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Part IV. Sociology without the Will

3. Bourdieu's Structuralism

If social class is defined by relation to the means of production, this still does not tell us *how* classes are *constituted as classes*, nor how the complex status hierarchies of capitalist societies are articulated and internalised by individuals or how other systems of status subordination are integrated within an economic system of class domination. On its own, possession of greater or lesser title to means of production (*economic capital*) explains very little about the dynamics of bourgeois society.

Pierre Bourdieu (1984) claimed to show at great length and detail (in reference to 1960s/70s France) how the knowledge and use of cultural artefacts and the body, and the tastes which people develop for culture (everything from food, clothing and life-style to preferences in painting and music) constitute multiply sublimated transformations of a single relation of dominant to dominated class, moderating the myriad of struggles between classes and class fractions in modern capitalist society. He shows how people learn to tailor their expectations and their view of themselves to their place in a hierarchy of political power and their share in the social product, at the same time as finding vehicles to *contest* the place their class fraction has in that hierarchy and the place an individual can lay claim to in a given class fraction.

Bourdieu's Structuralism is full of conflict and struggle in which the stakes are real.

Bourdieu also claims an understanding of how other deep-seated relations of subordination, especially age and gender, merge with economic and cultural relations of subordination in sublimated forms, shedding light on how multiple forms of subordination articulate with one another. However, I find the way Bourdieu tries to turn all these pairs of opposites into a single, universal ordering principle, such that all dichotomous ordering principles are in some sense 'the same', an aspect of his thinking which is best dispensed with. It adds nothing to what he has achieved. Although the basic idea derives from Saussure's linguistics and Lévi-Strauss's anthropology, Bourdieu's sensitive application of the idea of *distinction* to postwar France is very productive.

I shall clarify some of Bourdieu's main concepts.

Capital

Let us take it as read that the concept of 'economic' capital is understood, and that it can take various interchangeable forms – legal title to factories, stockpiles, intellectual property, shares, finance capital, and so on. What is required then, to justify the concept of f*orms of capital* which are not economic is to establish that they can be *converted* into 'economic capital', and thus that everything deemed to be a form of capital can be arranged, under specified conditions, along a single axis, i.e., quantified. Here is how Bourdieu deals with this problem.

Projection onto a single axis, in order to construct the continuous, linear, homogenous, one-dimensional series with which the social hierarchy is identified, implies an extremely difficult operation, whereby the different types of capital are reduced to a single standard. This abstract operation has an objective basis in the possibility, which is always available, of converting one type of capital into another. The exchange rates vary in accordance with the power relation between the holders of the different forms of capital, which vary from time to time and place to place. But formulating the principle of the convertibility of the different kinds of capital is the precondition for reducing the space to one dimension. The in-principle construction of a two-dimensional space makes it clear that the *exchange rate* of the different kinds of capital is at stake in all the struggles between class fractions whose power and privileges are based on one or the other of these types of capital. In particular, this exchange rate is a stake in the struggle over the dominant principle of domination (economic capital, cultural capital or social capital), which goes on at all times between the different fractions of the dominant class. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 125)

Bourdieu extends the concept of capital according to an underlying concept which only in principle relies on convertibility into capital in the normal economic sense. The underlying concept appears to be a combination of enjoyment, echangeability and domination, which maintains itself across different forms of capital. The in-principle convertibility of different forms of capital allows us to surmise from the place of capital in capitalist society a general notion of 'capital' as Bourdieu sees it. Marx's definition of capital, 'buying in order to sell more dearly', gives us a definition of economic capital. However, being the *dominant* form of capital, economic capital, has a concrete impact on the form of life via the labour process which is not illuminated by this simple definition. Likewise, the entirety of Bourdieu's work is required to demonstrate the impact of capital in his generalised sense on social life and what it means to a person to own it. A neat definition is not required.

