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Habitus, Field, and Capital: The Question of Historical Specificity

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The novelist Kurt Vonnegut studied anthropology at the University of Chicago, his studies interrupted by World War II. In one of his novels, he reports that anthropology seems to have had two messages. Before the war, he was taught that all people were different; after the war, that all people were the same.

Anthropology – and the human or social sciences generally – have indeed had these two messages throughout their history. Anthropology has perhaps been the paradigmatic science of otherness, but sameness, ethnocentrism, or explicit universalism has been predominant in sociology, economics, psychology, and most of the other human sciences. Today, the debate continues with particular vociferousness. On the one side stand poststructuralists, postmodernists, some feminists, and others who would base an identity politics on the absoluteness of otherness, the radical incompatibility of different intellectual traditions, and even the impossibility of full communication across lines of cultural or other basic differences. On the other side stand defenders of Enlightenment universalism, modernism, and rationality as a basis for communication, among whom Jürgen Habermas is the most prominent.

The postmodernists push their case sharply enough to run the risk of stepping onto the slippery slope of radical relativism; some, indeed, dive onto that slope head first. Habermas defends the Enlightenment project by means of a rationalism so thoroughgoing that it runs the risk of seeming vulnerable to the charges that Hegel leveled against Kant's moral philosophy. Hegel's four key charges were: excessive formalism, abstract universalism, impotence of the mere ought, and the terrorism of pure conviction.[1] In particular, accounts like Habermas's seem to require a strong separation of form from content and thus to lose touch with the

concreteness of actual human social life. Pierre Bourdieu has tried in the strongest terms to distinguish his work from the tradition for which Habermas speaks, seeking to do theory primarily in concrete, empirical analyses and to oppose the antinomy of form and content (among many other antinomies). Yet, he is hard to place among the postmodernists (though like many he might be considered a "poststructuralist"). His quest for another path is valuable and will be supported in this essay. Yet I will also argue that because of a lack of clarity on one issue dividing so-called modernists and postmodernists – universalism versus historical specificity – Bourdieu's position is more ambiguous than at first appears and hence more problematic.

Overall, the debate between self-declared modernists and post-modernists seems to echo the inconclusive debate on rationality and cross-cultural analysis which was sparked off by Winch's (1958) Wittgensteinian argument for a contextualization of knowledge so radical that it seemed to make cross-cultural understanding an impossible goal (see the anthologies by Wilson (1970) and Hollis and Lukes (1982)). That debate generated a variety of interesting arguments but, ultimately, was carried out at such a remove from the empirical work of most social scientists (and the practical concerns of most political activists) that it was unable to effect much reform of our understanding. In the postmodernist/modernist debate as well, sensible third paths seem hard to identify, since the positions are rhetorically overdrawn, in part because they tend to be presented in great abstraction from actual analysis and social practice. The apparent exceptions, like Foucault and Bourdieu, are in fact not protagonists of the debate. Though Foucault's work is now central to it, this was not his main frame of discourse. He offered a critique of modernity, to be sure, but no argument for postmodernism as cultural form or social reality.

In the present essay, which I am afraid is fairly abstract itself, I want to pose the question of whether Pierre Bourdieu's work might offer some suggestions as to such a sensible third path between universalism and particularism, rationalism and relativism, modernism and postmodern-ism – the whole linked series of problematic dichotomies. I do not want to set it up as an argument of the same sort, in part because I think that Bourdieu has admirably stayed away from such absolute claims as are made on both sides of those divides; his call for heterodoxy in social science strikes me as eminently sound (Bourdieu 1988f and, in a similar vein, Bourdieu and Passeron 1967). But Bourdieu's work has substantial similarities to both sides of the current discourse, even while it is sharply distinct. It shares with what on the American side of the Atlantic is often

labeled "poststructuralism" or "postmodernism" both structuralist roots and a recognition that structuralists were wrong to reject all critical inquiry into basic categories of knowledge as necessarily based on a philosophy of the subject. Like Derrida and Foucault, Bourdieu has carried out significant critical, epistemological inquiries without embracing traditional philosophy of consciousness or subjectivity. Yet Bourdieu is unlike these other "poststructuralists" in his more agonistic (though still deep) relationship to Heidegger (Bourdieu 1988d), in his determination to develop a genuinely *critical* theory (in a sense that I shall develop more below), and in his emphasis on the material practicality of social concerns, even in the realm of culture. He has also sharply rejected the substitution of quasi-poetic discourse "which becomes its own end [and] opens the door to a form of thinly-veiled nihilistic relativism . . . that stands as the polar opposite to a truly reflexive social science" (in Wacquant 1989: 35).[2]

This sort of argument places Bourdieu somewhat closer to Habermas.[3] Both, I would suggest, are heirs to the tradition of critical theory, not just in the Frankfurt school but extending back to Marx, and both propose projects that substantially reformulate the foundations for critical theory. It may be somewhat surprising to place Bourdieu in the camp of critical theorists, so let me defend that for a moment. It is true that Bourdieu follows the lead of the older generation of Frankfurt school theorists – Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse – much less closely than does Habermas. Moreover, he is greatly indebted to other traditions which have little resonance in Frankfurt school thought – notably the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and Lévi-Straussian structuralism. Nonetheless, to restrict the label "critical theory" to followers of the Frankfurt school is to make it, unreasonably, into a kind of proprietorial claim and to lose sight of core features that give it meaning and significance today. We might understand critical theory, I think, as the project of social theory that undertakes simultaneously critique of received categories, critique of theoretical practice, and critical substantive analysis of social life in terms of the possible, not just the actual. All three moments are important, and Bourdieu shares all three with Horkheimer and Adorno, even though his theoretical style and substantive analyses differ.

There are other important similarities between Bourdieu and Habermas. Both strive to maintain an analytic focus on agents or agency, while avoiding the philosophy of the subject.[4] Both are engaged in projects intended to overcome, or enable one to overcome, the traditional opposition of theory to practice. Both derive significant insights from

Weber's account of Western rationalization as well as from Marxism (though they do quite different things with these insights in their respective theories).

The differences from Habermas are many also. They start, perhaps, with Bourdieu's opposition to theoretical system building, to what he has called "theoretical theory" (in Wacquant 1989: 50), the development of conceptual schemes divorced from concrete analytic objects or projects.[5] One may evaluate this negatively, pointing out that Bourdieu engages in a good deal of generalization even while he declines to work out a full theoretical basis for it, or positively, noting how he avoids the charge of arbitrary formalism which has been leveled at Habermas. In any case, the difference is significant. So is that which stems from Bourdieu's focus on the relationships of power that constitute and shape social fields (on fields, see 1990e, 1984: 113–20, 1988b, 1987b). Power is always fundamental to Bourdieu, and it involves domination and/or differential distribution. For Bourdieu, in other words, power is always *used*, if sometimes unconsciously; it is not simply and impersonally systemic.[6] Habermas's theory, like Parsons's, allows both relational and distributive understandings of power to take a back seat to power understood as a steering mechanism and a general social capacity.

