

Discussion Essay

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Michael Grenfell

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The following text includes written responses to four questions that were put to Michael Grenfell at a Conference organised in Mendoza, Argentina in 2022 by a group of scholars working with the ideas of the French psychologist Jacques Lacan. The questions were prepared by Adriana Testa and the responses were delivered impromptu on the spot verbally. The written text here is a more considered account of the themes raised.

The relationship between sociology and philosophy is always an acute and occasionally tense one. I therefore am grateful to the Lacan specialists at the conference for opening their door to me. I hope that the issues alluded to encourage a more open and frequent debate about respective philosophies, methods and practical relevancies. I have not undertaken a fully developed integration of themes, and my base is definitely Bourdieusian. However, I have attempted to highlight relevant themes and connections with Lacan's oeuvre wherever possible. These are occasionally set apart from the text and are placed in italics in order to create a discursive montage.

The four 'questions' posed in fact give rise to a whole set of other questions – more or less. In what follows, therefore, I have made use of a wide range of narrative strategies, including the factual and speculative. I leave it to the reader to make of these what they will. I have also included some indicative Bibliography at the end of the text in order to facilitate referencing.

Responses to the current text will aid the development of a more conventional academic article for future publication.

MG, 2025

FIRST QUESTION

About the young people of the French May. The young revolutionaries.

Jacques Lacan and Pierre Bourdieu were contemporaries for most of their respective lives. Lacan, 1901-1981. Bourdieu, 1930-2002.

Bourdieu studied at the *École Normale Supérieure de Paris* in the years 1951-1954, in those years Lacan began regular teaching through his annual seminars. There is an event that both lived through in the 1960s, the French May or May '68. At that time, Lacan was giving Seminar 17, transcribed by Jacques-Alain Miller as Book 17 of the Jacques Lacan Seminar, under the title, *The Reverse of Psychoanalysis*. On December 3, 1969, he held a session in Vincennes, at the university experimental center. It was announced as the first of four sessions, with the title *Analyticon, four impromptus* (four improvisations).

In the first session, at the end of a philosophical dialogue with the students, Lacan tells them in a very critical tone: "If you had a little patience and if you wanted our impromptus to continue, I would tell you that the revolutionary aspiration is something that has no other chance than to end, always, in the master's discourse. Experience has given proof of this.

What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You shall have it."

Right there, Lacan declares himself liberal and anti-progressive, although he acknowledges being part of a progressive movement that is that of founding the analytic discourse, and tells the students something else: "you play the role of *illots* (slaves) of this regime. The regime exhibits you. It says: *Look at them how they joy*."

With respect to the position of the slave (taken from the Hegelian dialectic on the Lord and the Servant), Lacan says in one of the Seminar classes of that year: "the proletarian, in the capitalist universe, is not simply exploited, he is someone who has been stripped of his function of knowledge." (Sem. 17, p. 159)

What was Bourdieu's position in those years, did he take an explicit position, and from Bourdieu's many studies on the university structure, what did he think of the relationship of the young students to the generation of the old, long-serving professors, as he himself experienced it in his training at ENS-Ulm?

Bourdieu's discussion of the world of the 1960s generally and 1968 in particular form the backdrop of his 1984 publication, *Homo academicus* (1988/ 84). Intrinsic to this book is a socio-historical account of salient features of French society at the time and French Higher Education. Yet, his approach is polyvalent, including analyses that range from objective social trends, the individuality of the French education *field*, and personal reflections of his place within it.

In the *Preface* to the English edition, Bourdieu seems to take great relish in pointing out that many French 'stars' on the international academic stage – Althusser, Barthes, Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault – often held marginal positions in the French university system and would be disqualified from directing doctoral research (1987/ 1984: xviii). Lacan is mentioned as being of 'great importance' but is omitted because he did not have an 'official position in the university' (ibid.: xxi). He also reminds the reader that Durkheim stated that 'history was unconscious' – and thus invisible: something that points to the invisible determinism of Lacan. As an epigraph to chapter 1 of the book, Bourdieu also quotes the socially minded Catholic writer Charles Péguy that, 'historians don't want to write a history of historians' (p. 1) – a kind of refusal to accept that 'history is writing them'. He then kicks off the book with a chapter entitled 'A Book for Burning'? : a term used since the sixteenth century heretical text of Li Zhi to recall that final violent repudiation of intellectual and literary production - 'book burning' as an excremental activity. Bourdieu therefore expects the book to be polemical: he is conducting an analysis of his own *field*, just as he used his inaugural lecture at the *Collège de France* to analyse an inaugural lecture at the *Collège de*

France! (1982), and indeed, used his final lecture at the *Collège* to suggest that his work in many ways needs to be read/ understood as a personal socio-cultural history – ‘self-analysis even’ (see Bourdieu 2007/ 2004; Eakin, 2001). Indeed, both Lacan and Bourdieu share the ambition of using theory/ method to undertake a process of liberation: to undo at a subject level what society has done. What that position is haunts both works.

In fact, *Homo academicus* consists of two main discussions: one which details the academic university *field* of the day in all its structural morphological and internal dynamics, including those who occupy it; and a second which sets the first part against an analysis of the ‘events of May 68’ when universities – and indeed the whole country – went on strike for several weeks, resulting in numerous street demonstrations, etc.

Bourdieu considers Higher Education (HE) at three levels: as a *field* in relation to the *field* of power; as a *field* with an internal structure (disciplines, faculties, etc.) based on *capital* (*economic, social, cultural*) configurations; and in terms of the *habitus* of those who took up relative positions within the *field* (1988/84: 32). What Bourdieu found was just that the French HE *field* behaved like other *fields* in terms of possessing specific forms of *symbolic capital* (Phds, research grants, promotion titles, prestigious publications, etc.), systems of reproduction/ reconversion, and a certain moral (capitalizing) *ethos* - aspects of Lacan’s Big Other?. Like all *fields*, growth in its size had led to pressures towards change and internal reconfiguration. Also, it struggled for autonomy, that is, independence of policy and practice. The imminent radicalism of those employed in Higher education consequently often turned inwards in terms of

internal activism when such autonomy was refused by the residing external *field* of power. Again, there are these questions: of 'what is freedom'? 'How is it possible?' 'What does it mean as an experience?'.

Bourdieu noted the extent to which the French HE *field* had undergone enormous stresses since the Second World War: most noticeably because of the increase in student numbers, which had expanded fourfold during this time. In fact, 8 million people – that is 16 percent of the population - fell within the 18 – 23 age bracket at that time – a youthful time. Such a consequent influx of the baby-boomer generation put enormous strain on the HE *field*, a strain that could only incite forces of change. He next identifies topographical differences, which had emerged as a result: for example, between what he called the 'Higher Faculties' – or 'Society Pole' – which represented the traditional disciplines of the 'Imperial University' founded in 1808 – that is, Medicine and Law; and the 'Lower Faculties' or 'Science Pole', represented by relatively new disciplines – Humanities, Language, History, Geography and the Social Sciences. Different forms of Knowledge were also distinguishable, both within and cutting across various disciplines and faculties. Bourdieu grouped these forms of knowledge in terms of the alternatives between 'scientific competence' and 'social competence', in other words, as 'pure' and 'applied' relations to knowledge. This distinction could also be understood in terms of the opposition between the 'pursuit of underlying causes' versus 'empirical experience', for example, the biologist versus the clinician in medicine – so, distinct differences in the nature of the relationship between knowledge and practice. Each of these forms of knowledge and disciplines also came with their own respective *symbolic capital*, defining positions and power within the

field, which similarly was then reflected in the *habitus* of those possessing it. For example, 30 % of lecturers in the Arts were members of Trade Unions (politically active); whilst this figure went down to 6% in Medicine (politically neutral). The reason for such a difference is that in the latter case, its 'consecrated' position did not necessitate political activism since its inherent dominance within both the academic *field* and *social space* as a whole was a given. In fact, faculties such as Law and Medicine held consecrated *capital* from antiquity and for a long time had assumed, and still held, key power positions within the university structure – making their displacement unlikely. Interestingly, Bourdieu found homologous structures emerging in the social sciences, where some professors focused on the intellectual *field* and others were more involved with the nature of cultural reproduction itself. Such a distinction was defined in terms of what was and was not symbolically valued in site contexts research-wise, and the relative subsequent orientation of professional trajectories. The ideal *Homo academicus* of the day therefore navigated their careers by choosing the best institutions, subject, topics of research, etc. in order to gain the most significant *symbolic capital*, and thus power, within the *field*. *Symbolic capital* for lecturers is represented by prestigious publications and research grants: there is a need to publish as much as possible (ibid.: 84) to gain it. Nevertheless, for those less 'gifted', Bourdieu shows how there was always an alternative 'temporal route': HE management, for example. Similarly, those who chose teaching over research placed themselves in the 'non-scientific' domain of the *field*. Each of these *field* contexts of course occupied a different configuration of classification and categorical thinking, expressed in terms of the symbolic market and various *capital* manoeuvres within it.