Capital is the resource, command of which, enables one to exercise and resist domination in social relations, or to put it another way, to maintain a position in the status hierarchy of society, or more generally: capital is an *organising principle*. 'Composition of capital' thus refers to the composition of total capital of cultural and economic capital (with the other types of capital playing a subordinate role), creating a 'plane' across which dominance increases monotonically towards the top-right corner (economic capital +, cultural capital +) but with the gradient at every point on the plane subject to contestation.

Thus, 'capital' in this sense, is capable of ordering the relation between any two people, in any given part of social space, but such an ordering principle does not necessarily produce a *complete* ordering of society, along a single axis of subordination.

This conception marks Bourdieu's concept of capital off from the everyday concept of 'wealth'. The use and maintenance of the various forms of capital is less about enjoyment than of domination.

Conceived in this way, 'capital' could span across different social formations, not only bourgeois society, representing the degree of command a subject has over whatever it is in a given society or social stratum, which confers the capacity to

subordinate others. But Bourdieu does not go there. The object is modern capitalism with its fluid systems of change and exchange.

Bourdieu accepts 'economic capital' as the dominant principle of domination in capitalist society, but observes that the efficacy of economic capital as a principle of domination is constantly under challenge by fractions of the dominant class (e.g. artists, professionals, academics, politicians, etc.) who are relatively poor in economic capital, but who by dint of their social role, wealth in cultural or other forms of capital, strive to exercise and enhance their own specific form of capital as a rival principle of domination.

This conception is not dissimilar to the struggles which have gone on down the centuries between landed property, industrial capital and finance capital. The capacity to define what is valid art (or science or body-shape or life-style, or 'connections' or whatever) by those capable of elaborating it, is a powerful lever of domination. So it seems not unreasonable to designate command of such authority as a 'form of capital'. So struggles over art (or science or body-shape or life-style) take on the appearance of struggles between social classes, just like the struggles of industrial capital with landed property and finance capital over the rate of rent and interest.

Field and Habitus

Bourdieu sees the social world through the lens of *field* and *habitus*, complementary concepts representing the social and psychological processes which moderate the actions and attitudes of individuals so that stable systems of interpersonal and class relationships spontaneously reproduce themselves.

A *field* is an institution, conceived of as a normative and evolving set of rules, roles and relationships which determine how various rewards such as status, authority, income, resources or autonomy are distributed among individuals acting in roles within the field. Examples of fields are politics, academia, the world of romance, the art world, the village, etc., where different capabilities are rewarded with appropriate roles bringing commensurate rights, responsibilities and rewards. *Habitus* refers to deeply ingrained, durable dispositions – habits, skills, and tastes – acquired through social upbringing and experiences within some class fraction.

Subjects acquire a habitus appropriate to the field in which they expect to make their living, while the field motivates subjects to carry out the functions of the field and ensure its maintenance. The field acts somewhat analogously to an ecosystem or habitat, and habitus describes the kind of creatures that live in that habitat and maintain it.

These concepts capture very successfully how people occupying *disadvantaged* or denigrated positions in the broader social formation actively seek to *maintain* that position and 'police the boundaries', so to speak, punishing individuals who stray outside the norms appropriate to the habitat, by adopting features or practices which are denigrated in that habitat.

Hysteresis

However descriptive a social theory might be, it is worthwhile to the extent that is can explain how a social formation reproduces and maintains itself and how

crisis and social change is generated. The key dynamic in Bourdieu's social theory is the relation between field and habitus. It is clear enough that subjects will adapt themselves to the demands of living in a field and the field will adapt itself to the availability of subjects with a relevant habitus. However, Bourdieu shows that the habitus is formed mostly in the home and typically takes decades for a community to change its habitus. It is in the nature of things that efforts to change a habitus will meet fierce resistance. Fields, on the other hand, can change very rapidly and dramatically under the impact of economic and political pressures coming from over the horizon of those living in the field. That is, there is a *lag* in the adaptation of the habitus to the field, and this mismatch is what generates crises in the social formation. This is witnessed when a steelmaking town runs out of coal or iron ore and has to make a living in a service industry, or when a sleepy rural town suddenly becomes the home of a coal mine.