In short, there is reason to think that Bourdieu is engaged in a project of critical theory similar to Habermas's, but that his work is much more open to the kind of positive insights that have been offered by the so-called poststructuralists (some of which, like the imbrication of knowledge in relations of power, he put forward at least as early as those poststructuralists who became famously associated with them). His work is essentially contemporary with these others (for example, Foucault and Derrida) and of comparable scope, though it has been less widely read in the English-language world. I want here to explore the idea that it might suggest ways out of what is increasingly becoming a sterile and boring impasse between Habermas and the postmodernists. I will not make any effort to summarize that debate, though it forms my frame (see Calhoun 1989, 1991). And I will take up only one thread of the dispute. This is the issue of difference. Some postmodernists make such a fetish of attention to difference that they are prepared to embrace a thoroughgoing relativism, which Bourdieu has sharply opposed. Habermas, on the other hand, is sufficiently rigid in his universalism (even though he distinguishes his own as lower-case *u*, compared to Kant's capital *U*; see Habermas 1989) and his separation of form from content that he seems unable to offer much more than lip service to the importance of difference, to the idea that social and cultural differences might be positively desirable, not merely tolerable on liberal grounds.

Difference as such is not a central theme of Bourdieu's. I am not sure that it is even a peripheral theme. In at least one way his theory is weakened by inattention to this issue: he offers an inadequate account of how to address the most basic categorial differences among epochs, societies, and cultures and corresponding differences in how his analytic tools fit or work in historically or culturally distinct instances. Despite this, I will argue that Bourdieu's work gives us extremely useful ways of approaching parts of this issue and that it thereby contributes importantly to getting contemporary theoretical discourse out of the rut of postmodernist versus modernist.

The issue of how to understand differences in societal types, epochs, civilizations, or cultures is a central one for social theory. It figures at least implicitly in the modernist/postmodernist debate as the question of whether the contemporary era is, or is about to become, distinct in some basic categorial way from that of the last three hundred or more years. The very idea of modernity, of course, posits a break with the premodern (usually conceived of as the medieval European and/or as a category which collapses and obscures the wide range of variation in non-Western societies). Some such idea of the distinctiveness of the modern West has informed anthropology and sociology from their inception, despite recurrent criticism of various specific formulations: *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*, traditional/modern, folk/urban, and so forth. The dual messages of anthropology (to which I alluded at the beginning) have in part to do with efforts on the one hand to show that "primitive" people are rational, despite the manifest conflicts between their beliefs and practices and what we "know" to be true, and on the other hand to maintain the otherness of the people studied, either out of respect for their concrete way of life or as a mirror for our own. The post-Winch rationality debates were about just these issues: for example, about how we can determine whether or not the people of a different culture are "rational".

It seems to me that Bourdieu's work both reveals the general ambivalence about this issue and suggests a way of grappling with part of it. I will try to demonstrate the latter by developing an account of the transformation of the workings of the habitus involved in movement from a minimally codified "traditional" social organization towards, on the one hand, more complex civilizations outside the modern Western ambit and, on the other, capitalist states in the modern West. More briefly, and with more attention to problems, I will look at Bourdieu's later argument regarding multiform and convertible capital. At stake is

whether we should understand Bourdieu's analytic apparatus – his conceptual tools like habitus, field, and capital – as applying universally, without modification, or as situationally specific. Moreover, in either case, we want to know whether they help us to make sense of differences among situations, not just their commonalities. Bourdieu is concerned with both sides of this:

> There are *general laws of fields*: even such different fields as the field of politics, the field of philosophy, and the field of religion have functionally invariant laws (it's because of this fact that the project of a general theory is not senseless, and that, therefore, one can make use of what one understands of the functioning of each particular field to interrogate and interpret other fields, thereby getting past the mortal antinomy between idiographic monographs and formal and empty theory). (Bourdieu 1984: 113, all emphases in quotations original)

The issue is not, as critics have sometimes charged, whether Bourdieu neglects change or struggle; he does not, but rather pays attention to both.[7] The issue is how to describe a change so basic that it calls for different categories of analysis. In his early work, Bourdieu contrasted Kabylia with France, the traditional with the modern. Starting in the 1960s, he embarked on a long-range trajectory of studies of France which used the categories he had developed in studying Kabylia and argued substantially for the similarity of the basic social issues across cases.[8] Bourdieu does not decide the issue for us. He has described his project as "uncovering some of the universal laws that tendentially regulate the functioning of all fields" (in Wacquant 1989: 36). But in the same interview, he also uses more qualified expressions: "One of the purposes of the analysis is to uncover *transhistorical invariants*, or sets of relations between structures that persist within a clearly circumscribed but relatively long historical period" (ibid.).

Bourdieu is simply unclear as to how historically and comparatively specific his conceptual frameworks and analytic strategies are meant to be. He has not done much systematic comparative or historical analysis that would indicate how – or indeed, whether – he would make critical distinctions among epochs or types of societies or cultures. His conceptual development is generally couched in the context of concrete analysis – part of his opposition to "theoretical theory"; this makes for an element of contextual specificity to his terms. On the other hand, it leaves the historical and comparative frame for such specificity relatively unexamined. Bourdieu's predominant presentation tends towards a trans-historical conceptual framework and analytic approach which

partially obscures the specificity of epochs and types of society or culture. At the same time, much of his conceptual apparatus can be employed in an analytic approach which does a better job of achieving historical and cultural and social organizational specificity. In other words, we can use Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus to develop an account of breaks that so distinguish social arrangements and cultures that different issues arise and different analytic categories and strategies become appropriate.

Some of Bourdieu's categories may readily fit all social settings; for example, I would think that no one could be without a habitus. Others are trickier. Is the notion of capital altogether trans-historical? The issue is muddied by divergent readings of Marx and some ambiguity as to how closely related to Marx Bourdieu means his conception to be. This is worth exploring in some detail.