For Bourdieu, *fields* constantly change their configuration and position in relation to other *fields* within *social space* as a whole at any particular time. For French Higher Education in the 1960s, this feature played out in terms of various discipline areas. Bourdieu demonstrates how, as a result of Humanities expanding rapidly during the 50s and 60s, other subjects had lost their *symbolic capital* value. Philology, for example, was now considered 'old' and 'aristocratic', thus experiencing a real *hysteresis* in terms of the rest of the academic *field* passing it by. Meanwhile, since more new lecturers were needed in the expanding discipline areas, the natural order of recruitment and promotions was being challenged; many were less qualified but did more teaching. Even so, they could still 'leap-frog' over sitting academics for promotion if they managed to adopt the necessary '*game strategies*' (and thus acquire *capital*) of the *field*. Yet, promotion possibilities were still not sufficient for the numbers involved, which raised the temperature of discontent within faculties as competition became acute.

In the second half of *Homo academicus*, Bourdieu goes on to show how all these features of the French HE *field* led to what he called a 'Critical Moment' in 1968 when students, lecturers and workers united 'as one' against the *field* of power. In order to understand it, it is necessary to 'reconstruct' the social *conditions* of its making – that invisible *ethos* of time which shaped an entire relationship to time and place within a *symbolic economy*. Firstly, was the aforementioned expansion in student numbers. Secondly, was the crisis of 'qualification inflation', where the same certificates bought students (and lecturers!) less in terms of job prospects. Some would-be lecturers found themselves teaching more, and thus had less opportunity to gain prestige (*symbolic*

capital) for research and publications. Thirdly, there was a more psychological result of these conditions, which might be termed a 'crisis of *conatus*' (see Fuller, 2014) – a term he borrowed from Spinoza to mean the propensity to be and to maintain a certain existential form. In other words, the relation between 'self worth' and the 'objective opportunities' within the *field* in terms of pay-off for education/ work undertaken – a kind of crisis of identity which reflected a crisis in the nature of *cultural capital* itself, as the calculation of the present with respect to the future was thrown into doubt. For Lacan, this would be a practical example of where the Symbolic Order is not enough to contain and mediate the Subject. Desire reaches beyond; although, ultimately, such a situation needs to be read in terms of a crisis in the former itself, as an expression of the tensions of capitalist evolution. Bourdieu expressed this situation as provoking a form of 'dual consciousness', one result of which – just as he had seen in Algeria – produced a different relationship to the future (he was to take up a similar argument with respect to French society as a whole under Neoliberalism in *La misère du monde* 1999/ 1993). Where there was little perceived future direction, investment in it was weakened. Thus, future 'time' collapsed into an ever-present 'now'. Since students, graduates and some lecturers experienced the same crisis of identity and commitment to their occupation, this situation coalesced with that of industrial workers who had similarly been driven by a centralised economic policy – with no obvious end in sight - which had existed since the Second World War as part of the rebuilding of France. The unity that the various groups displayed – for a while, at least – clearly arose from their homologous position in *social space* and a common sense of *hysteresis*. The situation (condition) then gave rise to what Bourdieu calls an 'objective break in expectations' – and the move to 'leave the race' (p. 172) - temporarily. In this

context, '*separate times*' lived by individual social agents according to their own temporal realities in effect became '*one common time*', leading to a kind of 'communal empathy', which united both students and workers as one group (p. 185).

The world was then literally turned upside down in 1968: young and old were united, workers and students. Sartre even interviewed student leaders who had convened local 'student parliaments' in lecture halls to discuss and pass educational reforms. Lacan met with the student leader Cohn-Bendit. Both he and Bourdieu gave a cautious respect to the events, whilst questioning its ultimate motives and chance of success. It is important to note that this common spirit of revolt partly masked the natural differences between the more - and less - educated, together with their respective *capital* holdings. Once again, Bourdieu saw the potential (and eventual) patterns of miscomprehension between the different social groups as analogous to the stupefaction with which elder Algerian peasants responded to the new farming techniques used by the young (p. 183), that is, the near impossibility of seeing the world through another's eyes. So, if in France they all shared a foundational *ethos* as constituted and imposed by the ruling order (*field of power*), their individual responses to it were socially distinct, as necessitated by the differences between their individual *habitus* and thus social trajectories. This accent of social provenance and differentiation is somewhat muted in Lacan in favour of universalist concepts of human psychology: the Symbolic Order is central to his theory but rarely exemplified empirically.

Once the content of various group causes are examined in detail, it is easy to understand how revolutionary fervour was quickly quelled; so that, subsequently, the 'synchronisation' of discontented fragments and 'conjunctural alliances' was broken. It would be wrong, nevertheless, to conclude that nothing came from *Mai 1968*. Calls for '*participation*', '*autogestion*' and '*autonomie*' were after all listened to, and indeed responded to by governments to a certain extent. Changes were then implemented. Yet, the general consensus is that most of those reforms introduced were quickly watered down in the years that followed, so that substantial change was in effect eroded once the internal logic of practice (generating principle – distinction) of the HE *field* – social class reproduction - reasserted itself.

Bourdieu was later to reflect on the 'two faces of May' (2008a/ 2002: 41): one of the resentment of the lower class of intellectuals, who had the opportunity to express their repressed violence and social fears; the second of the 'social innocence' of youth and their refusal to accept old ways. The ramifications of both lived on after everyone went back to work. However, the shake up in the *Symbolic Order* was soon neutralized as old values were recast with modern forms. There is something of Lacan's 'master and slave' in this context. If Hegel saw slavery as 'transitional' and 'right'/ valid' in the evolution towards truly ethical conditions, Gramsci writes of the 'morbid forms' that arise when the socio-historical forces of one era are used up and the new is yet to be 'born'. Neither was really the case in the example of 1968. The dominant *ethos* remained capitalism, which has the power to shape the very resistance to it: even in its opposition, the same relationship is being constructed. In this way, it was indeed 'a master's discourse'. It is so that Lacan declared that the 'revolutionaries' were seeking

‘another master’ – and they got it. This is a significant point that he shares with Bourdieu (for example, in *Masculine Domination*, 2001/ 1998): that in the very act of overthrowing, the new order is built with respect to a chiasmic pattern of the old; resistance was shaped in its own form. Thus, ‘the master’ is retained along with the ‘master-slave’ relationship.

Homo academicus and *La noblesse d’état* (1996a/ 99) were Bourdieu’s response to 1968, building on his earlier work with students (see 1977b, 1979) and hence asserts that not much changed in the political *field*, where subsequently corporate interests became even more pronounced. Nevertheless, he wanted to hold on to the ‘truth of the springtime of laughter’ – somewhat connecting with the French revolutionary tradition, which always seems to prefer to spring for its uprisings. Lacan, on the other hand, responded with probably his most social turn in his account of the *four discourses* - the master, the university, the hysteric and the analyse – arguing that society (the Symbolic Order) is liable to be governed according to one or the other according to the configuration that the elements Agent, Product, Other and Truth set up. In other words, there is an alternative. However, tellingly, the Master discourse always leads to contradiction and failure.

Bourdieu and Lacan

At this point, it is probably worth saying a few words about the respective intellectual biographies of Bourdieu and Lacan – their backgrounds - since this underpins their salient theories.

Bourdieu was born in 1930, when Lacan was already 29. Bourdieu experienced the onset of the Second World War and Nazi Occupation of France as a child. Lacan would have similarly seen the outbreak of the First World War and its aftermath. These climates would have affected both in different ways. Lacan's formative years were when the 'discoveries' of Freud were still having their initial impact – against the impact of the instability that war had created socio-economically. He met James Joyce and was familiar with avant-garde literary circles. He also read and sympathised with the literature of Charles Maurras, who was the founder of Action Française, one of the most influential of socio-political groups that set traditional (Catholic) values against what was considered the corruption of the Third French Republic. He studied medicine and specialised in psychiatry. Bourdieu followed the 'royal' intellectual route of the École normale supérieure, specialising in philosophy; although coming from a modest rural family in the French Pyrenees. The Second World War had seen the rise of Existentialism in France, led by their star intellectuals, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. However, phenomenology and structural anthropology were also in the air. Of course, both Bourdieu and Lacan partly set themselves against their respective intellectual climate - Freud, existentialism and anthropology - all whilst being influenced by them. Bourdieu was certainly attracted to phenomenology – his proposed Master thesis topic (never completed) was a phenomenology of the 'affective life'. However, in terms of science and method, he also took guidance from the philosophers of the history of science, such as Gaston Bachelard (1864-1962), Georges Canguilhem (1904-1995), Alexandre Koyré (1892-1964). Lacan turned to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Hegel (1770-1831) and was friendly with the Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Of course, Bourdieu embraced sociology away from philosophy for experiential reasons

(see below), and drew on philosophy and literary works. Both therefore took their disciplines and 'philosophised' them. Indeed, we might describe Bourdieu's work as 'social philosophy' or 'philosophical anthropology'; whilst Lacan would be a 'philosophical psychiatrist', or 'psychological philosopher'. It is in this respect that we might see their two oeuvres as overlapping to a certain degree, with distinct differences: both were ultimately concerned with the nature of the relationship between the individual and the collectivity, the Subjective and the Objective.

