulation is a little too quick
... – a difference, a distinctive property, white or black skin, slenderness or stout-
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cer, piano or accordion, bridge or *belote* (I proceed with oppositions, because things
tend to operate in this fashion most of the time, although the situation is more
complicated than this), only becomes a visible, perceptible, non-indifferent, socially
pertinent difference if it is perceived by someone who is capable of *making the*
distinction – because, being inscribed in the space in question, he or she is not *indif-*
ferent and is endowed with categories of perception, with classificatory schemata,
with certain *taste*, which permits her to make differences, to discern, to distinguish
– between a color print and a painting or between Van Gogh and Gauguin. Differ-
ence becomes a sign and a sign of distinction (or vulgarity) only if a principle of vision
and division is applied to it which, being the product of the incorporation of the
structure of objective differences (for example, the structure of the distribution in
the social space of the piano or the accordion or those who prefer one or the other),
is present among all the agents, piano owners or accordion lovers, and structures
the perceptions of owners or lovers of pianos or accordions (there was a need to
spell out this analysis of the logic – that of symbolic violence – according to which
dominated lifestyles are almost always perceived, even by those who live them, from
the destructive and reductive point of view of the dominant aesthetic).

The Logic of Classes

To construct social space, this invisible reality that cannot be shown but which
organizes agents' practices and representations, is at the same time to create the
possibility of constructing *theoretical classes* that are as homogeneous as possible
from the point of view of the two major determinants of practices and of all their
attendant properties. The principle of classification thus put into play is genuinely
explanatory. It is not content with describing the set of classified realities, but rather,
like the good taxonomies of the natural sciences, it fixes on determinant properties
which, unlike the apparent differences of bad classifications, allow for the prediction
of the other properties and which distinguish and bring together agents who are
as similar to each other as possible and as different as possible from members of
other classes, whether adjacent or remote.

But the very validity of the classification risks encouraging a perception of
theoretical classes, which are fictitious regroupings existing only *on paper*, through

an intellectual decision by the researcher, as *real* classes, real groups, that are constituted as such in reality. The danger is all the greater as the research makes it appear that the divisions drawn in *Distinction* do indeed correspond to real differences in the most different, and even the most unexpected, domains of practice. Thus, to take the example of a curious property, the distribution of the dog and cat owners is organized according to the model: commercial employers (on the right in figure 19.1) tend to prefer dogs, intellectuals (on the left in figure 19.1) tend to prefer cats.

The model thus defines distances that are *predictive* of encounters, affinities, sympathies, or even desires. Concretely, this means that people located at the top of the space have little chance of marrying people located toward the bottom, first because they have little chance of physically meeting them (except in what are called "bad places," that is, at the cost of a transgression of the social limits which reflect spatial distances); secondly because, if they do accidentally meet them on some occasion, they will not get on together, will not really understand each other, will not appeal to one another. On the other hand, proximity in social space predisposes to closer relations: people who are inscribed in a restricted sector of the space will be both closer (in their properties and in their dispositions, *their tastes*) and more disposed to get closer, as well as being easier to bring together, to mobilize. *But this does not mean that they constitute a class in Marx's sense, that is, a group which is mobilized for common purposes, and especially against another class.*

The theoretical classes that I construct are, more than any other theoretical divisions (more, for example, than divisions according to sex, ethnicity, and so on), predisposed to become classes in the Marxist sense of the term. If I am a political leader and I propose creating one big party bringing together both industrial employers and workers, I have little chance of success, since these groups are very distant in social space; in a certain conjuncture, in a national crisis, on the bases of nationalism or chauvinism, it will be possible for them to draw closer, but this solidarity will still be rather superficial and very provisional. This does not mean that, inversely, proximity in social space automatically engenders unity. It defines an objective potentiality of unity or, to speak like Leibniz, a "claim to exist" as a group, a *probable class*. Marxist theory makes a mistake quite similar to the one Kant denounced in the ontological argument or to the one for which Marx criticized Hegel: it makes a "death-defying leap" from existence in theory to existence in practice, or, as Marx puts it, "from the things of logic to the logic of things."

Marx, who more than any other theoretician exerted the *theory effect* – the properly political effect that consists in making tangible (*theorein*) a "reality" that cannot entirely exist insofar as it remains unknown and unrecognized – paradoxically failed to take this effect into account in his own theory . . . One moves from class-on-paper to the "real" class only at the price of a political work of mobilization. The "real" class, if it has ever "really" existed, is nothing but the realized class, that is, the mobilized class, a result of the *struggle of classifications*, which is a properly symbolic (and political) struggle to impose a vision of the social world, or, better, a way to construct that world, in perception and in reality, and to construct classes in accordance with which this social world can be divided.