Bourdieu appears to begin his analyses of capital with Marx very much in mind. In one major essay, for example, he introduces this definition in the first paragraph: "Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" (1986b: 241). Bourdieu intends to take quite seriously this version of a labor theory of capital, describing the social world as "accumulated history" and going on to argue that we can analyze the various forms of capital in terms of the different means whereby they are accumulated and transmitted to succeeding generations. "The universal equivalent, the measure of all equivalences, is nothing other than labor-time (in the widest sense); and the conservation of social energy through all its conversions is verified if, in each case, one takes into account both the labor-time accumulated in the form of capital and the labor-time needed to transform it from one type into another" (1986b: 253). Bourdieu's qualifier about the widest sense of labor-time is appropriate, for, unlike Marx, Bourdieu does not examine the historically specific conditions under which labor is abstracted into temporal units of measurement. As this passage makes clear, Bourdieu means by "labor-time" simply the amount of work. For a universal equivalent, this is somewhat problematic. We must wonder how the various concrete forms of work involved in the reproduction or production of capital are in fact made equivalent to each other where a process of abstraction (for example, into commodified labor) is lacking. Bourdieu's account works well to show how qualitatively different forms of work may contribute to the

putatively common project of achieving or reproducing hierarchical distinction. It does not show us any way in which these qualitatively different forms of work are transformed into a quantitative equivalent. In certain ways, then, Bourdieu adds to the account one can derive from Marx – for example, by arguing that a much wider range of labor is productive of capital than Marx suggested, including the labor of familial reproduction of the embodied sensibilities which distinguish classes. On the other hand, by treating capital as wealth or power, he sacrifices one of the linchpins of Marxist theory and, despite his use of terms like "universal equivalent," loses the capacity to clarify the nature of a social system which produces universal equivalents.

What is of interest in this is not an argument over Bourdieu's choice among the many possible readings of Marx. Rather, it is the implications of this sort of account of capital for the analysis of a range of historical epochs or culturally different contemporary social arrangements. Certainly one could apply the idea of different forms of capital anywhere, so long as one simply meant to point out descriptively the existence of different resources of power, differently reproduced. But if the convertibility of capital is something more than a postulate or a restatement of the definition of capital as power (and hence of cultural or social attributes as capital only to the extent that they yield power), then it would seem to be historically variable. That is, at the very least, the extent and ease of convertibility must be quite different in different contexts. A high level of convertibility is, I think, characteristic especially of relatively complex, market-based, and above all capitalist societies. Capitalism, moreover, seems to have a logic of increasing convertibility. Where capitalist relations enter, traditional barriers to conversion of forms of capital are undermined. Bourdieu (1977c) himself showed this accurately in his accounts of the behavior and relationships of Algerian peasants who had earned substantial amounts of cash outside the traditional village field of production. Their attempts to convert their economic capital into cultural and social capital were thwarted and made difficult by the traditional normative structure and habitus. At the same time, as the introduction of cash gained a foothold, it proved insidious, undermining customary patterns of practice. Paying for services in money rather than accumulated social debt undermined a pattern of more or less stable reproduction and helped to bring about basic changes.

What Bourdieu's newer approach to capital lacks, then, is an idea of capitalism. That is, he is not in a position to give an account of what is distinctive to those societies which operate with a compulsion to expand their reach and whose patterns of practice have a corrosive power over others. Bourdieu uses a number of shorthand expressions for the

societies in which fields proliferate and are sharply divided and in which the convertibility among forms of capital is most central to social organization. Like the rest of us, he calls them variously "relatively complex," "differentiated," "highly codified," and so forth. A Marxian understanding of capitalism would be one way to clarify this opposition – or at least aspects of it – theoretically. I will want to suggest that Bourdieu's theoretical framework potentially offers us additional ways to make these sorts of terms much more precise and more useful. First, though, we must examine the significance of the fact that he stays away from describing any of these complex societies as capitalist and from addressing the special role that capital accumulation plays in their constitution.[9] Where Marx stressed that capital was not simply wealth, but a moment in the complex relations of production called "capitalism," that it entailed a compulsion to intensify and expand the processes of exploitation whereby it was produced, and that it turned crucially on the distinction of its constitutive category, abstract labor power, from mere work, Marx was laying the foundations for a historically specific theory of capitalism.[10] Bourdieu, on the other hand, consistently sees capital simply as a resource (that is, a form of wealth) which yields power (1986b: 252; 1987f: 4). The link to Marx suggested by the common emphasis on capital and labor, a suggestion reinforced by aspects of Bourdieu's rhetoric, is thus misleading.

Bourdieu's considerable achievements in his work on cultural capital are linked with this difference from Marx. Bourdieu's key original insights are that there are immaterial forms of capital – cultural, symbolic, and social – as well as a material or economic form and that with varying levels of difficulty it is possible to convert one of these forms into the other. It is this notion of multiform, convertible capital that underpins his richly nuanced account of class relations in France (Bourdieu 1984):

> The social world can be conceived as a multidimensional space that can be constructed empirically by discovering the main factors of differentiation which account for the differences observed in a given social universe, or, in other words, by discovering the powers or *forms of capital* which are or can become efficient, like aces in a game of cards, in this particular universe, that is, in the struggle (or competition) for the appropriation of scarce goods of which this universe is the site. It follows that the structure of this space is given by the distribution of the various forms of capital, that is, by the distribution of the properties which are active within the universe under study – those properties capable of conferring strength, power and consequently profit on their holder. . . . These fundamental

> social powers are, according to my empirical investigations, firstly *economic* capital, in its various kinds; secondly *cultural* capital or better, informational capital, again in its different kinds; and thirdly two forms of capital that are very strongly correlated, *social* capital, which consists of resources based on connections and group membership, and *symbolic* capital, which is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate. (1987f: 3–4)

Economic capital is essentially that which is "immediately and directly convertible into money" (1986b: 243), unlike educational credentials (cultural capital) or social connections (social capital). The most interesting parts of Bourdieu's work in this area are his treatments of cultural capital. He has made particular strides by recognizing how much of cultural capital presupposes embodiment of distinctive and distinguishing sensibilities and characteristic modes of action. Thus it is that he is able to show how the labor of parents is translatable into the "status attainment" of their children in ways not directly dependent on financial inheritance or even on better schools. Such parental labor depends on the availability of time free from paid employment, however, which shows the dependence of the other forms of capital on economic capital (p. 253).[11] The importance of this sort of cultural capital is greatest, moreover, where for some reason it is advantageous to deny or disguise the inheritability of position (p. 246). Bourdieu does not directly explore the social conditions and histories which make such "strategies of reproduction" particularly advantageous.