But there is no habitus which changes or challenges the field here. It is all about *adaptation*. It is always the subject changing to suit the field, never the subject changing the field.

Class and habitus

The concept of 'habitus', borrowed from Aquinas, plays an important role in Bourdieu's theory.

> To reconstruct what has been pulled apart [the different practices performed in different fields] ... one must return to the practice-unifying and practice-generating principle, i.e., the class habitus, the internalised form of the class condition and of the conditionings it entails.
>
> Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101

and

> Social class is not defined solely by a position in the relations of production, but by the class habitus which is 'normally' (i.e., with a high statistical probability) associated with that position.
>
> op. cit., p. 372

Thus the 'habitus' is the "internalised form of the class condition and of the conditionings" by which a member of the class knows, without thinking about it, just how to react to different cultural stimuli, what he or she finds "pretentious" or "vulgar," "gawdy" rather than "attractive," "dignified" or "beautiful." Habitus is not a direct reflection of the conditions of existence of a class, but a *sensibility* acquired through a life-time and an upbringing in those conditions and the possibilities they include or exclude, with a future (including a future for one's children) which offers prospects, or on the other side, a past remembered when things were better or gains were made.

Thus, whether a person *actually* has money, or skills or education or family, in practice turns out to be secondary to the habitus they have acquired, which may sometimes be at odds with the life-style – attitudes, the way of using the body, command of language, friends and contacts, preferences in art and aspirations, etc., etc., – which are *normally* associated with the conditions of life. Thus we have the phenomenon of the miner's son who leaves town to become a dancer, or the junior clerk who bluffs his way into being accepted as a well-heeled

investor and by good luck turns pretension into reality, and so on. But the point is that these are *rarities*. The wealthy man's son is accepted into a management position despite knowing nothing about the actual business while the skilled worker waits a lifetime for promotion – that is the norm.

Bourdieu was very successful in explaining the stability and reproduction of cultural and social formations. The disappointment of working- and middle-class French people about the failure of the postwar boom to deliver a better life for them was the stimulus for his work. His study of how mass higher education failed to improve the lot of the millions of lower class French people who entered the university for the first time in the 1960s, was a remarkable achievement.

Can a habitus be changed, perhaps by individuals who challenge its norms, style-setters, organic leaders? Fields change in response to changes in the labour process which comes from outside the horizon of subjects. The acquired habitus of subjects are constantly being undermined by technical change, manifested in hysteresis.

'Field' and 'habitus' are meso-level concepts and as such are amenable to theorising the mediation between actor and structure. The contest over the exchange rate for a habitus is all Bourdieu offers, however. The disappointment of lower-class French people in the 1960s and '70s was explained, but it offered only consolation for the young participants of the uprising of May–June 1968. The workers and students were never going to unite.

Cultural capital and educational capital

Cultural capital is the capacity to play the culture game (to borrow an expression from Wittgenstein), to recognise the allusions made in a novel, what is being quoted or refused in a work of art, to know what and how to approve and disapprove, how to avoid the question if necessary, to have internalised appropriate manners and acquired a taste for appropriate art, to know the directors (or actors) of movies, *avant garde* (or popular), to know how to make dinner conversation, how to wear clothes, how to occupy space, how to look down your nose, and give or not give someone your time, and so forth – all those manners infallibly identify you to others as a person of a culture, popular, *avant garde* or 'legitimate', with a likely trajectory in life (declining or rising), suitable to have access to certain circles or not, and with more or less right to have an opinion on political or economic matters, or whatever.