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The very existence of classes, as everyone knows from his or her own experience, is a stake in a struggle. And this fact undoubtedly constitutes the major obstacle to a scientific knowledge of the social world and to the resolution (for *there is one* . . .) of the problem of social classes. Denying the existence of classes, as the conservative tradition has persisted in doing for reasons not all of which are absurd (and all research done in good faith encounters them along the way), means in the final analysis denying the existence of differences and of principles of differentiation. This is just what those who pretend that nowadays the American, Japanese, and French societies are each nothing but an enormous "middle class" do, although in a more paradoxical way, since those who believe this nevertheless preserve the term "class" (according to a survey, 80 percent of the Japanese say they belong to the "middle class"). This position is, of course, unsustainable. All my work shows that in a country said to be on the way to becoming homogenized, democratized, and so on, difference is everywhere. And in the United States, every day some new piece of research appears showing diversity where one *expected to see* homogeneity, conflict where one expected to see consensus, reproduction and conservation where one expected to see mobility. Thus, *difference* (which I express in describing social *space*) exists and persists. But does this mean that we must accept or affirm the existence of classes? No. Social classes do not exist (even if political work, armed with Marx's theory, had in some cases contributed to making them at least exist through instances of mobilization and proxies). What exists is a social space, a space of differences, in which classes exist in some sense in a state of virtuality, not as something given but as *something to be done*.

Nevertheless, if the social world, with its divisions, is something that social agents have to do, to construct, individually and especially *collectively*, in cooperation and conflict, these constructions still do not take place in a social void, as certain ethnomethodologists seem to believe. The position occupied in social space, that is, in the structure of the distribution of different kinds of capital, which are also weapons, commands the representations of this space and the position-takings in the struggles to conserve or transform it.

To summarize the intricate relation between objective structures and subjective constructions, which is located beyond the usual alternatives of objectivism and subjectivism, of structuralism and constructivism, and even of materialism and idealism, I usually quote, with a little distortion, a famous formula of Pascal's: "The world comprehends me and swallows me like a point, but I comprehend it." The social world embraces me like a point. But this point is a *point of view*, the principle of a view adopted from a point located in social space, a *perspective* which is defined, in its form and contents, by the objective position from which it is adopted. The social space is indeed the first and last reality, since it still commands the representations that the social agents can have of it.

I am coming to the end of what has been a kind of introduction to the reading of *Distinction*, in which I have undertaken to state the principles of a relational, structural reading that is capable of developing the full import of the model I propose. A relational but also a *generative* reading. By this I mean that I hope my readers will try to apply the model in this other "particular case of the possible," that is, Japanese society, that they will try to construct the Japanese social space

and symbolic space, to define the basic principles of objective differentiation (I think they are the same, but one should verify whether, for instance, they do not have different relative weights – I do not think so, given the exceptional importance which is traditionally attributed to education in Japan) and especially the principles of distinction, the specific distinctive signs in the domains of sport, food, drink, and so on, the relevant features which make significant differences in the different symbolic subspaces. This is, in my opinion, the condition for a *comparativism of the essential* that I called for at the beginning and, at the same time, for the universal knowledge of the invariants and variations that sociology can and must produce.

As for me, I shall undertake in my next lecture to say what the mechanisms are which, in France as in Japan and all other advanced countries, guarantee the reproduction of social space and symbolic space, without ignoring the contradictions and conflicts that can be at the basis of their transformation.

Chapter 20

Structure

Objectivism con
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Chapter 20

Structures, *Habitus*, Practices* [1994]

Pierre Bourdieu

Objectivism constitutes the social world as a spectacle offered to an observer who takes up a "point of view" on the action and who, putting into the object the principles of his relation to the object, proceeds as if it were intended solely for knowledge and as if all the interactions within it were purely symbolic exchanges. This viewpoint is the one taken from high positions in the social structure, from which the social world is seen as a representation (as the word is used in idealist philosophy, but also as in painting) or a performance (in the theatrical or musical sense), and practices are seen as no more than the acting-out of roles, the playing of scores or the implementation of plans. The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions. It is possible to step down from the sovereign viewpoint from which objectivist idealism orders the world, as Marx demands in the *Theses on Feuerbach*, but without having to abandon to it the "active aspect" of apprehension of the world by reducing knowledge to a mere recording. To do this, one has to situate oneself *within* "real activity as such", that is, in the practical relation to the world, the preoccupied, active presence in the world through which the world imposes its presence, with its urgencies, its things to be done and said, things made to be said, which directly govern words and deeds without ever unfolding as a spectacle. One has to escape from the realism of the structure, to which objectivism, a necessary stage in breaking with primary experience and constructing the objective relationships,

* Originally translated by Richard Nice.

Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, *Habitus*, Practice," from Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, in association with Blackwell Publishers, 1990). English translation copyright © 1990 by Polity Press. Originally published in French as *Le Sens Pratique* by Les Éditions des Minuit. Original French text copyright © 1980 Les Éditions des Minuit. Reprinted by permission of Polity Press and Stanford University Press.

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necessarily leads when it hypostatizes these relations by treating them as realities already constituted outside of the history of the group – without falling back into subjectivism, which is quite incapable of giving an account of the necessity of the social world. To do this, one has to return to practice, the site of the dialectic of the *opus operatum* and the *modus operandi*; of the objectified products and the incorporated products of historical practice; of structures and *habitus*.