Bourdieu's mission is summarised in two books – The Craft of Sociology (1991c/ 68) and Outline of Theory of Practice (1977a/ 72). The first insists on 'epistemological vigilance' in 'constructing the research object' and claims four 'breaks' from different forms of knowledge: empirical, hermeneutic, objective, and theoretical. This in order to create a theory of practice, which combines all of these within a reflexive paradigm. Key to this is his take on structure as both 'structured' and 'structuring', by which he wants to go beyond a dichotomy in the social sciences that he found to be 'fundamental and ruinous' (1990/ 80: 25): Subjectivism and Objectivism. Rather, he is looking to express the dialectic between the two: 'the internality of externality and the externality of internality' (1971), or at least the generating principles that form them and the social conditions from which they arise. Since Lacan also was concerned with 'the Subject' and its relationship to an 'external' 'Big Other' and 'Symbolic Order', we can see again that there exists some degree of commonality between him and Bourdieu. However, there clearly also exists important differences. Bourdieu undertook an extensive amount of sociological and anthropological fieldwork in developing his theories, he also expressed results both statistically and ethnographically. Lacan seems to have based

his conjectures on the articulations of psychiatric patients. If anything, Bourdieu accented the social imposition of the state and society, whilst Lacan focused on the intimate mechanism of their articulation in individual psychologies. For example, in the latter case, the way the Subject is formed and forms the Ego and its consequences, and the impulses – desire, imaginary – that related both to internal substantive psychological phenomena and the ‘outside world’ – others, words, relationships. In fact Bourdieu too refers to ‘libido’ in his work which, together with terms such as conatus depict an ‘ableness to be’ as expressed through internal impulses. Libido is, of course, a key Freudian concept, but for Bourdieu is more like ‘interest’, a ‘protension’. a particular orientation towards the future with advantage in mind..

SECOND QUESTION

In relation to freedom.

Jacques Lacan, in two Writings of his first period, refers to freedom with a certain suspicion, and the same with respect to happiness. Two are his counterpoints: destiny, inertia and madness as a limit to freedom.

In 1946, in the *Written "About Psychic Causality"* he says about life, with tragic tone:

"...bastard chain of destiny and inertia, of dice and stupor, of false successes and unknown encounters, which constitutes the ordinary text of human life." (p. 150).

And about madness, as another counterpoint and limit, he says: it is the shadow that follows the movement of freedom.

"Far from being madness the contingent fact of the fragilities of the organism, it is the permanent virtuality of an open crack in its essence. [...] Far from being an insult to freedom, it is its faithful companion; it follows its movement like a shadow.

And he ends by shifting the causality of madness to "the unfathomable decision of being".

It must be said that his reference is Pindar: "Become as you are", over the idea of "the trap of destiny that deceives him about a freedom that he has not conquered". That he has not yet conquered.

In 1953, In Writing: "Function and field of the word and language in psychoanalysis",

The "lack of freedom" in relation to the development of psychoanalysis. I quote:

"Let us be categorical, it is not a question in psychoanalytic anamnesia of [tangible] reality but of truth, because it is the effect of a full word to reorder past contingencies by giving them the sense of needs to come, such as are constituted by the little freedom by means of which the subject makes them present." (p. 246).

In the artistic field, in relation to the creative project, within the determining game of a structure defined as a magnetic field, a system of lines of forces, governed by its own laws, how does Bourdieu propose freedom in the creation of the work? What place for autonomy in the relation *habitus*-capital-field, in practice, in action, in the creative act? *Habitus* is a paradoxical term in Bourdieu. Its postulation is complex.

Although titled 'In relation to freedom', this is a wide ranging question: including issues of 'freedom', 'madness', 'autonomy', 'destiny', anamnesia, language and, finally, moves to a consideration of creativity before addressing habitus, field, capital.

I assume this poses the question of the possibility of freedom for Bourdieu, whether creativity is an expression of this and thus autonomy is a component part of such a phenomenon.

Perhaps the first thing to say is that all the terms immediately cited above are words, and that Bourdieu warns to be 'aware' of words (1989b) – just indeed as Lacan does in the signifier-object relationship. Why? because for Bourdieu words come with pre-prescribed meaning and interpretations – a view not unlike Lacan's. Both focus on what we say and mean and why – the *signifier* – knowing that the ultimate source is the Symbolic Other/ Society and the network of its associations as *signified*. So, what is this 'effect of a full word to reorder past contingencies word'?... in order to provide 'the sense of needs to come, such as are constituted by the little freedom by means of which the subject makes them present'. Such suggests that some words have a special sense that allows for a *metanoia* in a single life – implying freedom (the language of psychoanalysis?). But, 'freedom' itself is a word, thus prone to mis-understanding and mis-use.

There is certainly a tradition of 'freedom' in modern and contemporary philosophy, perhaps most famously expressed in the work of the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre, who argued life's experiences necessitated 'choice' which implied an essential

freedom of action between alternatives. Such a perspective was shared by other writers such as Albert Camus: and formed the basis of his novel *The Outsider*. This position was accentuated by the Second World War, where indeed any single decision could literally be a matter of life and/ or death. This was not a perspective that Lacan took and he was critical of both collaboration and resistance, and thus this form of existential freedom. Because the Ego is in fact an imaginary construct of wholeness, it hides a fragmentation that only the Subject unconscious can install. There is then an illusion of autonomy because the unconscious is undermining it – in the name of the Master (the Symbolic Other). The Sartrean link between freedom and the independence of consciousness does not exist at all for him: a perspective Bourdieu would share without the psychological penetration. For the latter, there can be no autonomous state arriving from what is socially constructed. Freedom must therefore entail going beyond that process, or at least understanding it. Lacan and Bourdieu share this view, with one going insider and the other outsider.

What is true is that although such freedom is an individual expression, it is made in relation to a social whole – almost needs to be acknowledged by the latter: unrecognised 'freedom' is a sort of madness.

'Social freedom' as such is similarly implied in the sociological tradition in relation to emergent changes in society. For Marx, for example, capitalist society brought with it an 'alienation' between man (*sic.*) and their labour, even though they possessed 'free' time under such a system they were disconnected from their work and world. But, this was not really freedom. Communism potentially offered freedom in terms of a return

to a more harmonious existence through a higher form of being once false consciousness was thrown off (as a contingent of the past). Something similar is implied in the work of other founding fathers of sociology. For example, for Durkheim alienation goes under the title of 'anomie': normlessness, where modern man lacks shared moral values and thus cohesion. Once again, freedom is not so much an individual or personal characteristic of throwing social 'chains' – which could lead to suicide in Durkheim's case, but to be found within a social *ethos* that allows for a give-and-take between the agent and their grouping – an organic solidarity. This type of argument can also be found in Max Weber with his contrast between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* : community and society. Once again, modern freedom gives rise to malaise because of its disenchanting effects and capitalist values. Interestingly, Weber does allow for value-freedom: where the individual (in particular the researcher) consciously subscribes to a certain set of values or ways of thinking, but it is questionable if it is available to everyman (*sic.*).

In fact, Bourdieu shows himself to have no use for concepts such as 'anomie' and 'alienation', still less for 'freedom' *per se* in a transcendental sense; indeed, he refers to existentialism as a 'insipid humanism'. That being said, his whole philosophy is based on the distinction between traditional and modern societies – as he found in Algeria and the Béarn – the effects of each on individual psychologies, and the evolution of one to another had on individuals. How to deal with these proposes the founding of a different form of knowledge relationship that implies a degree of independence. Both are cases, amongst many others, where 'social suffering' is the result of a shift in social forces; for example, in the processes of *hysteresis*, where

individuals find that the world (Symbolic Other) has passed them by – they no longer have recognisable social value in it. Freedom thus for Bourdieu can never be something that is given or attained by individuals through particular action but consists in *understanding* the social forces acting on them: a practical application of his theory of practice and the processes of *participant objectivation* (see below and 2000d). At one point (2000a), he even argues that (his) sociology can act in a veritable psychoanalytic way: he cites the case of a female teacher included in *La misère du monde* – after interviews with her, she understood the social forces that imposed on her, nothing had changed but she felt better ‘for knowing why and how’. This is a Spinozean view with the accent on the social causes of action rather than escape from the action itself. For Bourdieu, to understand what is determined in one’s life allows for the possibility of creating a certain ‘distance from it – more or less and somehow’ (1994/ 1987: 15). In this way, for Bourdieu, *habitus***, as a principle of social praxis, goes beyond both a philosophical and (incidentally) psychological point of view: because it situates itself between objective social structures (*fields*) and subjective structures (*habitus*), accepting that the latter are both personally unique but socially spatialised in terms of their objective elements included and the *ethos* that gives them value in a practical sense. Lacan’s Subject is akin to this without focussing on the elements of its social provenance: he is more interested in how the objective is mediated by the subjective than, as in Bourdieu, the structuring content/ form of the objective itself.