> Thus ... the social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds. Social divisions become principles of division, organizing the image of the social world. Objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits, a 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded.
>
> op. cit., p. 471

Bourdieu's research shows that possession of cultural capital is closely predicted by social origins. The bourgeois child knows the price of an Impressionist painting at auction and where it should hang in the drawing room, like the working class boy knows who won the World Cup and how to change a

sparkplug. Professionals know from an early age who is a good director, like a working class youth knows the actors and actresses of popular cinema.

The educational system offers a way for parvenus to acquire culture and a certificate to prove it, but Bourdieu's research shows that 'scholastic' culture can never quite duplicate the ease and depth of the cultural capital acquired by constant exposure from an early age, at home. As the educational system in France was opened to wider and wider sections of the populace, a struggle went on to redefine qualifications and jobs, and create new certificates, moving the goal posts so as to restore the social order, or on the other hand, to open new doors to young graduates. At the same time, there is a constant struggle going on between *rising* class fractions and those in *decline*, between technocratic executives with degrees in business management and all kinds of cultural mediators redefining their own life-styles upwards, while shopkeepers and skilled tradespeople, for example, inexorably decline, and so forth. The autodidact meanwhile, according to Bourdieu, enters a race which he has lost from the beginning.

Thus we have the phenomena which Bourdieu describes as judgments of classification which are themselves classified and classifying acts. As is well-known in respect to all internecine struggles, no distinction is so vital as the distinction between social neighbours, and thus one has all the acts of *refusal* in which what is valued by one is refused by the other, explicit in respect to *avant garde* art in relation to legitimate (i.e., expensive or classic) art.

The main axis of these struggles, according to Bourdieu, is *within* the dominant class, between those who lack economic capital, against those wealthy bourgeois who relatively speaking lack culture, with professionals of various kinds promoting their own status by trying to shift the dominant principle of domination towards cultural means, distinguishing themselves from the uncultured wealthy by emphasising taste for the refined and off-beat, as against the acquisition of rare and expensive cultural goods. And on the other side, among those lacking in economic capital, among the dominated classes, to promote the sensibilities of professional skills acquired by hard work through the public education system or artistic production, to gain entry to the lower ranks of the dominant class. At the same time, the working class, making a virtue of necessity, call to order anyone of their number who gets above themselves and thereby threatens class solidarity.

Appreciation of culture is thus reduced, with little or no residue, to *pretension* – people acquire and express a taste which expresses their pretension to be recognised in a given class fraction, refusing the vulgar or the common, the difficult or the fancy, according to the need for distinction. The whole business of cultural appreciation is reduced by Bourdieu to a status game.

On the other hand, the fields seem to be taken as given. All Bourdieu offers is a way of describing fields. The fields don't appear to produce anything other than the rewards offered to maintain their own internal structure of domination. Were a collective subject seeking emancipation come into view, then it could only be a new field for the exercise of enjoyment and domination for its participants. The origin of such social movements would be as much outside Bourdieu's view as the origins of a new technology or industry. There is no place in the scheme for the human Will.

Social capital, body capital, linguistic capital, political capital

Although cultural capital and economic capital constitute the principal axes of subordination within capitalist society, Bourdieu talks of other forms of capital as well. *Social capital* are 'connections' needed, in particular, to make use of one's cultural or *scholastic* capital (certificates). *Body capital*, both given by nature and that acquired through the socially-approved diet and exercise regime and so on, also constitute resources which give an individual leverage in social struggles. *Linguistic capital* is basically a subset of cultural capital contained in appropriate ease in the command of language. *Political capital*, a variety of social capital, is standing in the political world and the ability to command votes and support in political conflicts.

All these types of 'capital' share the same basic conditions of production as economic and cultural capital, so not a great deal of time need be spent giving them special consideration.

Cultural relativism

At the end of reading *Distinctions* one is left with the impression of an extreme relativism in cultural criticism; everything it appears is appreciated solely for the purpose of establishing markers of one's social status, albeit unconsciously. 'Real motives' are everywhere disguised or sublimated.