The issue is an important one. Bourdieu repeatedly urges us to see history and sociology as inseparably linked (for example, 1990d: 42; Wacquant 1989: 37; and Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; 90–99), but his sociology does not offer much purchase on the transformation of social systems. It is geared towards accounts of their internal operation. The issue is not simply whether Bourdieu offers a "motor of history" in the crude Marxist sense. Rather it is that his accounts of the general system of social and cultural organization always render it as essentially conservative; they suggest no reasons why a logic of reproduction would not work. There is nothing in his theory like the notion of contradictions in Marx's (or Hegel's). Bourdieu's theory does imply dynamism; but, crucially, it does so at the level of the strategic actor (individual or collective or, in those writings where he is more attentive to the problems of rooting his analysis in any positing of actors as fundamental, at the level of the strategy itself). That is, the motive force of social life is the pursuit of distinction, profit, power, wealth, and so on. Bourdieu's account of capital is an account of the resources that people use in such

pursuit. In this sense, despite his disclaimers, Bourdieu does indeed share a good deal with Gary Becker and other rational choice theorists. Bourdieu sharply, and probably rightly, rejects the charge of economism; he is not assuming that the "interests" which are fundamental are basically "economic." He deals less with the charge that he fails to consider action which is not consciously or unconsciously strategic. He accepts the notion of interest, albeit as part of a "deliberate and provisional reductionism," in order to be able to show that cultural activity is not "disinterested," as Western thought has often implied since the development of the modern ideology of artistic production.[12] He is quick and forceful in pointing out that

> the concept of interest as I construe it has nothing in common with the naturalistic, transhistorical, and universal interest of utilitarian theory. . . . Far from being an anthropological invariant, interest is a *historical arbitrary*, a historical construction that can be known only through historical analysis, *ex post*, through empirical observation, and not deduced a priori from some fictitious – and so naively Eurocentric – conception of "Man." (Wacquant 1989: 41–2)

Quite so; but then we must ask why this particular concept of interest arose historically and gained special power in both lay and academic analyses of human action in the present epoch. In any case, this recourse to empiricism rather than naturalism is not so problematic for economic or rational choice theorists as Bourdieu believes. "Revealed preference," they can reply. There are certainly important differences between Bourdieu's theory of practice and rational choice theory.[13] But though Bourdieu points out the historical particularity of all interests, he does not deny the universality of interested action. Implicitly, at least, he goes further, beyond treating all action simply as interested – which is little more than saying "motivated". He treats all interests, historically particular though their contents may be, as formally similar in their implication of strategies designed to advance some manner of acquisition of power or wealth. Bourdieu is saying something more trans-historical and anthropologically invariant about human actors than he lets on, especially in his accounts of capital.

Bourdieu's theory is social in a powerful sense in which rational choice theory is not. His conception of strategy in the idea of an intersubjective habitus conditioned by "objective" situations gives a much less reductionistic and more useful sense of human action. Bourdieu's sociology provides for effective accounts of the influences which objective circumstances, historical patterns of distribution of various

resources, and the trajectories of different actors through social fields all have on power relations. It relies little on any notion of creativity. Most centrally, it gives an account of the various socially determined interests people may pursue and the ways in which social structures constrain such action, but not of any internal tendencies of those structures to change in particular directions. Bourdieu's theory is at its best, therefore, as a theory of reproduction, and at its weakest as a theory of transformation. In this it shows its structuralist (perhaps even functionalist) roots.

Bourdieu has rightly protested that his work is by no means bracketable as a theory of reproduction *tout court* (1990d: 46 and Wacquant 1989). But he is centrally concerned with how the various practical projects of different people, the struggles in which they engage, and the relations of power which push and pull them nonetheless reproduce the field of relations of which they are a part. "The source resides in the actions and reactions of agents who, unless they exclude themselves from the game, have no other choice than to struggle to maintain or improve their position in the field, thus helping to bring to bear on all the others the weight of the constraints, often experienced as intolerable, which stem from antagonistic coexistence" (1990d: 193). In *Homo Academicus* and *La noblesse d'État*, Bourdieu reports that he is impressed by the stability of the basic field of relations even while incumbents change and struggles continue. In his work on Kabylia (for example, 1977c), ruptures in traditional practices always appear as the result of exogenous influences.

When Bourdieu approached the idea of reproduction, a key underlying concern was to overcome the antinomy between structure and action (1990d: 9–17, 34, 46). He wanted to show how patterns of social life could be maintained over time without this either being specifically willed by agents or the result of external factors beyond the reach of agents' wills. That is, he wanted to show that reproduction was the result of what people did, intentionally and rationally, even when reproduction was not itself their intention: "Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning. Because his actions and works are the product of a *modus operandi* of which he is not the producer and has no conscious mastery, they contain an 'objective intention', as the Scholastics put it, which always outruns his conscious intentions" (Bourdieu 1977c: 79). The practice which the habitus makes possible is not merely a determined result of the antecedent conditions; neither is it the sort of intentional action which many theories conceive of as action following a rule.

> Talk of rules, a euphemized form of legalism, is never more fallacious than when applied to the most homogenous societies (or the least codified areas of differentiated societies) where most practices, including those seemingly most ritualized, can be abandoned to the orchestrated improvisation of common dispositions: the rule is never, in this case, more than a second-best intended to make good the occasional misfirings of the collective enterprise of inculcation tending to produce habitus that are capable of generating practices regulated without express regulation or any institutionalized call to order. (Bourdieu 1977c: 17)

The last part of this quotation poses an essential issue: how is the coordination of actions to be achieved without either external determination (or, what amounts to almost the same thing, reference to the unconscious as an equally unwilled internal determination) or the issuance of some formal rule or communication involving a decision process (and hence the self-imposition of a rule)? Objectivists either simply record regularities without explaining them or reify various analytic notions such as "culture," "structures," or "modes of production" and imagine that they exist as such in the world, external to actors, constraining them towards regularity. Bourdieu's attack on this objectivism was powerful, but it is worth noting that it did not involve systematic attention to differences among societies in the extent to which formal rules are issued or to which action appears to actors as reified external determination.[14]

In *Outline*, Bourdieu's argument was aimed particularly at French structuralists, and he adopted the language of economizing strategies (from a mainly Anglo-Saxon discourse) largely to challenge the structuralist elimination of agents, of practices. But even here, he was careful to show that the economizing was not that of individuals understood discretely, but inhered in the habitus as a social creation. Bourdieu was careful to distinguish his position also from a subjectivism which imagined that agents were not overwhelmingly products of their backgrounds and situations or that their actions simply originated with their choices among abstractly conceived possibilities. Sartre was the particular subjectivist he had most in mind, and Bourdieu pointed precisely to the problem that Sartre created for himself by refusing to recognize anything resembling durable dispositions. He thereby made each action into "a sort of unprecedented confrontation between the subject and the world" (Bourdieu 1977c: 73). In so doing, he made social reality inexplicably voluntary and ultimately, therefore, arbitrary. Against this view, Bourdieu argued that agents acted within socially

constructed ranges of possibilities durably inscribed within them (even in their bodies) as well as within the social world in which they moved. Moreover, the relation between agent and social world is a relation between two dimensions of the social, not two separate sorts of being.