***NB. It is probably worth noting that both Bourdieu and Lacan produce a complex series of concepts in expressing their ideas. With Bourdieu, there is habitus, field,*

capital, ethos, hexis, interest, hysteresis, etc. For Lacan, there is the Subject, the Symbolic Order, object a, Big Other, Lalangue, Das Ding, etc. Throughout, there is still this subject-object play that both Bourdieu and Lacan work with. That said, Bourdieu's work starts at a particular point and then expands with a high degree of consistency and coherence. Lacan, on the other hand, constantly revised his ideas through three distinct periods. As a result, it is easier to argue that Bourdieu's multifarious concepts are in fact all facets of the same things. With Lacan, it would be much harder to make this claim: there remains inconsistencies – even contradictions – across his work.

Ultimately, the process of objective reflexivity that Bourdieu advocates is in many ways close to something like a psychology of social praxis in that it does indeed intend an *anamnesia* which opens the possibility of truth: a sociology of the past as a way of comprehending a historical sociology of the present. But, this does raise the question of 'how?' and again 'in what language?'.

Language remains, for Bourdieu, a veritable 'trojan horse' that imports all sorts of determinisms, common sense, misrepresentations, *doxic* relations, etc. that can remain un-analysed in the process of their reconstruction - *rassemblage*: a danger to which he sees prone both the empirical subject and intellectual scholar. At its limits, this can lead to a situation where 'the Word' used to describe a phenomenon becomes 'more real' than the thing it represents, or victim of a common sensical interpretation – a 'spontaneous sociology' by the untrained eye. Such misrecognition is endemic without epistemological vigilance. Bourdieu's quarrel with psychology (although he also accepts aspects of its concerns) is the way that its so-called analytic language is

arrived at by conjecture – rather than that is from empirical observation of *social* practice. As a result, Lacan seems less of a phenomenologist than Bourdieu: we might say, is interested less with the social structures by which experiences occur and is more concerned with the actuality of the lens through which they pass. That said, Lacan also seems to see language as that of others – the *Other* – for example that of the parents in the Mirror phase of the child's development. This notion is not a million miles from Bourdieu's view that children imbibe a whole set of interests and valued relations to the world of others and objects in the primary cognitive act. Both Bourdieu and Lacan therefore share a certain social and psychological focus to their base suppositions. Language might therefore be considered as practically 'inhuman' – a system of differences derived from some socio-historic artefact. It is just that it is employed to connect with others – and the Other. At one point, Lacan claims that a psychotic symptom may literally be a word 'trapped' inside the body. The congruent argument might be, 'if an illness does not have a word to describe it, does it exist?' – something that Bourdieu ponders.

For Lacan, words can trap entry into the unconscious as well as act as a vehicle for its expression. The words we use about words and the social/ psychological phenomena we are exploring are therefore crucial, and we would hope that they are formed from a certain epistemological vigilance. In them therefore, at least, a space is created – thanks to language and expressed in it – that allows for an objectification of grounding patterns – social and psychological. For Lacan, this is also the way the Subject assumes the history of its Ego. For Bourdieu, it is the way one's socio-historical provenance can be disclosed as a movement away from empirical, subjective reactions.

Reconstructing social identity in all its dimensions is clearly a lengthy and complex process, and involves more than a conjectural explanation. For example, Bourdieu claims that it took him 'ten years to see the world through the eyes of an Algerian peasant' (see 2000b) – a kind of epiphany requiring a shift in what/ how one sees. Objectifying this shift allows for a more generalised application of this point of seeing. For Bourdieu, discipline specialists are too ready to narrativise the product of individual social action rather than develop a 'theory of actual practice' that links epistemology to ontology. In the former case, what results is theory about theory instead of practice: 'the logic of things is replaced by the things of logic' (*pace* Marx). That said, he does see such confusions as deeply psychological since to speak in such ways is susceptible to a process of 'denial' akin to the Freudian concept *Verneinung* (de-negation) where even in its recall, the phenomenon is transfigured to disguise its empirical provenance – the form is recast without its conditions of emergence (1996b/ 1992: 3); in particular, this arises in relation to his analysis of the art field. Using the case of Flaubert and the 'realist' approach to his work, he asks 'what indeed is this discourse which speaks of the social and psychological world *as if it did not speak of it; cannot speak* of this world except on condition that it only speak of it as if it did not speak of it?'. What is it to speak of something (in a way that performs) by not speaking of it? For Bourdieu, such a *misrecognition* may not be deliberate or consciously explicit, neither would it necessarily be because the original experience that gives rise to the thought is painful. Rather, in a *symbolic economy* (Symbolic Order for Lacan), individuals are constantly adjusting what they think, say and do implicitly in terms of gaining *symbolic capital* in order to improve their position within respective *fields*. This

is no less true for scholars, specialists, and therapists – *in their fields* - who constantly adjust their thoughts and actions to enhance their own symbolic – and thus social – standing. There is thus an *interest* (see Grenfell, 2014: chapter 9) in denial or euphemisation, albeit implicit and disguised, even to the one who uses it. This is achieved through language that is hijacked for field (ultimately habitus) *interest*. Because the individual elements of language – words – always achieve meaning by association and difference with other (networks of) words, they can be hijacked by individuals and groups: a kind of imposition of form that achieves censorship by what is and is not the *normal* meaning for such and such a context. In the science field, Bourdieu even argues that the process involves a sublimation of *libido dominandi* into a *libido sciendi*: one scientific ‘fact’ can only be refuted by another scientific fact (2000c/ 97: 111ff.) – both are in control of respective fields and imply social positioning according to Capital. It is one powerful thing to have a set of vocabulary, which excludes *those not in the know*, it is still more powerful to adopt common parlance but give it a particular meaning. Bourdieu argues that Heidegger does this all time. It might not even be intentional; rather it constructs an articulation of the ruling ethos – in the case of Heidegger, of Nazi Germany (1991b/ 88)). Whatever, as a result, heteronomy is disguised as autonomy .

Bourdieu’s own social-historical analysis – deeply psychological – hence aims for the work that ‘makes possible the partial anamnesis of deeply (immanent) repressed structures’ (ibid.) Such would involve an analysis of the changing tectonic plates of the Symbolic Order, in Lacanian terms – the Big Other – at a particular point in time, the social hierarchies that this involves and also the individual evolution of subject

tastes and emotions. In this way he seeks to span something that is essentially social but instantiated in individual psychologies.

Such might be even more pronounced in a situation that would seem to bring Lacan and Bourdieu together: where it is not just a question of the Subject hiding from the Ego, but there is a Cleft habitus, where an individual exists in a state of two non-integrated Symbolic Orders: in other words, a kind of social schizophrenia in what to think and how to behave with psychological elements even somewhat at war with each other. Bourdieu's own habitus was 'cleft' in terms of provenance and trajectory, and we might even argue that such allows for the possibility of objectifying the social forces acting upon oneself and indeed their psychological impacts.

But the Language to do so is always slippery (one reason for arguing for a stable set of epistemologically grounded 'thinking tools'). In the empirical state, it is not merely a question of what is or is not said. Bourdieu at one point refers to Lacan where the latter quotes a letter cited by Heidegger to illustrate the case where 'I' say one thing knowing 'you' will think I am saying another when I am actually saying what I am saying (1991a: 146). Bourdieu goes on to argue that this is again exemplified in the case of Heidegger, where he 'proclaims' what he is doing as if knowing that he is doing another when he actually is doing what he saying but in a way that is disguised, including its contradictions. Paradoxically and for example, this allows him to speak about Care, whilst in fact being Careless: because it is omnipresent, there is no need to deal with it practically. In this way, that which is named becomes neutralised. This is kind of misrecognition – another de-negation of sorts. In this way, 'the return of the

repressed' is censured. In Heidegger's case, the Nazis refers to 'social care' all the time'. Heidegger too refers to 'care' as a central characteristic of Dasein whose very transcendent character means that nothing need to be done about it.

Transcendence is of course one of the features that Lacan also draws attention to in his account of *Das Ding*, which is the unknowable void that attracts the Subject's desire. It may be particular to the individual. However, it may also be collective as in mass psychosis. It is a 'nothing', but this very characteristic leaves it liable to sublimation by desire, which then creates a form for its impulses. Sexual impulses have no natural object for its expression – *Das Ding* provides that. In this way, the ordinary becomes transcendent. The fact that there is 'nothing there' only makes it more powerful (see below the discussion of Kant's aesthetics). Bourdieu implicitly acknowledge all this, although the transcendent is universally social and can be understood as the sources of the Subject's responses (how they define themselves), albeit in a dialectical relation with the institutions that surround it. In both cases, what is there/ not there defines a certain relation to it – its nature always prescribed by the Other/ Symbolic *field*, of course. Such is essentially structural, both materially and ideationally.

