

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOCIOLOGY: MARX MEETS BOURDIEU

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First Conversation with Pierre Bourdieu,
Havens Center, April 1, 2008

I: INTRODUCTION

- Bourdieu in Nutshell
- Reading Bourdieu
- Bourdieu and Marxism

Pierre Bourdieu in a nutshell

- The greatest sociologist of our era.
- Unmasking Domination
- Reflexivity
- Public Sociologist

Reading Pierre Bourdieu

- Reading an Author
- The Limits of Bourdieu's reflexivity
- Recreating the sociological field
- Bourdieu's silent conversations with: Marx, Gramsci, Fanon, Beauvoir, and Mills

II: FROM MARX TO BOURDIEU

Parallels, Complementarities and Antagonisms

- Logic of Practice
- Domination

The German Ideology

“As we hear from German ideologists, Germany has in the last few years gone through an unparalleled revolution. The decomposition of the Hegelian philosophy ... has developed into a universal ferment into which all the “powers of the past” are swept. ... It was a revolution besides which the French Revolution was child’s play, a world struggle beside which the struggles of the Diadochi appear insignificant. Principles ousted one another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard-of rapidity and in the three years 1842-45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries. All this is supposed to have taken place in the realm of pure thought.”

– Marx and Engels

Pascalian Meditations

“Now, if there is one thing that out ‘modern’ or ‘postmodern’ philosophers have in common, beyond the conflicts that divide them, it is this excessive confidence in the powers of language. It is the typical illusion of the *lector*, who can regard an academic commentary as a political act or the critique of texts as a feat of resistance, and experience revolutions in the order of words as radical revolutions in the order of things.”

– Pierre Bourdieu, PM, p.3

The Logic of Practice: Marx = Bourdieu

- MARX: Critique of German Idealism →
Theses on Feuerbach
- BOURDIEU: Scholastic Fallacies →
Outline of a Theory of Practice, The Logic of Practice, Pascalian Meditations

The Logic of Practice: From Marx to Bourdieu

MARX	BOURDIEU
Critique of German Idealism <i>Theses on Feuerbach</i>	Scholastic Fallacies <i>Pascalian Meditations</i>
Economic Practice	Cultural Practices

The Logic of Practice: From Marx to Bourdieu

MARX	BOURDIEU
Critique of German Idealism <i>Theses on Feuerbach</i>	Scholastic Fallacies <i>Pascalian Meditations</i>
Economic Practice	Cultural Practices
a. Mode of Production	
b. Base and Superstructure	
c. Dynamics: Capitalism as self-destroying system	
d. Struggle: Capitalism as terrain of struggle	
e. History: Succession of MPs	

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d. Struggle: Capitalism as terrain of struggle	d. Struggles within and between fields
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c.Dynamics: Capitalism as self-destroying system	c.Accumulation of cultural capital
d.Struggle: Capitalism as terrain of struggle	d.Struggles within and between fields
e. History: Succession of MPs	e.History as differentiation

Domination: From Marx to Bourdieu

“The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, *the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.*” (Emphasis added. p172)

-- Marx and Engels

Domination: From Marx to Bourdieu

“Symbolic violence is the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator (and therefore to the domination) when their understanding of the situation and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which, being merely the incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination, make this relation appear as natural; or, in other words, when the schemes they implement in order to perceive and evaluate themselves or to perceive and evaluate the dominators (high/low, male/female, white/black, etc.) are the product of the incorporation of the (thus neutralized) classifications of which their social being is the product.”

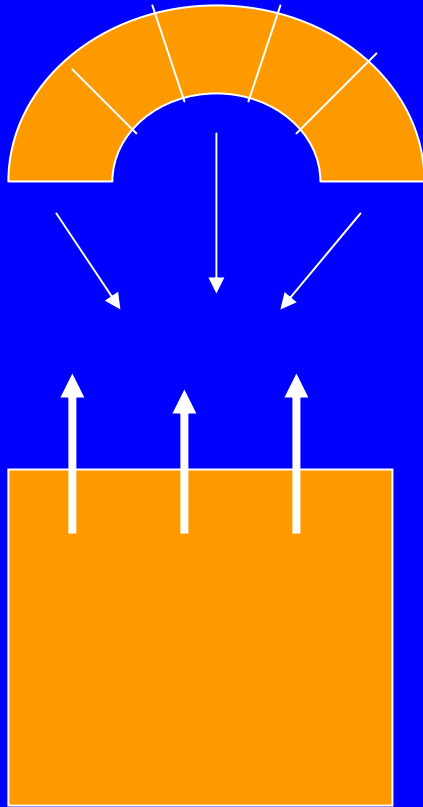
-- Pierre Bourdieu, PM, p.170

Domination: From Marx to Bourdieu

MARX	BOURDIEU
The ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class	Symbolic Violence
Dominant class and its intellectuals	Dominant and dominated fractions of dominant class
Working class struggles	Working class habitus