The bringing to light of the presuppositions inherent in objectivist construction has paradoxically been delayed by the efforts of all those who, in linguistics as in anthropology, have sought to “correct” the structuralist model by appealing to “context” or “situation” to account for variations, exceptions and accidents (instead of making them simple variants, absorbed into the structure, as the structuralists do). They have thus avoided a radical questioning of the objectivist mode of thought, when, that is, they have not simply fallen back on to the free choice of a rootless, unattached, pure subject. Thus, the method known as “situational analysis”, which consists of “observing people in a variety of social situations” in order to determine “the way in which individuals are able to exercise choices within the limits of a specified social structure”,¹ remains locked within the framework of the rule and the exception, which Edmund Leach (often invoked by the exponents of this method) spells out explicitly: “I postulate that structural systems in which all avenues of social action are narrowly institutionalized are impossible. In all viable systems, there must be an area where the individual is free to make choices so as to manipulate the system to his advantage”.²

The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively “regulated” and “regular” without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.

It is, of course, never ruled out that the responses of the *habitus* may be accompanied by a strategic calculation tending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the *habitus* performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective. But these responses are first defined, without any calculation, in relation to objective potentialities, immediately inscribed in the present, things to do or not to do, things to say or not to say, in relation to a probable, “upcoming” future (*un à venir*), which – in contrast to the future seen as “absolute possibility” (*absolute Möglichkeit*) in Hegel’s (or Sartre’s) sense, projected by the pure project of a “negative freedom” – puts itself forward with an urgency and a claim to existence that excludes all deliberation. Stimuli do not exist for practice in their objective truth, as conditional, conventional triggers, acting only on condition that they encounter agents conditioned to recognize them. The practical world that is constituted in the relationship with the *habitus*, acting as a system of cognitive and motivating structures, is a world of already realized ends – procedures to follow, paths to take – and of objects endowed

with a “permanent” character. This is because the structures of Saussure’s and Mauss’s are the basis of the social world apprehended.

If a very close connection exists between structured objective products (the good) and agents’ choices, it is because agents can estimate the chances of success, likelihood of success, about his chances of success, the possibilities and prohibitions inscribed in the social structure (statistical regularities of the class) generate dispositions pre-adapted to the situation, excluded, as unthinking agents to make a choice to will the inevitable, made of necessity, in relation to which the world that the experiment produces, estimations, which are the result of calculation, the accumulation of experience, give dispositions and social necessity, the domestic economy, the socially familiar manner of labour between the agents (relations, etc.), the existence produce the perception and

The *habitus*, a product of more history – in addition to the active presence of practice – of schemes of perception, of practices and their explicit norms. This is itself into the future, a law through which the constraints, is constantly objectivism sees in the world of the regulated trajectory, instantaneous determination, but equally instantaneous, spurious opposition.

treating them as realities without falling back into the necessity of the dialectic of objectified products and the *habitus*.

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of the *habitus* may be in a conscious mode the an estimation of chances ected objective. But these tion to objective potenti- r not to do, things to say ire (*un à venir*), which – te *Möglichkeit*) in Hegel's egative freedom" – puts rat excludes all delibera- uth, as conditional, con- ounter agents conditioned in the relationship with ag structures, is a world – and of objects endowed

with a "permanent teleological character", in Husserl's phrase, tools or institutions. This is because the regularities inherent in an arbitrary condition ("arbitrary" in Saussure's and Mauss's sense) tend to appear as necessary, even natural, since they are the basis of the schemes of perception and appreciation through which they are apprehended.

If a very close correlation is regularly observed between the scientifically constructed objective probabilities (for example, the chances of access to a particular good) and agents' subjective aspirations ("motivations" and "needs"), this is not because agents consciously adjust their aspirations to an exact evaluation of their chances of success, like a gambler organizing his stakes on the basis of perfect information about his chances of winning. In reality, the dispositions durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions (which science apprehends through statistical regularities such as the probabilities objectively attached to a group or class) generate dispositions objectively compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands. The most improbable practices are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable. The very conditions of production of the *habitus*, a virtue made of necessity, mean that the anticipations it generates tend to ignore the restriction to which the validity of calculation of probabilities is subordinated, namely that the experimental conditions should not have been modified. Unlike scientific estimations, which are corrected after each experiment according to rigorous rules of calculation, the anticipations of the *habitus*, practical hypotheses based on past experience, give disproportionate weight to early experiences. Through the economic and social necessity that they bring to bear on the relatively autonomous world of the domestic economy and family relations, or more precisely, through the specifically familial manifestations of this external necessity (forms of the division of labour between the sexes, household objects, modes of consumption, parent-child relations, etc.), the structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence produce the structures of the *habitus*, which in their turn are the basis of the perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences.

The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the "correctness" of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms. This system of dispositions – a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices, an internal law through which the law of external necessities, irreducible to immediate constraints, is constantly exerted – is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism sees in social practices without being able to account for it; and also of the regulated transformations that cannot be explained either by the extrinsic, instantaneous determinisms of mechanistic sociologism or by the purely internal but equally instantaneous determination of spontaneist subjectivism. Overriding the spurious opposition between the forces inscribed in an earlier state of the system,

outside the body, and the internal forces arising instantaneously as motivations springing from free will, the internal dispositions – the internalization of externality – enable the external forces to exert themselves, but in accordance with the specific logic of the organisms in which they are incorporated, i.e. in a durable, systematic and non-mechanical way. As an acquired system of generative schemes, the *habitus* makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production – and only those. Through the *habitus*, the structure of which it is the product governs practice, not along the paths of a mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions. This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antinomies – which the concept of the *habitus* aims to transcend – of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconscious, or the individual and society. Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning.