Objectification of these structural relations – and the impulses they carry - does suggest a 'freedom' (reordering, reconstituting) from the past (sociological, psychological): there is hence an anamnesia articulated through a narrative that itself disguises a deeper truth or creates another narrative that traps. It is all in the nature of the relation to the words used: their provenance and utilisation.

It follows that freedom or transcendental independence in Art can not be found in the creative act itself for Bourdieu: either in production or consumption. Creativity needs to be apprehended through a sociological lens: his target is here Kantian metaphysics.

Kant's phenomenology sought to synthesise what he saw as two opposing traditions in philosophy: empiricism and rationalism. He did so by developing an account which connected universal aspects of human mentation: understanding, sense impressions, knowledge, and concepts: the latter involving prior categories by which sense is converted into thought – space, time, etc. – and thus understood. The first part of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1998/ 1781) has the title 'The Transcendental Aesthetic' – that *word* again!! For Kant, aesthetics is not the preserve of art but actually relates to the Greek work meaning 'sensation' (the opposite being 'anaesthetic' – without sensation). By 'transcendental', he means that which is '*a priori*', or needed for this experience. Kant therefore grounds aesthetic knowledge of object experience as set by the limits of appearance. As noted above, rather for Lacan, it is desire that is the source of this experience, and hence limitless. The ineffable sense in artistic experience arises from the sense of something we cannot reach – desire's infinite capacity to desire. Kant's approach remains grounded in things-in-themselves.

Kant's aim is to locate a higher form of feeling, which can be said, *a priori*, to determine experiences of pleasure and pain. Such questions of taste cannot be based simply on concepts since if they were, they would not be able to 'lay claim to other

people's assent' – they would be relative. Kant responds by making a distinction between what is *beautiful* and what is *pleasurable*. The latter is associative and comparative, and connected with simple sensual enjoyment. However, in order for judgments of the *beautiful* to arise, *Imagination* must also present (sense) data (in time and space) to *Understanding*. In the case of the 'pure gaze', or the 'transcendental aesthetic', this data is not converted via concepts, because a 'non-cognitive' feeling accompanies the intuition by which the data of *Imagination* is presented to *Understanding*. At this point, we connect with a perception of pleasure or displeasure, which serves to define the non-cognitive feeling itself *and* replaces concepts. Since there are no concepts to provide form, what is presented is the power to form itself; a consciousness without anything to be conscious of. In this sense, what arises is a 'disinterestedness': a contemplative judgment as opposed to a cognitive (conceptual or theoretical) judgment: the transcendental aesthetic. Kantian consciousness – or at least that part of concept forming thought that has nothing to conceptualise – here seems to connect with Lacan's *Das Ding* – a void that is at once sublimated by a thing, in this case the art object (NB. Note the connection also with the Gnostic pleroma: that which is both void and full – it is so because in either case, a certain type of structural relation is formed between Subject and Object (here full or empty)).

Bourdieu does not particularly address the mechanics of Kant's reasoning: indeed, he accepts that there is a 'pure gaze' – BUT he interprets this as a social phenomenon located historically in an evolution of a certain class of society and their relationship to practical reality – distant/ detached. In books such as *The Rules of Art* (op. cit.) and

Manet (2017/ 2013), he argues that the form of the 'hero artist' (preoccupied with his talent and vision) emerged in the C19. Before that time, 'artists' were 'craftsmen', employed mostly to celebrate God and aristocracy. However, in the nineteenth century, a new breed of artists arose who captured a degree of autonomy over what was depicted and why (so, the *nature* of the relationship changed). But, such independence was relative – they formed part of the dominated amongst the dominant on whom they were dependent, namely a new bourgeois class. The latter characterised themselves as detached from 'practical' concerns, shared leisure time, and saw themselves as in possession of the 'pure gaze' – such characterised their art. This contrasted with the popular classes with their need for direct sensual enjoyment. The latter could tolerate no ambiguity between 'form' and 'content', so endemic within the new aesthetic.

Thus began the tenets of the modern and contemporary art *fields*, which Bourdieu saw as a series of competing generations: New Avant-garde, Avant-garde, Consecrated Avant-garde, Rear-garde (1996b/ 92: 159). The extent to which any one individual artist challenged the sitting Avant-garde, held their position and for how long depended on the amount of *capital* – especially *social* and *cultural capital* – they could generate and invest (see Grenfell and Hardy, 2007 for further discussion).

Bourdieu's account of creativity thus raises two important questions? Firstly, is the artists a 'hero' or simply 'self-seeking'? Secondly, can only acknowledged artists be 'creative'?

The answer to each question is 'yes' and 'no'.

In the first case, Bourdieu sees art as a product of social conditions, which is utilised by artists for personal gain. At the same time, they *can* act as a challenge to dominant socio-political *doxas*.

In the second case, an 'artist' is only recognised as such through systems of *legitimation* and *consecration* – galleries, curators, collectors, etc.. That said, anyone can be creative, and not formally connect with the art field; although Bourdieu would still see this a product of social conditions - the ruling *ethos* and the juxtaposition of subjective and objective structures implied by his theory of *habitus*. At best, such *unrecognised* 'art' would socially be considered as *bohemian* since it was not acknowledged by the art *field* itself (although still has the potential to be so).

In any of these cases, we can say that whatever the artist and art are, they are NOT a source of freedom – accepting nevertheless that the act of creativity and aesthetic contemplation does involve a change in attentional consciousness.

That being said, Bourdieu argues that fine artists can – through his method/ philosophy - produce a different form of art by understanding the social means of production of the aesthetic. When this happens, the resulting output is rather more a 'social' art than a 'commercial' one, since it better reflects the deep generating principle of society. In this sense, there is the potential to express what is denied by

society as a whole: an 'objective art'. At one point Bourdieu makes this argument with a group of fine art students (2016/ 2001).

This whole argument again links with Bourdieu's overall view of the possibility for any one individual to somehow free themselves of their social destiny, bestowed on them at birth. The chances are, for him, unlikely but possible – especially through his sociology as hinted at above (see also discussion below of the 'empirical' and 'scientific' *habitus*). In sum, Bourdieu asserts that we are 'born determined but have a small chance of achieving something like a (independent) subject'. The nature and form of this Subject, as compared to the Ego and the empirical subject is open to conjecture.

The question is then, how to find that small chance within a lived biography? The answer again lies in the nature of the relationship between the 'subject' and the 'object'.

THIRD QUESTION

With respect to Bourdieu's biography and the work itself.

What do you think about the relationship between Bourdieu's biography and his work?

In Bourdieu's documentary, "Sociology, a combat sport", with his participation, always in the foreground with others, he emphasizes the place of experience in a given structure, to say that what is decisive is how to work on one's own experience in order to get something out of it. He even proposes self-analysis, "socioanalyzing" one's own experience through a reflective analysis.

Was this position of Bourdieu disruptive in academic circles? Is it a trait of an ever-young position in him?

The use of the 'self' (personal biography) in intellectual (and empirical!) research is central to Bourdieu's method. He eschews the idea of the 'objective' researcher: for him 'participant observation' is a contradiction of terms. Rather, the researcher must place what they observe against the sources of what they notice in terms of their own reactions/ making sense of it. In this way, the aim of researcher is to apply the same approach to themselves and their research endeavour as to what they bring intellectually to that research: construction of research object, place in the academic *field*, the *symbolic capital* implications, conceptual tools of analysis, etc. (2000c/ 1997)

Bourdieu argues that most of his work arose from such approach: indeed, that his research was 'all about him'! Certainly, many texts can be linked directly to his own biography: for example, both *Homo academicus* (discussed above) and *La noblesse d'état* held a focus on the higher education experience that would have been intimate

to him. In fact, when he came to write notes towards his own 'socio-analysis' (2007/04), he concentrated on the intellectual structure and machinations of his own Parisian intellectual *field*. There are few details of his own biography as a child and adolescent: a surprising fact since what we do know is quite suggestive, and it is significant to remind ourselves that Bourdieu spent early teenage years in a France that was experiencing Nazi occupation.

As noted, Bourdieu was born in the rural South-west of France. His father was an itinerant worker on the land and for local public service. The family did not speak French but Gascon, a now moribund dialect of the area. Clearly intellectually gifted and with his mother's push, Bourdieu attended a boarding school in a regional town: Pau. He talked of lonely weekends and constantly getting into trouble. He also comments on how the pupils from the country were forced to wear grey smocks, while the local 'townies' arrived attired in fashionable clothes – something that made him feel humiliated. This experience certainly provoked resentment and bitterness on the part of Bourdieu, a reaction that was somewhat accentuated when he went up to Paris to attend first one of the elite training schools and then *l'École Nationale Supérieure* – the Grande école charged with forming the French intellectual elite. Here, the juxtapositions of urban and country environments on all levels would have been only too evident. Such is the detail of his 'Cleft habitus'. Some have argued that all this created a 'class rage' that never left Bourdieu – an 'ever-young'. On a personal reflection, I can report that every time I met him he was passionate and angry about some injustice – political, intellectual, social. He told me once that whenever he was obliged to write a report at the *Collège de France* he sensed himself back at school

with the teacher standing over him demanding he do his homework. A lot of his philosophical and methodological work is also framed in terms of 'breaks', 'refusals', 'ruptures', etc. from orthodox ways. This reputation went before him: when he died, the announcement in *Le Monde* was accompanied by a cartoon – 'Bourdieu est mort', it stated 'mais ce n'est pas evident qu'il l'a reconnu'. He placed himself 'to the left of the left' and claimed that the *Collège de France* invited him to become a member three times before he accepted the invitation.