> The source of historical action, that of the artist, the scientist, or the member of government just as much as that of the worker or the petty civil servant, is not an active subject confronting society as if that society were an object constituted externally. The source resides neither in consciousness nor in things but in the relationship between two stages of the social, that is, between the history objectified in things, in the form of institutions, and the history incarnated in bodies, in the form of that system of enduring dispositions which I call habitus. (1990d: 190)

Against some of the cruder forms of economistic choice theory, Bourdieu held that agents' use of the possibilities available to them, while strategic in a sense, was often not strictly speaking calculation because not discursive. The economizing or calculation was built into the practical play of the game. An analyst might, thus, see how a course of behavior effectively achieved some end, while the actor engaged in the behavior believed that she was merely being a good friend or wife or daughter. It was essential to some strategies that they could only be carried out by people who misrecognized them. Above all else, it was crucial to grasp, Bourdieu argued, that agents did not generally adopt the theoretical attitude of seeing action as a choice among all objective possibilities; they usually saw only one or a few possibilities. "The habitus is the source of these series of moves which are objectively organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention – which would presuppose at least that they are perceived as one strategy among other possible strategies" (Bourdieu 1977c: 73).

Bourdieu's concern was (and to a large extent still is) with how the coordination of social activities is achieved. His riposte to both objectivism and subjectivism was to stress practical mastery, a sense of playing the game which was at once active and nondiscursive. "We shall escape from the ritual either/or choice between objectivism and subjectivism in which the social sciences have so far allowed themselves to be trapped only if we are prepared to inquire into the mode of production and functioning of the practical mastery which makes possible both an objectively intelligible practice and also an objectively enchanted experience of that practice" (Bourdieu 1977c: 4). Bourdieu stressed that this was not simply a matter of phenomenologically reconstructing lived experience. It was necessary that a theory of practice

give a good account of the limits of awareness involved in lived experience, including both misrecognition and nonrecognition, as well as show the kind of genuine knowledge which was involved, often nondiscursively, in practice. Moreover, there was struggle over knowledge, including the prelinguistic:

> The individual or collective classification struggles aimed at transforming the categories of perception and appreciation of the social world and, through this, the social world itself, are indeed a forgotten dimension of the class struggle. But one only has to realize that the classificatory schemes which underlie agents' practical relationship to their condition and the representation they have of it are themselves the product of that condition, in order to see the limits of this autonomy. (1984: 483–4)

Thus critics (for example, Garnham and Williams 1980) have overstated the extent to which Bourdieu's account focused on reproduction at the expense of openings to the possibilities for action to create a new and different world – for example, to revolutionary struggle. Bourdieu's emphasis on reproduction did not foreclose contrary action, though neither did it introduce any notion of systematic pressures for such action. Bourdieu addressed the issue of revolutionary collective actions directly, although very briefly, and argued that they were imbricated within conjunctures and still crucially dependent on the same habitus which had hitherto organized reproduction. In other words, revolution did not mark a break with the habitus, but was based on it, even though it broke the pattern of stable reproduction:

> It is just as true and just as untrue to say that collective actions produce the event or that they are its product. The conjuncture capable of transforming practices objectively coordinated because subordinated to partially or wholly identical objective necessities into *collective action* (e.g., revolutionary action) is constituted in the dialectical relationship between, on the one hand, a *habitus*, understood as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks . . . and an *objective event* which exerts its action of conditional stimulation calling for or demanding a determinate response, only on those who are disposed to constitute it as such because they are endowed with a determinate type of dispositions. (1977c: 82–3)

This, Bourdieu suggests, is the source of "the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and

thought other than those of the past, albeit a revolutionary past" (ibid.).[15] Bourdieu also recognizes the role of the modern market and related economic changes – capitalism, I would say, though at this specific point he does not – in freeing "agents from the endless work of creating or restoring social relations" and providing the occasion for the break with the idea that society is held together by will and the recognition of the more or less impersonal, self-regulating mechanisms which play a central role in social integration (1977c: 189).

In this line of argument, we can see something of an analogue to Habermas's story of the uncoupling of the system and the lifeworld (1984, 1988b). In Bourdieu's account in *Outline*, the creation of self-regulating systematicity marks a crucial epochal break distinguishing kinds of societies and implicitly modes of analysis appropriate to them.

> The greater the extent to which the task of reproducing the relations of domination is taken over by objective mechanisms, which serve the interests of the dominant group without any conscious effort on the latter's part, the more indirect and, in a sense, impersonal, become the strategies objectively oriented towards reproduction: it is not by lavishing generosity, kindness or politeness on his charwoman (or on any other "socially inferior" agent) but by choosing the best investment for his money, or the best school for his son, that the possessor of economic or cultural capital perpetuates the relationship of domination which objectively links him with his charwoman and even her descendants. Once a system of mechanisms has been constituted capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion . . . , the dominant class have only to *let the system they dominate take its own course* in order to exercise their domination; but until such a system exists, they have to work directly, daily, personally, to produce and reproduce conditions of domination which are even then never entirely trustworthy. (1977c: 189–90)

Bourdieu's distinction is very close to that which I would make between direct and indirect social relationships (Calhoun 1992). And at this point, without particularly stressing it or even labeling it, Bourdieu has given us an account not just of a distinctive mode of domination, but of the break between two modes of societal integration. In the first, the coordination of actions in society is achieved primarily through a web of personal relationships, each of which must be played like a highly nuanced game. This game has hardly ended in modern societies, I might add; the key difference is that it is no longer the central, constitutive way of

organizing social relationships at large. Rather, the various apparently self-regulating systems perform that function most centrally. It is at this point, moreover, that it becomes particularly necessary for Bourdieu to introduce his concept of field.[16]

Bourdieu gives no particular reason why "less differentiated" societies should not be described in terms of fields, though this is not done in *Outline*, and at points Bourdieu suggests that "complex or differentiated" societies are precisely those which are characterized by having a number of fields. In any case, once attention is turned to "more complex" societies, something like the field concept is needed. Why? The reason has to do, I think, with an uncoupling of fields.[17] This uncoupling manifests itself first of all as a reduction in the extent to which the same agents are linked to each other in a variety of fields – say kinship, religion, and economic production – in other words, a reduction in the "multiplexity" of relationships, to use Max Gluckman's (1962) concept. But the uncoupling also manifests itself in a growing heterogeneity among fields, a reduction in the extent to which each is homologous with the others. This latter – if I am right – presents somewhat more of a problem for Bourdieu, given his general argument (for example, in *Distinction*) that the various fields are homologous. This does not necessarily preclude pursuit of a "general theory of fields," though it may limit it. The extent of homology can readily be made into an empirical variable, but the issue is important.