Nothing is more misleading than the illusion created by hindsight in which all the traces of a life, such as the works of an artist or the events at a biography, appear as the realization of an essence that seems to pre-exist them. Just as a mature artistic style is not contained, like a seed, in an original inspiration but is continuously defined and redefined in the dialectic between the objectifying intention and the already objectified intention, so too the unity of meaning which, after the event, may seem to have preceded the acts and works announcing the final significance, retrospectively transforming the various stages of the temporal series into mere preparatory sketches, is constituted through the confrontation between questions that only exist in and for a mind armed with a particular type of schemes and the solutions obtained through application of these same schemes. The genesis of a system of works or practices generated by the same *habitus* (or homologous *habitus*, such as those that underlie the unity of the life-style of a group or a class) cannot be described either as the autonomous development of a unique and always self-identical essence, or as a continuous creation of novelty, because it arises from the necessary yet unpredictable confrontation between the *habitus* and an event that can exercise a pertinent incitement on the *habitus* only if the latter snatches it from the contingency of the accidental and constitutes it as a problem by applying to it the very principles of its solution; and also because the *habitus*, like every “art of inventing”, is what makes it possible to produce an infinite number of practices that are relatively unpredictable (like the corresponding situations) but also limited in their diversity. In short, being the product of a particular class of objective regularities, the *habitus* tends to generate all the “reasonable”, “common-sense”, behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of these regularities, and which are likely to be positively sanctioned because they are objectively adjusted to the logic characteristic of a particular field, whose objective future they anticipate. At the same time, “without violence, art or argument”, it tends to exclude all “extravagances” (“not for the likes of us”), that is, all the behaviours that would be negatively sanctioned because they are incompatible with the objective conditions.

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Because they tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the conditions in which their generative principle was produced while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures that constitute the *habitus*, practices cannot be deduced either from the present conditions which may seem to have provoked them or from the past conditions which have produced the *habitus*, the durable principle of their production. They can therefore only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the *habitus* that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented, that is, through the scientific work of performing the interrelationship of these two states of the social world that the *habitus* performs, while concealing it, in and through practice. The “unconscious”, which enables one to dispense with this interrelating, is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by realizing the objective structures that it generates in the quasi-natures of *habitus*. As Durkheim³ puts it:

In each one of us, in differing degrees, is contained the person we were yesterday, and indeed, in the nature of things it is even true that our past *personae* predominate in us, since the present is necessarily insignificant when compared with the long period of the past because of which we have emerged in the form we have today. It is just that we don't directly feel the influence of these past selves precisely because they are so deeply rooted within us. They constitute the unconscious part of ourselves. Consequently we have a strong tendency not to recognize their existence and to ignore their legitimate demands. By contrast, with the most recent acquisitions of civilization we are vividly aware of them just because they are recent and consequently have not had time to be assimilated into our collective unconscious.

The *habitus* – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. This autonomy is that of the past, enacted and acting, which, functioning as accumulated capital, produces history on the basis of history and so ensures the permanence in change that makes the individual agent a world within the world. The *habitus* is a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects “without inertia” in rationalist theories.

Thus the dualistic vision that recognizes only the self-transparent act of consciousness or the externally determined thing has to give way to the real logic of action, which brings together two objectifications of history, objectification in bodies and objectification in institutions or, which amounts to the same thing, two states of capital, objectified and incorporated, through which a distance is set up from necessity and its urgencies. This logic is seen in paradigmatic form in the dialectic of expressive dispositions and instituted means of expression (morphological, syntactic and lexical instruments, literary genres, etc.) which is observed in the intentionless invention of regulated improvisation. Endlessly overtaken by his own words, with which he maintains a relation of “carry and be carried”, as Nicolai Hartmann put it, the virtuoso finds in his discourse the triggers for his discourse, which goes along like a train laying its own rails.⁴ In other words, being produced

by a *modus operandi* which is not consciously mastered, the discourse contains an "objective intention", as the Scholastics put it, which outruns the conscious intentions of its apparent author and constantly offers new pertinent stimuli to the *modus operandi* of which it is the product and which functions as a kind of "spiritual automaton". If witticisms strike as much by their unpredictability as by their retrospective necessity, the reason is that the *trouvaille* that brings to light long buried resources presupposes a *habitus* that so perfectly possesses the objectively available means of expression that it is possessed by them, so much so that it asserts its freedom from them by realizing the rarest of the possibilities that they necessarily imply. The dialectic of the meaning of the language and the "sayings of the tribe" is a particular and particularly significant case of the dialectic between *habitus* and institutions, that is, between two modes of objectification of past history, in which there is constantly created a history that inevitably appears, like witticisms, as both original and inevitable.

This durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations is a practical sense which reactivates the sense objectified in institutions. Produced by the work of inculcation and appropriation that is needed in order for objective structures, the products of collective history, to be reproduced in the form of the durable, adjusted dispositions that are the condition of their functioning, the *habitus*, which is constituted in the course of an individual history, imposing its particular logic on incorporation, and through which agents partake of the history objectified in institutions, is what makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to appropriate them practically, and so to keep them in activity, continuously pulling them from the state of dead letters, reviving the sense deposited in them, but at the same time imposing the revisions and transformations that reactivation entails. Or rather, the *habitus* is what enables the institution to attain full realization: it is through the capacity for incorporation, which exploits the body's readiness to take seriously the performative magic of the social, that the king, the banker or the priest are hereditary monarchy, financial capitalism or the Church made flesh. Property appropriates its owner, embodying itself in the form of a structure generating practices perfectly conforming with its logic and its demands. If one is justified in saying, with Marx, that "the lord of an entailed estate, the first-born son, belongs to the land", that "it inherits him", or that the "persons" of capitalists are the "personification" of capital, this is because the purely social and quasimagical process of socialization, which is inaugurated by the act of marking that institutes an individual as an eldest son, an heir, a successor, a Christian, or simply as a man (as opposed to a woman), with all the corresponding privileges and obligations, and which is prolonged, strengthened and confirmed by social treatments that tend to transform instituted difference into natural distinction, produces quite real effects, durably inscribed in the body and in belief. An institution, even an economy, is complete and fully viable only if it is durably objectified not only in things, that is, in the logic, transcending individual agents, of a particular field, but also in bodies, in durable dispositions to recognize and comply with the demands immanent in the field.

In so far – and only in so far – as *habitus* are the incorporation of the same history, or more concretely, of the same history objectified in *habitus* and structures, the practices they generate are mutually intelligible and immediately adjusted to

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the structures, and also objectively concerted and endowed with an objective mean-
ing that is at once unitary and systematic, transcending subjective intentions and
conscious projects, whether individual or collective. One of the fundamental effects
of the harmony between practical sense and objectified meaning (*sens*) is the pro-
duction of a common-sense world, whose immediate self-evidence is accompanied
by the objectivity provided by consensus on the meaning of practices and the world,
in other words the harmonization of the agents' experiences and the constant
reinforcement each of them receives from expression – individual or collective (in
festivals, for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings) – of
similar or identical experiences.

The homogeneity of *habitus* that is observed within the limits of a class of condi-
tions of existence and social conditionings is what causes practices and works to
be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted. The *habitus*
makes questions of intention superfluous, not only in the production but also in
the deciphering of practices and works. Automatic and impersonal, significant with-
out a signifying intention, ordinary practices lend themselves to an understanding that
is no less automatic and impersonal. The picking up of the objective intention they
express requires neither "reactivation" of the "lived" intention of their originator, nor
the "intentional transfer into the Other" cherished by the phenomenologists and all
advocates of a "participationist" conception of history or sociology, nor tacit or explicit
inquiry ("What do you *mean*?") as to other people's intentions. "Communication of
consciousnesses" presupposes community of "unconsciousnesses" (that is, of linguistic and
cultural competences). Deciphering the objective intention of practices and works has
nothing to do with "reproduction" (*Nachbildung*, as the early Dilthey puts it) of lived
experiences and the unnecessary and uncertain reconstitution of an "intention" which
is not their real origin.

The objective homogenizing of group or class *habitus* that results from homogene-
ity of conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized
without any calculation or conscious reference to a norm and mutually adjusted in
the absence of any direct interaction or, *a fortiori*, explicit co-ordination. The inter-
action itself owes its form to the objective structures that have produced the dis-
positions of the interacting agents, which continue to assign them their relative
positions in the interaction and elsewhere. "Imagine", Leibniz suggests,⁵ "two clocks
or watches in perfect agreement as to the time. This may occur in one of three ways.
The first consists in mutual influence; the second is to appoint a skilful workman
to correct them and synchronize constantly; the third is to construct these two clocks
with such art and precision that one can be assured of their subsequent agreement."
So long as one ignores the true principle of the conductorless orchestration which
gives regularity, unity and systematicity to practices even in the absence of any
spontaneous or imposed organization of individual projects, one is condemned to
the naive artificialism that recognizes no other unifying principle than conscious
co-ordination. The practices of the members of the same group or, in a differenti-
ated society, the same class, are always more and better harmonized than the agents
know or wish, because, as Leibniz again says, "following only (his) own laws",
each "nonetheless agrees with the other". The *habitus* is precisely this immanent

law, *lex insita*, inscribed in bodies by identical histories, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination. The corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose mastery of a common code; and undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the *habitus* of the mobilizing agents (prophet, leader, etc.) and the dispositions of those who recognize themselves in their practices or words, and, above all, without the inclination towards grouping that springs from the spontaneous orchestration of dispositions.

It is certain that every effort at mobilization aimed at organizing collective action has to reckon with the dialectic of dispositions and occasions that takes place in every agent, whether he mobilizes or is mobilized (the hysteresis of *habitus* is doubtless one explanation 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, however revolutionary). It is also certain that it must take account of the objective orchestration established among dispositions that are objectively co-ordinated because they are ordered by more or less identical objective necessities. It is, however, extremely dangerous to conceive collective action by analogy with individual action, ignoring all that the former owes to the relatively autonomous logic of the institutions of mobilization (with their own history, their specific organization, etc.) and to the situations, institutionalized or not, in which it occurs.