Bourdieu was aware of his own ambivalence towards an education sector which in effect saved him from his social fate: and he acknowledged the lot of the 'marginal' as both a *cause celebre* and method brings with it social suffering, also allows for the possibility to possess the ability to see what others do not see in the spaces that are opened up within dominant *doxas*. So, Bourdieu could see both the advantages and the disadvantages – between what he 'knows' and what he 'feels' - of such a position. These social distinctions do not seem to appear in Lacan's writings.

Nevertheless, and as noted, at one point Bourdieu refers to *Homo academicus* as a 'self-analysis by proxy' (1988a: 84: xxvi): encouraged by his move from philosophy to the social sciences, and his need to gain 'rational control' over the disappointment he experienced about the 'annihilation of the truths and values' to which he had been destined and dedicated - that would be both the cultural dispositions of his home background and the elite education he experienced. This possibility was, for him, a distinct alternative to a kind of 'resentment' that could be personally self-destructive and arose whenever he applied his 'theory of practice' to *his own practice*. He states

that 'self-reappropriation' then becomes both possible and necessary. To expand on the possibility of Subject:

By objectifying the objectivity that runs through the supposed site of subjectivity, such as the social categories of thought, perception and appreciation, which are the unthought principles of the 'objective' world. By forcing one to discover externality at the heart of internality, banality in the illusion of rarity, the common in the pursuit of the unique, sociology does more than denounce all the impostures of *egoistic narcissism*; it offers the only means perhaps of contributing, if only through awareness of determinations, *to the construction, otherwise abandoned to the forces of the world, of something like a subject*.

(1990/ 80: 21 – my italics)

Here, we might say that Bourdieu is describing a kind of Lacanian *transference*, where we express knowledge we know but then attribute it to another; in this case a particular epistemology. What is expressed is transferred but not the subject context: knowledge is separated from the Subject, which alienates the latter. The bigger the separation, the larger the space between subject and object becomes. Of course, the question then is whether this is a genuine form of 'new' knowledge – freedom? - or a phantasy? In either case, the ultimate determinant *is* social.

But, this type of process did not happen by accident for Bourdieu: Rather, it arose as a result of three epiphanies – Gurdjieffian shocks? - linking the social, political, philosophical, and personal.

The first was his deployment on military service in Algeria, a country which, at the time, was experiencing a full-scale colonial war. The impact would have been violent

and visceral: killings and bombings were a daily event. How to make sense of this? Bourdieu took literally thousands of photos and saw for himself the tragedy of colonial fragmentation. His philosophical training only took him so far, and the move to sociology resulted from a necessity to understanding the cultural diversity of Algeria and what happened when its traditional cultures came in contact with modern France. Bourdieu saw how 'domination' arose not simply by 'imposition' but was preceded by forced 'integration' as Algerian communities were obliged to live through French systems. The differences between the two were fundamental: one semi-feudal/ agrarian/ nomadic, the other industrial/ capitalist/ urban. These differences expressed themselves at every ontological level in terms of relations to time, honour, marriage, commerce, religion, language itself. The fact that France lay claim to 'Universal' principles of the modern world only led to a 'monopolisation' of what was 'right' and 'wrong'.

The second epiphany was when Bourdieu took what he had seen in Algeria back to his home region in the Béarn. Here, he saw an analogous process as local economies and customs were being opened up by 'invasion' from the nearby modern world. Once again traditional ways were under threat. He writes with a degree of pathos of how marriage strategies had changed: once all this was agreed between farmers and their offspring, now the young women of the village were being tempted by soldier outsiders who represented everything about modern living in comparison to local communities set in their ways. The local *paysans* simply could not compete: *hysteresis* - the world had passed them by (see 2008b/ 02).

The third epiphany was intellectual. When Bourdieu returned from Algeria he was somewhat horrified to be asked of Raymond Aron to teach Durkheim. For him - a 'philosophe prétendant' - 'nothing could be worst' (Bourdieu, 2019: 4):

And, then one day, I began to draw out a scheme on the blackboard, and I said to myself, 'It is obvious, we have to study people *in relation*'.
(ibid.)

This intellectual epiphany became the key to his entire philosophy and methodology; everything that followed in some ways was suffused with it in articulating the relationship between 'the whole' and the 'particular' – and the form, content and nature of that relationship.

There is much in all this that can be read as having psychological significance. And, indeed, the degree to which Bourdieu is or is not 'psychological' is a relevant if ambivalent question. In its crudest articulations, Bourdieu would see psychology as 'essentialist' and 'dehistoricised' (2001/ 98: viii). For him, even the most intimately personal phenomena needed to be understood primarily as the product of social conditions. Nevertheless, to re-emphasise, Bourdieu's work is saturated with terms that the psychologist would claim for their own: the unconscious, libido, the repressed, phantasy, anamnesis, projection – all suitably 'sociologicalised' of course. Moreover, he does refer to Lacan as someone who 'socially and symbolically allied Lévi-strauss and Merleau-Ponty' (1988/ 84: xxi) – two individuals also fundamental to Bourdieu's own epistemology : albeit that Bourdieu synthesised the work of these writers with a range of others – Husserl (*habitualität*), Bachelard (*epistemological vigilance/ rupture*,

aesthetic/ science rationality), Canguilhem (*history of ideas*), Koyré (*history of the philosophy of science*), Spinoza (*spatialised*), Wittgenstein (*aspect seeing*), Panowsky (*field*), Pascal (*fideistic*), Cassirer (*relational/ substantive*).

Structure is a good point of contrast. Lacan sees a synchronicity between the structures of language, the unconscious, and thus subjectivity. He comes closest to Bourdieu by also relating structure to its source in the Symbolic Order. Bourdieu does not have Lacan's taxonomy of *voice* and puts more the accent on social structures as – ultimately - the creator of the social constructive genome. Nevertheless, he is always pitching himself at the point where the subjective and objective structures interface; as noted, he refers to their traditional opposition in the social sciences as 'most fundamental and ruinous as noted above,' (1990/ 80: 25). Instead, Bourdieu seeks to found a science and method that is built on a dialectical relationship between structure in its personal phenomenological sense and structure as within an objective whole. One is an expression of and is formed by the other – and *vice versa*. There are consequently homologies to be identified as representative of these relationships and their mutual construction. In this way, 'structure' must be understood as both *structuring and structured*, with the aim of founding:

...a science of dialectical relations between objective structures...and the subjective dispositions within which these structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them.

(Bourdieu, 1977: 3)

Bourdieu refers to this method as 'structural constructivism' or 'structural constructivism' (see 1989a). It is this continual dialectical approach – to both producing

and reading what emerges from such science – which seeks to minimize, if not completely avoid, substantialism. A further way of doing likewise is to focus on the *logic of practice* – or in fact, generating principles – of such constructivism.

As an aside, we might consider the relationship between the individual subject and the Other – the Symbolic Order. So, Bourdieu refer to his work as ‘constructivist’. However, he never intends the gradual integration of any individual habitus into a pre-given other social order – ethos. Rather it comes with a whole series of contradictions, fragmented forms, misconceived concepts, etc. He therefore sets himself against the Marxist Althusser who, with such concepts as ‘state ideological apparatuses’ (of which schools are one), sees the ideological as an imposition power (1971/ 69), a kind of doctrine that is asserted. For Bourdieu, the whole process is much more subtle and complex: ideological domination is preceded by integration, etc. - often as a social structural levels before it is imbibed as a mental modus operandi. Since such is never value free but normally an expression of the ruling ethos, universalization is preceded by monopolisation – something, as noted, he observed in real-life contexts: In other words, the assertion of the capital values of the symbolic economy.

Lacan seems to tease out the deep psychological process in the way ideology works: also not as an imposed other but essentially in the nature of the unconscious and its creations. For Lacan, the ego arises from the imaginary misplaced view of wholeness – it is therefore an illusion: hence an effect of imaginary misrecognition; Althusser then mistakenly defines the Subject as the result of this misrecognition (1971/ 64). The Subject, however, and because it arises from the unconscious itself, is fragmented. It is

so because the unconscious itself is divided with respect to the Symbolic Other. In this argument, the Subject does not then arise out of the Other but is created by the impossibility of the Subject confirming it: the Subject does not exist a priori to the Symbolic Order but is constituted by the impossibility of integration with it.