Taste responds to two kinds of stimuli, on the one hand the pleasure connected with basic human needs, on the other, basically 'quotation' and 'association' which refer to other points in the cultural universe in a kind of 'in-group' conversation. The latter responses create distance from the material world and entry to an social world structured and populated by cultural references and the social universe of the dominant class – essentially domination.

According to Bourdieu, all the dichotomies of cultural criticism are successive sublimations of one basic distinction between the dominated class and dominant class, beginning with animal nature versus human culture, therefore crude/heavy versus fine/light and so on.

These distinctions can undergo inversion when the dominated fractions of the dominant class use the same contrast to indicate ascetic/serious versus light-weight/frivolous, etc. in contrast either to the culturally poor, economically dominant bourgeoisie, or the simple enjoyments of the unpretentious worker.

Bourdieu also finds that the basic dichotomies of gender and age are deployed to express or reinforce distinctions of cultural dominance. So for example, one has the contest of immature/mature against youthful/aged, and all the contested markers of antique subordination penetrate and express the language of cultural subordination.

Although the dominant class's appreciation of art is sublimated through multiple shifts, it is basically stimulating the same need for a feeling of distinction or distance from the crude necessity of the life of the dominated classes. Through multiple sublimation, culture constitutes itself as a relatively independent domain, but the taste for a work of art can ultimately be traced back to the pleasures of either enjoyment or domination.

Thus, we have a window into the class struggles as it is played out in the domain of culture:

> Taste is at the heart of these symbolic struggles, which go on at all times between the fractions of the dominant class and which would be less absolute, less total, if they were not based on the primary belief which binds each agent to his life-style. A materialist reduction of preferences to their economic and social conditions of production and to the social functions of the seemingly most disinterested practices must not obscure the fact that, in matters of culture, investments are not only economic but also psychological. Conflicts over art or the art of living, in which what is really at stake is the imposition of the dominant principle of domination within the dominant class – or, to put it another way, the securing of the best conversion rate for the type of capital with which each group is best provided – would not be so dramatic if they did not involve the ultimate values of the person, a highly sublimated form of interests.
>
> op. cit., p. 310

The means of domination has shifted:

> substituting seduction for repression, public relations for policing, advertising for authority, the velvet glove for the iron fist, pursues the symbolic integration of the dominated classes by imposing needs rather than inculcating norms.
>
> op. cit., p. 153-4

Objectivism

Reading *Distinctions* also leaves one with an overwhelming feeling of *objectivism*, in the sense that all the social agents appear to be pursuing illusions – tastes and desires which derive from unconscious internalisations of their social position. "Culture is the ultimate fetish," he says, and there undoubtedly is such a pessimistic flavour to the work, but it is nuanced.

In his analysis of the French newspapers, Bourdieu shows how the culture addresses itself to the bourgeois as "subjects of history, or at least subjects of a discourse about history," whereas the habitus of the working class, centres around the worker as *object* of politics.

The social arrangements reflected in Bourdieu's analysis therefore capture the form of rule active in bourgeois society. There is no suggestion, however, of how the working class, acclimatised to subordination and ruling themselves out of matters of state, could transform themselves into subjects of history.

> With mass market cultural products – music whose simple repetitive structures invite a passive, absent participation, prefabricated entertainments which the new engineers of cultural mass production design for television viewers, and especially sporting events which establish a recognised division between the spectators and the professionals, virtuosos of an esoteric technique or 'supermen' of exceptional ability – dispossession of the very intention of recognition of dispossession.
>
> op. cit., p. 386

Political Opinion Formation

Somewhat as an aside from the main argument, as part of a critique of the naïve use of questionnaires to measure political opinion, Bourdieu refers to three modes of political opinion formation:

> First, a *class ethos*, a generative formula not constituted as such which enables objectively coherent responses, compatible with the practical premises of a practical relation to the world, to be generated for all the problems of everyday existence.
>
> Secondly, it may be a systematic political 'slant' (*parti*), a system of explicit, specifically political principles, amenable to logical control and reflexive scrutiny, in short, a sort of political 'axiomatics' (in ordinary language, a 'line' or a 'programme') ...
>
> Thirdly, it may be a two-stage choice, i.e., the identification, in the mode of knowledge, of the answers consistent with the 'line' of a political party, this time in the sense of an organisation providing a political 'line' on a set of problems which it constitutes as political.
>
> op. cit., p. 418

There is no sense of self-mobilisation here. In Bourdieu's day, the PCF spoke for the industrial working class, and spoke on their behalf in the language of the dominant class. All that was at stake was the improvement or defence of the material conditions of life. Political leaders acquire political capital and are rewarded with success in the political field and maybe there'll be a wage rise or the retirement age will not after all be raised. There is no room for an emancipatory consciousness here.

Systems of Status Subordination

Nancy Fraser (2003), sees capitalist society as marked by the co-existence of *two* forms of subordination, "the class structure and the status order," According to Fraser, it is necessary to utilise two different systems of concepts to grasp the two systems of subordination, and understand the interaction between the two.

Bourdieu's approach to subordination along *multiple* axes allows a kind of utilitarian analysis whereby subjects choose a strategy which maximises their benefit for the particular composition of capital that they have command of, in combination with the struggle by classes to valorise their own life-style in competition with others. But Bourdieu treats economic capital as just one of a number of mutually exchangeable measures in a multi-dimensional status order. Cultural capital and economic capital are orthogonal but so also are social capital, body capital, academic capital, etc.

Thus we have the observation that (in 1960s France) working class women don't bother about their appearance and prefer to be home-makers and make their men happy, because the jobs on offer for them are rotten anyway, while the daughters of the bourgeoisie dress-up, get educated and corner prestigious jobs as 'cultural mediators' because this offers the optimum route to improving or maintaining their own status.

Bourdieu is also attuned to a lot of the observations found in Fraser's work, such as the deployment of gender stigmatisation on gendered forms of labour, with

consequences such as male nurses suffering from low pay and the pay rates of trades falling when they become open to women, and so forth.

It is Bourdieu's claim that different forms of capital are essentially interchangeable and expressible in a single analytic which is unique.

Subjectivity

Bourdieu is pessimistic about the prospects for the working class, or any fraction thereof, transforming themselves from objects into subjects of history. Indeed, he observes that those who act as spokespeople for the working class are forced to adopt the language of the dominant class in order to even express the political demands of the working class.

On the other hand, his description of the class habitus, contributing as it does to the understanding of class consciousness, and his elucidation of the mechanisms of class struggle within the domain of culture, provides a necessary understanding of how class struggle is motivated and the kind of barriers that radical politics faces.

Certainly, Bourdieu provides an impressive exposé of professional and petit-bourgeois claims to high pay and status, as against the under-valued skills and labour of the working-class. There is a sense in which Bourdieu's philosophically inclined analysis expresses the spontaneous working-class prejudice that bourgeois culture is nothing more than a pretension aimed to make its connoisseurs look smarter and working class and rural people look stupid, even demeaning their body-shape. In that sense his relativist conceptions have an egalitarian flavour.

However, it is implicit in this whole approach that the actors altogether *lack insight* into their own motivation. Under these conditions, it is difficult to see how a class or class-fraction could develop a genuine collective will beyond the consciousness of a mob. But people read the newspapers and they read books. If a sociologist can gain have insight into their own motivation and that of others, why are the objects of social sciences excluded from having such an insight?

Bourdieu's Structuralism is certainly more humane than Althusser's mainly because Bourdieu's subjects do struggle and do make changes in the structure, even if it is limited to improving the exchange-rate for their habitus. They are not absolute structural dopes. But there is no action in this world which is not produced by the structure, and rather than Althusser's structure which resists all practical efforts to change it, Bourdieu's structure is more like a process which is continuously adjusted and renewed by internal struggle. If the subjects in this world were granted insight, then change is possible.