* Sociology treats as identical all biological individuals who, being the products of the same objective conditions, have the same *habitus*. A social class (in-itself) – a class of identical or similar conditions of existence and conditionings – is at the same time a class of biological individuals having the same *habitus*, understood as a system of dispositions common to all products of the same conditionings. Though it is impossible for all (or even two) members of the same class to have had the same experiences, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for members of that class. Through the always convergent experiences that give a social environment its physiognomy, with its “closed doors”, “dead ends” and “limited prospects”, the objective structures that sociology apprehends in the form of probabilities of access to goods, services and powers, inculcate the “art of assessing likelihoods”, as Leibniz put it, of anticipating the objective future, in short, the “sense of reality”, or realities, which is perhaps the best-concealed principle of their efficacy.

To define the relationship between class *habitus* and individual *habitus* (which is inseparable from the organic individuality that is immediately given to immediate perception – *intuitus personae* – and socially designated and recognized – name, legal identity, etc.), class (or group) *habitus*, that is, the individual *habitus* in so far as it expresses or reflects the class (or group), could be regarded as a subjective but non-individual system of internalized structures, common schemes of perception, conception and action, which are the precondition of all objectification and apperception; and the objective co-ordination of practices and the sharing of a world-view could be founded on the perfect impersonality and interchangeability of

singular practices or representative and interchangeable. They reflect none of the diversity within of their social class, a structural variable of the class and its products of the deviation in relation to a common style or “manner” – but

The principle of the ordered determination of their social order, which, at every turn, produces the limits defined by the *habitus* tends to the selection of calling into qu by force, and to think, for which the *habitus* ally confirmed same opinions) and people that and critical cha as possible, th its dispositions again it is the all “choices”, in order to av *habitus* which of a non-conso conditions of a strategic inte originating fro Even when t by the *habitus* ing situations oriented by an illusion, this is

which is the precondition of practices of co-ordination. They unconsciously carry out pre-emptive collective mobilization (the *habitus* of the mobilized) who recognize themselves the inclination towards the inclination towards of dispositions.

Doing collective action has what takes place in every *habitus* is doubtless one of the dispositions to grasp particular, of the frequently of perception and thought also certain that it must be of dispositions that are more or less identical objective of collective action by which owes to the relatively own history, their specific not, in which it occurs.

Who, being the products of social class (in-itself) – a conditioning – is at the same *habitus*, understood as the same conditioning. Though the class to have had the each member of the same have been confronted with. Through the always constant physiognomy, with its objective structures that access to goods, services and business put it, of anticipating realities, which is perhaps

individual *habitus* (which is immediately given to immediate and recognized – name, the individual *habitus* in so far as regarded as a subjective common schemes of perception of all objectification and practices and the sharing of a unity and interchangeability of

singular practices and views. But this would amount to regarding all the practices or representations produced in accordance with identical schemes as impersonal and interchangeable, like individual intuitions of space which, according to Kant, reflect none of the particularities of the empirical ego. In fact, the singular *habitus* of members of the same class are united in a relationship of homology, that is, of diversity within homogeneity reflecting the diversity within homogeneity characteristic of their social conditions of production. Each individual system of dispositions is a structural variant of the others, expressing the singularity of its position within the class and its trajectory. “Personal” style, the particular stamp marking all the products of the same *habitus*, whether practices or works, 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 – like Phidias, who, for Hegel, had no “manner” – but also by the difference that makes the “manner”.

The principle of the differences between individual *habitus* lies in the singularity of their social trajectories, to which there correspond series of chronologically ordered determinations that are mutually irreducible to one another. The *habitus*, which, at every moment, structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, which are modified by the new experiences within the limits defined by their power of selection, brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences, of the experiences statistically common to members of the same class. Early experiences have particular weight because the *habitus* tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information, if exposed to it accidentally or by force, and especially by avoiding exposure to such information. One only has to think, for example, of homogamy, the paradigm of all the “choices” through which the *habitus* tends to favour experiences likely to reinforce it (or the empirically confirmed fact that people tend to talk about politics with those who have the same opinions). Through the systematic “choices” it makes among the places, events and people that might be frequented, the *habitus* tends to protect itself from crises and critical challenges by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible, that is, a relatively constant universe of situations tending to reinforce its dispositions by offering the market most favourable to its products. And once again it is the most paradoxical property of the *habitus*, the unchosen principle of all “choices”, that yields the solution to the paradox of the information needed in order to avoid information. The schemes of perception and appreciation of the *habitus* which are the basis of all the avoidance strategies are largely the product of a non-conscious, unwilling avoidance, whether it results automatically from the conditions of existence (for example, spatial segregation) or has been produced by a strategic intention (such as avoidance of “bad company” or “unsuitable books”) originating from adults themselves formed in the same conditions.