To see why, let us turn to a schematized notion of macro-historical social change. The change we are interested in lies in the means whereby which coordination of social action is achieved. At one level, what we are doing is adding some needed complexity to the Weberian notion of movement from tradition to modernity.[18]

Weber conceived of tradition simply as respect for "that which has always been" (1922: 36) and of traditional social organization primarily as simple continuity rather than the more complex project of reproduction. But let us think of tradition not in Bagehot's sense of the hard cake of culture, but, truer to its etymology, as an active verb, as *traditio* (cf. Shils 1981), referring to the passing on or handing down of information. Tradition, then, is a mode of transmission of information, particularly, for present purposes, that crucial to the coordination of action. Following Bourdieu's account of the habitus, we may note that the information need not be rendered discursive; it may be tacit knowledge, even knowledge embodied in modes of action which agents are unable to bring to linguistic consciousness, like basketball players their hook shots.

The habitus, on Bourdieu's account, works to shape this process even while it provides the regulated source of improvisations – indeed, precisely because it does. One of the crucial features of Bourdieu's account of the habitus is that it allows for a process of continual correction and adjustment: "The habitus . . . makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems, and thanks to the unceasing corrections of the results obtained" (Bourdieu 1977c: 83). Most tradition is not passed down in situations – for example, ritual performances or schools – in which that passing down is itself the main manifest project. On the contrary, most passing on and subsequent affirmations of culture take place in the course of interested actions in which people pursue a variety of ends, both conscious and unconscious. As people succeed or fail, meet with approval or disapproval, in trying to carry out their manifold projects of daily life, they may adjust slightly the traditional information that they have received from various others in the course of previous interactions. A basketball player, to return to that example, may imitate – or be explicitly taught – another's shot technique; but he learns to adjust the velocity to compensate for his own height or to add spin because it makes a favorable bounce more likely. The adjustments may be unconscious or conscious and in either case mandated by the recurrent evaluation of each shot as a success or a failure. But the example is imperfect; for the basketball player, we may assume, at least knows that he is playing basketball. Or does he? Might this be a limited perception of what is in fact a more complex strategy; achieving success in one field which seems relatively open while minimizing investment in another – say school – which seems closed, while half-consciously or even unconsciously engaging in strategies for achieving a sense of personal autonomy or perhaps escaping a ghetto and gaining a better standard of living?

Regardless, the basketball player illustrates the possibility of continued correction or adjustment in the passing on of tradition. This may be a crucial element of traditionality, of the extent to which tradition can actually serve to coordinate social activity, in many settings. If tradition were rigid, it would soon meet with disastrous consequences and prove itself an extremely inefficient means of coordinating action. It is precisely because it can be adjusted with (often unconscious) regard to the success or failure of various practical projects that the tradition embodied in the habitus can be supple enough to change with other aspects of a society.

More complex societies never lose this element of tradition, but it comes to organize somewhat less of what goes on and is often compartmentalized within specific spheres or at least at the local level.

Thus, in classical India and China, tradition of this kind took place constantly, resulting in a variety of local adaptations and idiosyncrasies. At the same time, the passing on of information – still tradition and still with an attitude of preservation not innovation – took place through other, especially textual means. These other means introduced a new institutional dimension – the role of authorized arbiters of correctness. This, I take it, is what Bourdieu refers to when he speaks of the "codification" of culture.

> The extent to which the schemes of the *habitus* are objectified in codified knowledge, transmitted as such, varied greatly between one area of practice and another. The relative frequency of sayings, prohibitions, proverbs and strongly regulated rites declines as one moves from practices linked to or directly associated with agricultural activity, such as weaving, pottery and cuisine, towards the divisions of the day or the moments of human life, not to mention areas apparently abandoned to arbitrariness, such as the internal organization of the house, the parts of the body, colours or animals. Although they are among the most codified aspects of the cultural tradition, the precepts of custom which govern the temporal distribution of activities vary greatly from place to place and, in the same place, from one official informant to another. We find here again the opposition between official knowledge . . . and all kinds of unofficial or secret, even clandestine, knowledge and practices which, though they are the product of the same generative schemes, obey a different logic. (1990e: 333–4)

In China, India, much of Islamic civilization, and, indeed, medieval Europe at least for a time, the operation of these more codified modes of transmission did not imperialistically challenge the simultaneous operation of more informal tradition within personal interaction. One of the distinctive features of the modern West may be the extent to which the transmission of "official" information through authoritative channels has in fact been destructive of the transmission of information through direct interpersonal relationships.[19]

Linked to this is the problematization of the informal tradition through differentiation of fields, increasing contact with people of different cultures, and increasing exercise of individual choice. The first, I think, is clear enough to need little comment. As various fields become differentiated, the information which can be passed on informally as part of the ordinary round of daily life becomes segmented. If more general information is called for, it is increasingly likely to be passed on through codified, authoritative means. And it is likely that, at the very least, those in power will find it necessary that some such information – say, about

the virtues of their rule – be passed on. Information of this sort may still be traditional in the colloquial and/or Weberian sense that it embodies an attitude of deference for "what has always been" (whether or not it is in fact ancient being a matter quite secondary to whether it is believed to be so). This attitude is more likely to be ruptured when people are brought into routine contact with others quite different from themselves, especially under a common rule (which prevents them from treating their fellow-subject as quite radically other). Bourdieu addresses this point through his notion of a passage from the "doxic" attitude of not considering another form of existence or belief to the "orthodox" attitude of correctness with regard to authoritative standards of belief (1977c, 1990e). The next step is brought about by the increase in apparently independent decision making (either by individuals or by groups) which poses the challenge of heterodoxy. What apparent independence means is not just not following traditional rules, but acting in a habitus which is not highly congruent with those of others in one's fields.[20]

Bourdieu does not address this increase of independent decision making very directly in either *Outline* or *The Logic of Practice*. It is linked to his borrowing of economizing language to describe the strategies built into the play of the habitus. We need, however, to unpack the several dimensions of the notion of rationality. A notion of maximization is in fact only one possible meaning or aspect of rationality. Bourdieu suggests that at least some sort of maximizing is universal, because there is always scarcity. Of course, there may also be scarcity which is specific to various social fields, and maximizing may be in part a historically specific orientation to action. Just as maximizing is variable, so are the other dimensions of rationality. There is, for example, the question of how far a strategizer extends his or her horizons of calculation, how many of the objectively possible courses of action and their potential effects he or she actually analyzes. One of the crucial characteristics of the configuration of habitus and field in "traditional" societies was that they radically limited the range of options considered by rational actors. Whether actors were maximizing or not, this gave a much greater chance to traditionality as a means of coordinating action. For every increase in the range of options that a decision-maker considers not only increases the complexity of his or her own decision making but makes that person less predictable to others. This loss of predictability is apt to become part of a vicious circle, as others in a decision-maker's field are led to plan on shorter and shorter time horizons in order to allow themselves the opportunity to adjust to the unpredictability. This sort of attitude, this vicious circle, is antithetical to

maintenance of stable traditional patterns of social relations. When coupled with increasing scale or reach of social relations, it leads to the necessity of adopting statistical measures of the probability of various courses of action, preferably averaged not only over time but across a range of other members of a field. At this point, we have left the coordination of action through tradition and entered the world of at least putatively self-regulating systems.