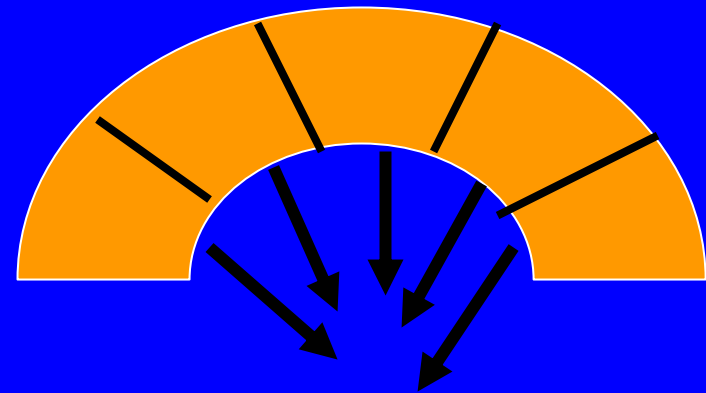
PICTORAL SUMMARY: MARX vs. BOURDIEU

Superstructure



Mode of production
Economic Base

Field of Power itself composed
multiple fields – economic,
Political, education, literary, etc



Symbolic Domination

III. SOCIOLOGY AS CULTURAL FIELD

- Bourdieu's Cultural Field
- Exploitation and Academic Capital
- Division of Academic Labor
- The Struggle for Sociology

Cultural Fields

- *Autonomy vs. Heteronomy*
- *Dominant vs. New Entrants*

Struggle Within Cultural Field

“The ageing of authors, works or schools is something quite different from a mechanical sliding into the past. It is engendered in the fight between those who have already left their mark and are trying to endure, and those who cannot make their own marks in their turn without consigning to the past those who have an interest in stopping time, in eternalizing the present state; between the dominants whose strategy is tied to continuity, identity and reproduction, and the dominated, the new entrants, whose interest is in discontinuity, rupture, difference and revolution.” (Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*, p.157)

Cultural Fields

- Autonomy vs. Heteronomy
- Dominant vs. New Entrants

	Autonomy	Heteronomy
Dominant	Consecrated	Bourgeois Art
New Entrants	Avant Garde	Social Art

Cultural Fields

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New Entrants	Avant Garde	Social Art

- What happened to “exploitation”?
- Sociology as cultural field

Distribution of Academic Capital

(Defined by Departments of Training and Employment)

	Elite Training	Non-Elite Training
Elite Employment		
Non-Elite Employment		

Division of Academic Labor

	Academic Audience	Extra-Academic Audience
Instrumental Knowledge	Professional	Policy
Reflexive Knowledge	Critical	Public

Division of Academic Labor

	Academic	Extra-Academic
Instrumental (trained in elite departments)	Professional	Policy
Reflexive (employed in non-elite depts.)	Critical	Public

The Struggle for Sociology

- Conservation Strategies
 - Symbolic Domination
 - Hegemonic Strategies
 - Offensive Strategies
- Subversion Strategies
 - Counter-Hegemonic Strategies
 - Offensive Strategies

IV. BOURDIEU'S REPLY

Scientific Field

- Defense of autonomy of science

The Scientific Field

- Defense of autonomy of science
- Concentration of academic capital

The Scientific Field

- Defense of autonomy of science
- Concentration of academic capital
- Struggle between dominant and new entrants

The Scientific Field

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- Critical and public sociologists are imposters

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- Critical and public sociologists are imposters
- Only legitimate public sociology is the symbolically consecrated

BEYOND The Scientific Field

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- Scientific Field vs. Disciplinary Field

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MARX MEETS BOURDIEU

- Parallels
- Complementarities
- Antagonisms
- Traditional vs. Organic Intellectuals
 - Gramsci
 - Fanon
 - Beauvoir