Even when they look like the realization of explicit ends, the strategies produced by the *habitus* and enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and constantly changing situations are only apparently determined by the future. If they seem to be oriented by anticipation of their own consequences, thereby encouraging the finalist illusion, this is because, always tending to reproduce the objective structures that

produced them, they are determined by the past conditions of production of their principle of production, that is, by the already realized outcome of identical or interchangeable past practices, which coincides with their own outcome only to the extent that the structures within which they function are identical to or homologous with the objective structures of which they are the product. Thus, for example, in the interaction between two agents or groups of agents endowed with the same *habitus* (say A and B), everything takes place as if the actions of each of them (say a_1 for A) were organized by reference to the reactions which they call forth from any agent possessing the same *habitus* (say b_1 for B). They therefore objectively imply anticipation of the reaction which these reactions in turn call forth (a_2 , A's reaction to b_1). But the teleological description, the only one appropriate to a "rational actor" possessing perfect information as to the preferences and competences of the other actors, in which each action has the purpose of making possible the reaction to the reaction it induces (individual A performs an action a_1 , a gift for example, in order to make individual B produce action b_1 , so that he can then perform action a_2 , a stepped-up gift), is quite as naive as the mechanistic description that presents the action and the riposte as so many steps in a sequence of programmed actions produced by a mechanical apparatus.

To have an idea of the difficulties that would be encountered by a mechanistic theory of practice as mechanical reaction, directly determined by the antecedent conditions and entirely reducible to the mechanical functioning of pre-established devices – which would have to be assumed to exist in infinite number, like the chance configurations of stimuli capable of triggering them from outside – one only has to mention the grandiose, desperate undertaking of the anthropologist, fired with positivist ardour, who recorded 480 elementary units of behaviour in 20 minutes' observation of his wife in the kitchen: "Here we confront the distressing fact that the sample episode chain under analysis is a fragment of a larger segment of behavior which in the complete record contains some 480 separate episodes. Moreover, it took only twenty minutes for these 480 behavior stream events to occur. If my wife's rate of behavior is roughly representative of that of other actors, we must be prepared to deal with an inventory of episodes produced at the rate of some 20,000 per sixteen-hour day per actor . . . In a population consisting of several hundred actor-types, the number of different episodes in the total repertory must amount to many millions in the course of an annual cycle".⁶

The *habitus* contains the solution to the paradoxes of objective meaning without subjective intention. It is the source of these strings of "moves" which are objectively organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention – which would presuppose at least that they be apprehended as one among other possible strategies. If each stage in the sequence of ordered and oriented actions that constitute objective strategies can appear to be determined by anticipation of the future, and in particular, of its own consequences (which is what justifies the use of the concept of strategy), it is because the practices that are generated by the *habitus* and are governed by the past conditions of production of their generative principle are adapted in advance to the objective conditions whenever the conditions in which the *habitus* functions have remained identical, or similar, to the conditions

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in which it was constituted. Perfectly and immediately successful adjustment to the objective conditions provides the most complete illusion of finality, or – which amounts to the same thing – of self-regulating mechanism.

The presence of the past in this kind of false anticipation of the future performed by the *habitus* is, paradoxically, most clearly seen when the sense of the probable future is belied and when dispositions ill-adjusted to the objective chances because of a hysteresis effect (Marx's favourite example of this was Don Quixote) are negatively sanctioned because the environment they actually encounter is too different from the one to which they are objectively adjusted. In fact the persistence of the effects of primary conditioning, in the form of the *habitus*, accounts equally well for cases in which dispositions function out of phase and practices are objectively ill-adapted to the present conditions because they are objectively adjusted to conditions that no longer obtain. The tendency of groups to persist in their ways, due *inter alia* to the fact that they are composed of individuals with durable dispositions that can outlive the economic and social conditions in which they were produced, can be the source of misadaptation as well as adaptation, revolt as well as resignation.

One only has to consider other possible forms of the relationship between dispositions and conditions to see that the pre-adjustment of the *habitus* to the objective conditions is a "particular case of the possible" and so avoid unconsciously universalizing the model of the near-circular relationship of near-perfect reproduction, which is completely valid only when the conditions of production of the *habitus* and the conditions of its functioning are identical or homothetic. In this particular case, the dispositions durably inculcated by the objective conditions and by a pedagogic action that is tendentially adjusted to these conditions, tend to generate practices objectively compatible with these conditions and expectations pre-adapted to their objective demands (*amor fati*).⁷ As a consequence, they tend, without any rational calculation or conscious estimation of the chances of success, to ensure immediate correspondence between the *a priori* or *ex ante* probability conferred on an event (whether or not accompanied by subjective experiences such as hopes, expectation, fears, etc.) and the *a posteriori* or *ex post* probability that can be established on the basis of past experience. They thus make it possible to understand why economic models based on the (tacit) premise of a "relationship of intelligible causality", as Max Weber⁸ calls it, between generic ("typical") chances "objectively existing as an average" and "subjective expectations", or, for example, between investment or the propensity to invest and the rate of return expected or really obtained in the past, fairly exactly account for practices which do not arise from knowledge of the objective chances.

By pointing out that rational action, "judiciously" oriented according to what is "objectively valid",⁹ is what "would have happened if the actors had had knowledge of all the circumstances and all the participants' intentions",¹⁰ that is, of what is "valid in the eyes of the scientist", who alone is able to calculate the system of objective chances to which perfectly informed action would have to be adjusted, Weber shows clearly that the pure model of rational action cannot be regarded as an anthropological description of practice. This is not only because real agents only very exceptionally possess the complete information, and the skill to appreciate it, that rational action would presuppose. Apart from rare cases which bring together

the economic and cultural conditions for rational action oriented by knowledge of the profits that can be obtained in the different markets, practices depend not on the average chances of profit, an abstract and unreal notion, but on the specific chances that a singular agent or class of agents possesses by virtue of its capital, this being understood, in this respect, as a means of appropriation of the chances theoretically available to all.