These self-regulating systems call for a more theoretical kind of understanding; the practical attitude of the habitus is less likely to be able to attain practical mastery of relationships within them. This is not to say that there is no longer any reason to talk of the habitus as governing the generation of improvisational strategies for dealing with such systems. On the contrary, there is no conceivable point at which human beings could be perfect rational actors; since they always operate within various forms of bounded rationality, it will always be necessary to consider the socially produced means of generating strategies which are open to them and which reflect the organization of the fields in which they act and their own trajectories through them. And in this sense a theoretical attitude should not be too sharply opposed to the notion of habitus (as Bourdieu – for example, 1977c – has sometimes implied). Rather, a theoretical attitude should be seen as a variety of habitus, itself reflecting a certain social placement and participation in specific socially constructed projects. Thus it is not simply that "moderns" adopt theoretical attitudes, but that certain members of modern societies do so with regard to certain of their practices. An economist employed by the Ministry of Finance may rely on a theoretically informed habitus in conceptualizing the stock market and developing his own practical dealings with it (or its consequences). At the same time, a "pit trader" may work on the floor of the stock exchange, executing buy and sell orders with a supreme practical mastery minimally informed by any theoretical understanding of the overall market (though it is true that his or her habitus would be unlikely to resemble the doxic complete investment of a member of a highly homogenous and relatively self-contained society, for the floor trader would almost certainly be aware of the availability of other ways of understanding stock markets).

In a modern society, apparently self-regulating systems like large-scale markets are crucial links in the reproduction of patterns of social relations. Both they and the relatively high levels of distinction among fields encourage an attitude of a high level of rationality (understood as selecting among a wide range of options on the basis of maximal information about likely outcomes in order to efficiently pursue some goal). Therefore, even in the absence of internal contradictions which

hamper their capacity to reproduce stably, the self-regulating systems are apt to give rise to social relational patterns which undermine stable reproduction. Of course, such systems – for example, capitalism – may have basic internal contradictions, in which case stability is even more doubtful.

This conclusion need not be seen as problematic for Bourdieu's work (indeed, it is produced through thinking along with parts of Bourdieu's work) *except* insofar as he *assumes*, rather than empirically demonstrates, a high level of homology among fields, an absence of systemic contradictions, and therefore a tendency towards social integration and stable reproduction of the encompassing field of power. I think he tends towards assuming this in *Distinction* (1984), *Homo Academicus* (1988b) and *La noblesse d'État* (1989c). But I do not think that this assumption is necessary to his analysis.

My argument in this essay has led to the conclusion that there are important, basic differences among kinds of societies. I believe that thinking through Bourdieu's own arguments suggests this, although he has not made it entirely clear what sorts of categories should be taken as historically specific and which as trans-historical. There are, of course, many possible kinds of difference and issues about difference which might be raised; I have only introduced, not exhausted, that subject. Indeed, there is a certain ambiguity about just what is to be generalized and what not in Bourdieu's empirical studies of various fields. Obviously the answers turn on further empirical investigations, but there is an implication of greater formal comparability than seems immediately warranted. It is one thing to ask how much the conceptual apparatus and analytic strategy of *Homo Academicus* would have to change to address the American case. It is a deeper matter to ask the reasons (not merely the "amorphous anecdotes of factual history" 1990d: 46) underlying the transformation of the medieval university through various stages into its modern namesake and successor. As Bourdieu recognizes, "it is necessary to write a structural history which finds in each state of the structure both the product of previous struggles to transform or conserve the structure, and, through the contradictions, tensions and power relations that constitute that structure, the source of its subsequent transformations" (1990d: 42).

Be that as it may, the specific sort of difference in transmission of culture addressed above is very important. It establishes, first of all, the basic grounding for addressing the question of what societies or modes of organizing social life are comparable for purposes of comparative

research. And not least of all, it brings us back to the modernity/postmodernity debate.

On the one hand, Bourdieu's analyses of the relationship between habitus and field can be seen as adding crucial dimensions to Habermas's argument concerning the centrality of an uncoupling of system and lifeworld to the history of rationalization in the West.[21] At the same time, Bourdieu's analysis shows a weakness in Habermas's which results from Habermas's thoroughgoing rationalism and inattention to both the importance of practical mastery in any account of social action and especially the role of tradition transmitted informally as part of everyday strategic activity in accomplishing the coordination of social action and therefore in some cases societal integration.[22] My examination of Bourdieu's account also suggests that in order to mount more than a superficial claim to a "postmodern condition" (*pace* Lyotard 1984) one would need to show a basic change in the mode of coordinating action and/or in the basic relational organization of fields and the relation of habitus to fields.

This is a dimension that is missing from most postmodernist accounts. That is, they address various changes in media and style and the shift from production-oriented capitalism to an advertising and seduction-based consumerism and so forth, but they do not address the empirical question of whether social relations, most basically relations of power, are in fact changing. I read Bourdieu as arguing that they are remarkably stable, but this is not the key point. Rather, the point is what would have to be shown in order to make a good case for a postmodernist transformation of society.

At the same time that Bourdieu's work points to these gaps in the modernist/postmodernist debate – and thus potentially to a more interesting direction for theoretical and empirical exploration – it can be seen to suffer from a weakness or gap of its own. This is (to condense a cluster of related matters) a very minimal level of attention to the actual workings of the self-regulating systems of modern, large-scale societies and, more generally, what I have called indirect social relations – those mediated by information technology (communications, especially, but also other computer applications and surveillance) and complex administrative organizations as well as by markets and other self-regulating systems. Bourdieu has made profound contributions to our understanding of the relationship of embodied, prelinguistic, or nondiscursive knowledge to social action. His concepts of habitus and field direct our attention to crucial phenomena. But his other most distinctive notion, that of capital as multiform – social, cultural, economic, and symbolic – grasps only an aspect of capitalism. It grasps primarily the aspect which

is distributive and/or central to relations of power. It does not grasp equally the sense in which capital itself – on an alternative reading of Marx (such as that of Lukaćs 1922 or Postone 1993) – is a form of mediation. Bourdieu (for example, 1983a, 1985c, 1986b) tends to reduce capital to power or a complex notion of wealth defined as resources for power, quite in contradiction to Marx's argument. More generally, Bourdieu's work so far shows an insufficient attention to the nature of mediation, the constitution of actors, and the modes of coordinating action in contemporary large, complex societies. This is hardly a severe criticism, for I do not see Bourdieu's theory closed to these considerations in any way; rather, it seems to me to be simply an important direction for our attention to turn. The roles of information technology, very large-scale administrative organizations, and impersonal markets are all important, both in their own right and as factors militating for basic changes in habitus and fields.