The Slovenian philosopher Žižek takes this distinction further in a way that combines the idea of Subject and Hegel with Marxist politics. For Žižek, subjectivity is not to be dismissed – as many postmodernists do, but its very failure to integrate is seen as the motor of ideology. There is a fundamental contradiction between the Subject and Symbolic Order. There is a wish on the part of the Subject to integrate which, paradoxically, allows for the submission to ideology as a delivery from the trauma of the contradictory reality with which it is confronted: ‘The function of ideology is hence not so much as to offer us a point of escape from our reality but to offer us the social reality itself as escape from some traumatic, real, kernel’ (1989: 45).

There are two significant points to make from this discussion. Firstly, the implicit political (Marxist even!) dimension of Bourdieu’s and Lacan’s respective works. Secondly, how much Bourdieu and Lacan can overlap. Clearly, Bourdieu focused on the external and Lacan the internal. What the latter argues for in his drilling down into the Ego, Subject, Unconscious, Other, and Symbolic Order would seem to be congruent with Bourdieu’s habitus. Unsurprisingly, therefore, that despite Bourdieu’s reservations with the discipline of psychology he does confess that there is enough work there for him to address – but it would have taken another lifetime!!

There are two further points to make in understanding the formative causes and effects of what ultimately can be termed 'Bourdieu's Theory of Practice': one methodological, the other personal. Methodologically, as well as associating the grounding of the approach to certain philosophical traditions, we need to connect it to the kind of epistemological epiphany described above. Bourdieu:

I was stuck with Weber's work (the ideal prophet does this and that, etc.), and I was practically obliged to paraphrase Weber then, based on the scheme – it was a kind of structural matrix. If I was able to do that, it is because at the same time, I was doing *structuralist* type research on kinship, on the Kabyle house. I read a *pre-structuralist* text with a *structuralist* way of thinking, in such a way that I was able to say the most obvious things about it which, before had not been evident before.
(Bourdieu, 2019: 4)

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In other words, Bourdieu was synthesizing pre-structuralist and structuralist reasoning in a way, which went beyond both (incidentally, going beyond a post-modernist alternative at the time in the making). Personally speaking, and pertinent to methodological principles, it is also important to note that the early engagement in Algeria and the Béarn were 'insider accounts' – he thus drew on the *trust* and honesty of those he encountered to 'tell the truth' of their social reality. 'Sociology would not be worth anything', he declared at one point 'if it did not return to men and women the meaning of their action' (2008b/ 2002: 95). In this sense, he was speaking 'on their behalf' whilst drawing on his own biographical experiences as a source to understanding. This characteristic of his work would have increasing relevance as his career proceeded.

Ultimately, what resulted for Bourdieu was a kind of dual *habitus*: empirical and scientific. As the 'empirical' one, he is like everyone else – acts according to impulse and emotion. However, the 'scientific' one can then objectify the empirical one with the theory of practice and conceptual tools available in his method in order to understand why 'Bourdieu' is acting one way and another - the 'why?' and 'how?' of social discourse. In this way, another 'truth' can be 'torn' (*arraché*) out of comprehension of social facticity at a personal level. He also remarks that in time, the latter can mitigate the former – a psychological transformation of sorts. Bourdieu's epistemology thus implies and entails the possibility of 'capturing' a new ontology as a result of undertaking the re-orientation of one's view of oneself and the world according to his epistemological perspective. Lacan, with his focus on clinical procedures is surely doing the same. Such a position is akin to 'finding one's true self' in the act of discovering the practical objectivity of the world and thus, incidentally, the parameters of one's construction of it, and the limits of thinking about oneself in it. Nevertheless, Bourdieu insists that such an evolution is not simply a personal mission: in fact, one becomes more 'a subject' within a social community committed to do this the same. Nevertheless, the effect must surely involve a disenchantment as the 'given' values of the world are found to be inauthentic. Again, the kind of 'socio-analysis' that Bourdieu is referring does further connect with Lacan when the latter uses the Heideggerian terminology of 'Eating your Dasein' to describe what is left at the end of psychoanalysis when one is left without what was – social identity: an experience of loss and gain.

FOURTH QUESTION [to be included depending on the time frame].

On the nature of the subject-object relationship.

In the video interview published in *Conversations with the Other*, you raise what you call a philosophy of the object in Bourdieu. Then, you emphasize that much of Bourdieu's work was to try to reconcile the subject and the object (dichotomy - Bourdieu says and you yourself say - that social science suffers from and ruins it; the same criticism you make of social psychology, for being too essentialist. Then, you raise, in relation to that reconciliation, the difficulties to grasp **the nature** of that subject-object relationship. **What can you tell us about the nature of this relationship, about some clues of Bourdieu's approach?**

I can tell you that, Lacan, who also states that the subject of the unconscious is constituted in the field of the Other, it is complex to grasp the nature of the relation with the object, with an object that is not an object that is given to be seen, but the empty place where objects are lodged, "the episodic substances" of objects, as Lacan names them, belatedly. We could use as a reference the Heideggerian metaphor of the emptiness of the vessel and the environment that constitutes it as a vessel.

As we approach this final question, it becomes all the more demanding to speak of nothing. We are in the realms where presence and absence are equally powerful, where words always defer their meaning, where understanding is ex-temporal. Such are some aspects of the philosophy of the invisible. Above, I mentioned Bourdieu's wish to 'beware of words' because of what came with them and how pernicious that can be. Lacan was all the more explicit in stressing the multifarious associations connected with a single word. Less a transparency of words or a Lockean transmission of meaning, his focus was on the signifier and what it meant within a Subject-Object-Symbolic Order relationship. Because language is alien to an individual Subject – not made for them – words are intrinsically alienating, and both express and block identity (what then the 'words' and 'objects' of psychoanalysis?). So we are using words here, not so much as to define or express something but to point in the direction of the meaning of something that is perhaps invisible. Why? because it requires relational (pace Cassirer, 1953) and dialectical thinking – not rational logic – the synapse between the subject-object relationship..

The very nature of thought is divisive.

The issue of the '*nature* of the relationship between the subject and object' is primordial for Bourdieu. Besides the whole set of issues connected between subjectivism and objectivism alluded to above, there is the very expression of the *nature* of their relation. Briefly, to name that nature – to give it a quality – is already to construct another object. Lacan would also locate the nature of the relationship 'within the environment of the Other'.

In Heidegger's terms, 'the object' – the 'thing' holds space for a particular time: but it is not really that because what is *is* outside of time and space. A jug holds an empty space – its form sets the boundaries of imminent and immanent manifestation but, in time - the form – the bonded emptiness remains once the jug is withdrawn. Therefore, if we see a form that is there and gone or a potential shape in a strip of time - and infinitely present – all really depends on our relationship to it (what we do and do not see) and, by implication our relationship to a bounded space that is equally ourselves – body and consciousness.

So, what is the nature – the constructivising *ethos* – of that relationship and its construction? *In whose name do I name?* Too often in the human sciences, such naming is set within the orthodoxy of intellectual disciplines (and thus a certain form of rationalism) – sociology, psychology – without acknowledging this as such: again, as noted above, because there is an *interest* in such a denial of *doxa* (resistance to) in favour of vested world values – shaped by hybrids of capitalism. It is the same in the empirical mode – so scholarship only escapes the latter by recreating it by another name. *Who are we to name?*

In the primary cognitive act, after birth, there is a process of establishing relations as part of founding a kind of psychic equilibrium between inside and outside and the body (including thought) (all *knowledge* is 'bodily knowledge' for Bourdieu – mind and body - see 2000c: chapter 4). In this way, cognitive structural relations are created with Self, Other and Objects: some of these latter are material, some are ideational. But, the point is that these 'objects' are not value-neutral but come as a ready-made expressions (capitalist) of the contingent *Symbolic Order* – thus a protension towards the future itself as mediation of the present: That includes 'the other' and 'the Other' in Lacanian terms. Objects are part of the Symbolic Order for Lacan: he is not therefore a structuralist who wants to do away with the Subject, but asks what kind of Subject can emerge from such a structure? As we have seen, Words can only fragment. This is why alienation is situated within the register of language.

Bourdieu may also accept the Lacanian account of Imagining, the Other, the Symbolic Order and the Subject but would still want to accent their social/ sociological provenance and character; that is, not see them as somehow universally innate (*essentially* psychological). In a way, Lacan is still congruent with Bourdieu but does focus of the internal psychological process in the mediation of the external Order rather than analyse the socio-historic nature of that order itself.

For Bourdieu, in a capitalist system, all sorts of moral and ethical forces (honour, trust, gift contracts, *symbolic capital*) are carried (or not), not only in words, but in 'things' themselves – not just in terms of semantic meaning but understandings (assumptions) of (relations to) qualities of space, time, honour, morality, etc. This is why Bourdieu

insists on beginning with social conditions; indeed, to examine, not just 'the conditions of the reproduction of thought' but 'the conditions of the reproduction of the conditions of thought and action'. ETC.