Economic theory which acknowledges only the rational "responses" of an indeterminate, interchangeable agent to "potential opportunities", or more precisely to average chances (like the "average rates of profit" offered by the different markets), converts the immanent law of the economy into a universal norm of proper economic behaviour. In so doing, it conceals the fact that the "rational" *habitus* which is the precondition for appropriate economic behaviour is the product of particular economic condition, the one defined by possession of the economic and cultural capital required in order to seize the "potential opportunities" theoretically available to all; and also that the same dispositions, by adapting the economically most deprived to the specific condition of which they are the product and thereby helping to make their adaptation to the generic demands of the economic cosmos (as regards calculation, forecasting, etc.) lead them to accept the negative sanctions resulting from this lack of adaptation, that is, their deprivation. In short, the art of estimating and seizing chances, the capacity to anticipate the future by a kind of practical induction or even to take a calculated gamble on the possible against the probable, are dispositions that can only be acquired in certain social conditions, that is, certain social conditions. Like the entrepreneurial spirit or the propensity to invest, economic information is a function of one's power over the economy. This is, on the one hand, because the propensity to acquire it depends on the chances of using it successfully, and the chances of acquiring it depend on the chances of successfully using it; and also because economic competence, like all competence (linguistic, political, etc.), far from being a simple technical capacity acquired in certain conditions, is a power tacitly conferred on those who have power over the economy or (as the very ambiguity of the word "competence" indicates) an attribute of status.

Only in imaginary experience (in the folk tale, for example), which neutralizes the sense of social realities, does the social world take the form of a universe of possibles equally possible for any possible subject. Agents shape their aspirations according to concrete indices of the accessible and the inaccessible, of what is and is not "for us", a division as fundamental and as fundamentally recognized as that between the sacred and the profane. The pre-emptive rights on the future that are defined by law and by the monopolistic right to certain possibles that it confers are merely the explicitly guaranteed form of the whole set of appropriated chances through which the power relations of the present project themselves into the future, from where they govern present dispositions, especially those towards the future. In fact, a given agent's practical relation to the future, which governs his present practice, is defined in the relationship between, on the one hand, his *habitus* with its temporal structures and dispositions towards the future, constituted in the course of a particular relationship to a particular universe of probabilities, and on the other hand a certain state of the chances objectively offered to him by the social world. The relation to what is possible is a relation to power; and the sense

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of the probable future is constituted in the prolonged relationship with a world structured according to the categories of the possible (for us) and the impossible (for us), of what is appropriated in advance by and for others and what one can reasonably expect for oneself. The *habitus* is the principle of a selective perception of the indices tending to confirm and reinforce it rather than transform it, a matrix generating responses adapted in advance to all objective conditions identical to or homologous with the (past) conditions of its production; it adjusts itself to a probable future which it anticipates and helps to bring about because it reads it directly in the present of the presumed world, the only one it can ever know. It is thus the basis of what Marx¹¹ calls "effective demand" (as opposed to "demand without effect", based on need and desire), a realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power. This disposition, always marked by its (social) conditions of acquisition and realization, tends to adjust to the objective chances of satisfying need or desire, inclining agents to "cut their coats according to their cloth", and so to become the accomplices of the processes that tend to make the probable a reality.

NOTES

- 1 M. Gluckman, "Ethnographic Data in British Social Anthropology." *Sociological Review*, 9 (1961) 5-17; cf. also J. Van Velson, *The Politics of Kinship: A Study in Social Manipulation among the Lakeside Tonga* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964).
- 2 E. Leach, "On Certain Unconsidered Aspects of Double Descent Systems." *Man* 62 (1962) 133.
- 3 E. Durkheim, *The Evolution of Educational Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 11.
- 4 R. Ruyer, *Paradoxes de la conscience et limites de l'automatisme* (Paris: Albin Michel 1966).
- 5 G. W. Leibniz, *Second éclaircissement du système de la communication des substances* (first pub. 1696). In *Œuvres philosophiques*, ed. P. Janet (Paris: Ladrance, 1866).
- 6 M. Harris, *The Nature of Cultural Things* (New York: Random House, 1964).
- 7 For some psychologists' attempts at direct verification of this relationship, see E. Brunswik, "Systematic and Representative Design of Psychological Experiments." In J. Neyman (ed.), *Proceedings of the Berkeley Symposium on Mathematical Statistics and Probability* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press 1949); M. G. Preston, and P. Baratta, "An Experimental Study of the Action-value of an Uncertain Income." *American Journal of Psychology*, 61 (1948) 183-93; F. Attneave, 1953: "Psychological Probability as a Function of Experienced Frequency." *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 46 (1953) 81-6.
- 8 M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr, 1922).
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. I (New York: Bedminster, 1968) p. 6.
- 11 K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. In K. Marx, *Early Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956).

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