NOTES

1 Habermas has recently argued (1989) that discourse ethics is not much damaged by these criticisms.
2 Bourdieu here is specifically criticizing recent trends in anthropology (e.g. Clifford and Marcus (eds.) 1986) and the sociology of science (e.g. Latour 1987).
3 My account of Habermas's theory here relates primarily to his work from the mid–1960s to the present, especially his theory of communicative action and his discourse ethics (Habermas 1984, 1988b).
4 See Habermas (1988a) for a suggestion of how central a goal this is for his project. See also the interviews with Bourdieu in Wacquant 1989: 37.
5 More generally, Bourdieu has sharply rejected the intellectual totalism he associates with the Frankfurt school, with Sartre, and to some extent with Marxism generally. "Never before, perhaps, has there been so complete a manifestation of the logic peculiar to the French intellectual field that requires every intellectual to pronouce himself totally on each and every problem" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1967: 174; see also the preface to 1990e, 1988f, and Wacquant 1989). Bourdieu sees this as a feature not only of Marxism but of an intellectual field in which Marxism occupies a central place, obliging every intellectual to declare and explain his or her adherence or nonadherence.
6 Even capital becomes, for Bourdieu, a matter primarily of power (1986b: 252).
7 "It follows that the form taken by the structure of systems of religious practices and beliefs at a given moment in time (historical religion) can be far from the original content of the message and it can be completely understood

only in reference to the complete structure of the relations of production, reproduction, circulation, and appropriation of the message and to the history of this structure" (1991a: 18). Bourdieu goes on to stress the centrality of struggles for the monopoly of religious capital, including both struggles between clergy and laity and those between priestly authorities and heretical, quasi-religious or other challengers. "Genesis and structure of the religious field" has not been widely enough recognized as Bourdieu's key, seminal text on fields. There he shows clearly what he means by going beyond the "pure" study of meaning and interaction to study the underlying relations of struggle which produce and shape meanings and interactions and constitute their frame. The approach to religion expounded there anticipates that which he has more recently begun to develop towards the state (cf. Bourdieu 1989c).

8 As in his study of kinship and matrimonial strategies in his own village in Béarn (1990e: 249–70), Bourdieu's account revealed many commonalities with what he had seen in Kabylia and in general showed that his approach could yield insights into either setting just as readily. On the other hand, it did not address certain basic issues of difference between the settings – e.g., the fact that kinship is more central to the constitution of Kabyle society than it is to France, where it is central primarily to a compartmentalized local field but not to the state or the economy in general.

9 The issue is somewhat clouded because Bourdieu developed his tools as part of his continuing engagement with concrete analytic problems; so we cannot be sure when to treat a conceptual or analytic shift as having to do with a change in case (from his earlier work in Kabylia to his more recent work in France) and when with an intention to reformulate more generally. Thus, e.g., the concept of field plays little role in the *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, a substantial role in *The Logic of Practice*, and a central role in Bourdieu's more recent writings on French academia and professions (1984, 1987b, 1989c). Is this simply theoretical advance? Or is it a result of reflection on a different sort of society?

10 This is evident not only in *Das Kapital*, but especially in the *Grundrisse*, where the direction of Marx's thinking is sometimes clearer because its processes are more transparently laid out. See the forceful argument for this reading of Marx in Postone 1993.

11 Bourdieu's argument is that children gain from the added nurturance they receive from mothers who stay at home with them, something that only mothers in relatively well-off families can do. This illustrates the point well, though it is both empirically uncertain and arguably based on sexist assumptions.

12 See Wacquant 1989: 41. Bourdieu's arguments on the genesis of this notion of a pure aesthetics and its consequences for the analysis of culture are themselves important; see 1980a, 1987c.

13 Bourdieu suggests, indeed, that "far from being the founding model, economic theory (and rational action theory which is its sociological

derivative) is probably best seen as a particular instance, historically dated and situated, of field theory" (Wacquant 1989: 42). See also discussion in Wacquant and Calhoun 1989.

14 "Genesis and structure of the religious field" (Bourdieu 1991a) is a partial exception to this, making a point of historically different levels of codification or systematization of religion. The promulgation of increasingly codified religious systems is a product of specific groups – generally priests or clergy – struggling to institutionalize their dominance in the religious field. Simultaneously, such systematization furthers the autonomy of the religious field.

15 See Calhoun 1983 for an attempt to develop systematically the role of this grounding of radicalism in an older habitus.

16 And alongside the concept of field, that of multiform (social, symbolic, and cultural, as well as economic) and convertible capital. "The structure of a field is a state of balanced forces [*rapport de force*] between agents and institutions engaged in a war, or, if one prefers, it is a distribution of the specific capital which, accumulated in the course of previous wars, orients future strategies" (1984: 114; see also 1986b).

17 In discussion at the conference at which this essay was first presented, Bourdieu accepted and reiterated the importance of proliferation of fields for describing "complex" societies, by contrast with societies in which the division into fields is minimal.

18 This is the sort of "long-term history" which Bourdieu derides as "one of the privileged places of social philosophy" (1990d: 42). But, in the same paragraph, Bourdieu sets himself "the problem of the modern artist or intellectual," a problem intrinsically framed by reference to long-term history. So it is hard to escape broad historical schemas, like Weber's, even when one correctly notes the weakness of their empirical foundations or their susceptibility to overgeneralization.

19 Bourdieu suggests that codification renders things simple, clear, and communicable (1990d: 101). This seems sound, although he does not consider (at least to my knowledge) the possible counterbalancing aspect, the extent to which codification (alongside writing) allows for a dramatic increase in information flow and accordingly in overall complexity, even if the bits are simple.

20 The notion is much like that of Simmel's account (1903, 1967) of individuality as deriving from distinctiveness in social networks, specific intersections of social circles.

21 I have argued elsewhere (Calhoun 1989 and 1991) that Habermas's is a flawed conceptualization of a fundamentally important change.

22 I think that Bourdieu would also have a good deal of trouble with Habermas's discourse ethics. In the first place, there is Habermas's attempt to work through a notion of communication devoid of interested action. Bourdieu would presumably reject this, even as a regulative ideal. "Every exchange contains a more or less dissimulated challenge, and the logic of challenge and riposte is but the limit towards which every act of

communication tends. . . . To reduce to the function of communication . . . phenomena such as the dialectic of challenge and riposte and, more generally, the exchange of gifts, words, or women, is to ignore the structural ambivalence which predisposes them to fulfill a political function of domination in and through performance of the communication function" (1977c: 14). Even in the realm of "universal norms," Bourdieu wants to ask "who has an interest in the universal" and to see the history of reason as inescapably interested, like all other history (1990d: 31–2). See also discussion in Wacquant 1989, e.g. p. 50.

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