Conclusion

One has to appreciate the power of Bourdieu's insight into how an entire social formation, like modern-day capitalism, is internalised in the most intimate feelings and desires of its people.

Everyone grasps the element of truth in the claim that scientists write papers for recognition, promotion, overseas travel and so on, not *just* in pursuit of truth – but this can be *exaggerated*. And Althusser would tell us that Science is a

subjectless process, so the intentions of its protagonists are irrelevant. But are they?

If Bourdieu's critique applies to Art, why not Science, why not Sociology? Althusser carved out a place for himself as part of an elite which was historically conscious, but Bourdieu does not. Is his book mere pretension then?

All these institutions – Science, Art, etc – have an objective basis *irrespective* of delivering external rewards (MacIntyre, 1981) to the participants of the given institution, and the objective basis of an institution also provides motivation for the individual participants. And most people, I would hazard to say, appreciate the *internal* rewards of their work to a greater or lesser extend according to economic hardship.

Bourdieu's Sociology is the inverse of Leontyev's Activity Theory in this sense. Leontyev never investigated how the nature of the object of activity lay behind the ethos inside the activity. Bourdieu on the other hand elaborates the ethos within a field without consideration for the object of the field. But both took the object of the activity/field as given. And yet it is the changing demands of social reproduction which is surely the ultimate source of revolutionary transformation.

Bourdieu has given us a rich and compelling theory of the dynamic equilibrium of modern capitalist society, but what we really need is a theory of social transformation, and a theory in which subjects are deemed to have some insight into their own situation.

Whereas Althusser could only provide generalisations in which every aspect of human life was drained of any trace of the human Will, Bourdieu has given us three things. First, a compelling image of the social struggle as it is fought in all the various corners of modern society. He shows *how* this struggle is undermined and stymied at every step, but nonetheless we see *struggle*, wilfulness. Second, he has introduced a number of concepts which *mediate* between the entire social formation and the experience of each individual subject, viz., habitus and field. As a result, we have new concepts with which to understand how a social structure is experienced by its denizens. Third, he has given us a theory of crisis, viz., hysteresis – a displacement of Marx's conflict between the forces of production and the system of property relations – which we see all around us, without recourse to macro-economic speculation.

Bourdieu, like Althusser, expressed the conviction of French intellectuals at that time that the working class had been nobbled and there was no opening for revolutionary change. But Bourdieu has given us a series of concepts which show how the system of domination is experienced by people and how it motivates people to resist, even if only for a 'better deal' – if only we could grant human beings *insight* into their own situation.

The concept of 'field' is too totalising. It is dystopian. What is needed is a theory of how a field can be destabilised or subverted, or simply how it changes at all. Fields may or may not have a 'motive' – i.e., something such that if it didn't exist, it would have to be invented, like Leontyev's *activities*. But the fields of romance or sport, for example, are not the same as the world of science of the world of manufacturing, even though both can be theorised as fields and both are colonised by capitalism. A different way of conceiving of the relation between an

institution and the subjectivity of individuals within the institution is needed in which a person may have an investment in the outcome as well as their own reward and in which human consciousness has some surplus over and above their shaping by the system of domination. And we need a better theory of the relationship between the habitus and a person's conditions of life.

In short, Althusser and Bourdieu are both *sociologists*. They take no account of Psychology. Bourdieu's concept of habitus as elaborated in *Distinctions* is very compelling, but it has no foundation in genuine psychological research. Yet, as the labour process is continuously revolutionised, demanding ever-changing skills and sensibilities from its workers, including increasing *insight* into the social procss, the habitus of millions of workers changes. The concept of hysteresis explains how crises which arise from the rapid changes in the labour process. But sometimes defending what you have demands changing what you do.

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