Invariably, the generating principles of the reproduction of such conditions can be found in social structures (in both traditional and modern societies) – material and ideational, which are hierarchically organised and thus include (and set against each other) the dominant and the dominated. The logic of practice of social thought and action is always *distinction* for Bourdieu – played out as *symbolic capital* through what is and is not recognised/ valued within field orthodoxies (something perhaps he shares with Lacan). The question for research is then, 'what is the form that this process of distinction takes at this time and place?'.

The answer to this question returns us to another subject/ object dichotomy, which again demands the articulation of 'the nature of their relation'. Going beyond this recurrence takes us again to this kind of 'philosophy of the invisible' ('episodic instances?'): and a consequent understanding that is only available in the act of understanding (so, out of time) - an unfolding of insight, not simply as a consecutive series of substantive ideas but a (present) apprehension of the dynamic of their relational immanence. This approach is empathetic to phenomenology, but Bourdieu still wishes to take the Merleau-Ponty/ Husserl philosophy and 'sociologicalise' them.

For example, in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes of the issue thus:

This subject-object dialogue, this drawing together, by the subject, of the meaning diffused through the object, and, by the object, of the subject's intentions – a process which is physiognomic perception – arranges round the subject a world which *speaks to him of himself*, and gives his own thoughts their place in the world.

(1962/ 45: 132 *my italics*)

Here, Merleau-Ponty does not intend that the world (objects) is sentient, as human. It is subject consciousness that 'sees' the world; but the world still 'calls' on the subject to know *what it already knows*, to be conscious of *what it is already conscious of*. In this sense, *we are what we see* but experience it as *it seeing us*. How so? This is a universal consciousness for Merleau-Ponty, but of a sociological provenance for Bourdieu: this is why the development of a 'sociological consciousness' both from but also *contra* to an empirical (or indeed scholarly) one is so important for Bourdieu. In this argument, we apprehend the significance of understanding how embodied dispositions - *habitus/ conatus* - in fact shape not only what *is* seen but *can* be 'seen' – in its relation with the Symbolic Other (economy). In other words, if the world 'calls' (interpolates), only part is 'heard' because it is internally and externally different (distinction) – that which we are conditioned to receive. As noted, in this case, it is not so much that the capitalist world interpolates (hails) individuals to a concrete relationship with it, but such an interpolation arises in a way that is both embraced and resisted : not so much by the heroic opposition of the Subject, but the very fragmented nature of the unconscious itself and its relationship to the Other (Symbolic Order). We saw this in the way ideology can hence be grasped as a positive salvation: the Subject holds on to a form, which delivers it from 'seeing' such fragmentation. Such a Subject sees what it needs to see to mediate themselves with the Other. In this

case, it is therefore also seeing *what it is*, what it has experienced – as a chiasmatic reversal of Subject and Object – and, so, in this way, as it seeing them.

Phenomenologically, Merleau-Ponty further writes hence of a ‘single flesh’ between the ‘observer’ and the ‘observed’; where, ‘the seer’ and the ‘visible’ reciprocate one another and ‘we no longer know which sees and which is seen’ (ibid: 139). It is a relationship formed by a single *ethos*, in Bourdieu’s terms, or in the nature of the subject-object relationship for Lacan.

This raises questions for the researcher/ analyst: Who is speaking? About what? How? What are the consequences for understanding and acting? Despite his insistence on the social, Bourdieu can be understood as following these essential elements of ‘phenomenological consciousness’ and the ‘universal subject’, but always redefining them as a ‘praxeological’ or ‘sociological’ consciousness/ subject. He does this, of course, by sociologicalising all these elements according to his own epistemology: the embodiment of the moral (*capital*) force of the world is then the final constituting nature of this sociological source (that is, *ethos* or - now sociological – ‘flesh’): its sets up the spacial/ temporal parameters of the relationship and prescribes/ proscribes what does and does not have value. The attempt of Lacan to somehow drain the nature of the relation of its social (or at least relegate it to the position of an amorphous backdrop without empirical exemplification) and universalise the psychological seems to point to at least an opaque social – and emptiness - that Bourdieu would wish to inhabit with ‘real’ substantive social features. It is necessary

for him to take the social primordial as cause and effect. The nature of the relationship is further articulated thus...

At one point, Bourdieu echoes Pascal that, 'By space the universe comprehends and swallows me up like an atom; by thought I comprehend the world' (2000c/ 97: 130). We might interpret this as: 'I understand the world and it understands me'; although the actual quote in French is: 'L'univers me comprend et m'engloutit comme un point; par la pensée, je le comprends'. The 'comprend' here has a double meaning in French: 'to understand' but also 'to include'. In other words, by thought I 'understand' the world and 'include' it in my Self as part of the same process. Both senses encapsulate the paradox of sociology for Bourdieu and the need for the researcher/ analyst to be included in their interpretations (2015: 242). This understanding/ inclusion and its consequences are both philosophically and sociologically contingent on the degree to which what I above called the empirical and/ or scientific *habitus* is in play at any particular time and place. It follows *mutatis mutandis* that within an operative framework of 'participant objectivation' (2000d) it is possible to see *the world* and *me* as expressions of *habitus, field, capital* – but each as one and the same thing. For Lacan, this would entail the deconstruction and reconstruction of an individual Ego by a Subject that could objectify both its own unconscious and the Symbolic Order in personal (socio-historic) terms in order to see the nature of the relationship between these.

But, as congruent with the above, there remains a further step to be taken about the nature of this consciousness itself – this *metanoia* – it must be apprehended *in time*, albeit ex-temporal.

Consciousness clearly ‘possesses’ a temporal nature, but yet remains essentially atemporal in relation to time as a chronological phenomenon. To this extent, we might say that the subject-object can indeed exist as a single ‘flesh’: they are intimately connected, and one only leaves off where another begins and *vice versa*. This provokes the image of the surfer: who is permanently ‘on the spot’ of their surf board but moving all the time on the sea (thus impermanent) across the (sea). Such gives us a flavour of the permanent nature of impermanence. In terms of the ‘observer’ and the ‘observed’, it is not so much that the visible blends into the observer to become one. Rather it is that both partake in an identical consciousness that emanates from One: ‘the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know which sees and which is seen’ (: 139). The flesh, then for Mearleau-Ponty, appears as an elemental relation – like water, air, fire and earth – rather than an actual thing: spiritual/ material, mind/ matter, idea of thing. But, it is still bounded by what is socially possible for Bourdieu, even in seeing what is not possibly seen and comprehended.

The fact that it is an embodied state (bodily knowledge) only underlines its physicality as well as its psychological power. This reaffirms Bourdieu’s argument that *habitus* is also *hexis*: it is not simply based on mental activity or personal consciousness. It is the moral conditioning force itself that drives such an embodiment and provides the conditions, which define the nature of the conditions for constituting structural

relationships. Such a process is then 'social' not simply in terms of what is and is not socially acknowledged but according to what values and whose *interests*, as defined by the residing *symbolic (state) power* (symbolic Order). It provides a kind of *amour propre* that is constituted in the primary cognitive act, and then shapes everything else that proceeds from it. In effect, it is the very quality that instantiates *symbolic capital*.

There is a difficulty, therefore, when – in the subject-object relationship - *the subject makes for themselves an object – in their own (fragmented) image* – and thus with all the implied assumptions of a *doxic* view: this is as true for the 'scientific' as much as the 'empirical' subject. We see such an indulgence in the *Skholè* of the researcher/ specialist/ therapist/ analyst. It is a relationship, which is inevitable to a certain extent. However, if making sense is undertaken in terms of Bourdieusian concepts – praxeologically validated – *habitus, field* and *capital*, etc. – these can mediate (a different kind of mordant/ *ethos*) between subject and object in a way that constitutes a *different interest* - libido sciendi: an *interest* hence with a different ethical, value-based generative principle. Basically, such an approach offers, and indeed allows for, a different – emancipatory – view of the world (freedom!!?). Consequently, instead of a subject objectifying an object *as an object*, the subject sees itself literally in it: but not as a subjective mirror of individual empirical identity but at an epistemological moment grounded in the same generative principles underlying the relations within their scientific practice.

A literary example provides a further exemplification of the co-terminus nature of the subject-object relationship. It comes from an experiential episode in the

autobiography of the American playwright Arthur Miller. At the end of *Time Bends* (1995/ 87) he writes about looking out at the field behind his house from the writing desk on which he had created so much work. He comments that he looked at the trees, the ones he had seen through so many seasons. And, at one point, the sort of *chiasmic* reversal referred to above takes place as he realises *that it is the trees that are looking at him* – not *he them*. In other words, the subject and object become both reversed and as one. Phenomenologically, when we look at a tree, attention/ consciousness goes out from our eyes, touches the object and comes back to us. This is perception – of object, of Object. But, such also carries a certain social energy that at that instance is both external and internal at one and the same time. At this point – prior to comprehension and experience itself – internal and external are indeed one – outside of time. We might even understand it in Kantian terms: Just as the ‘pure gaze’ arises from the power to form concepts without something to form concepts about (thus open to emotional dynamics), what is occurring in this social phenomenology is a gaze that is at one and the same time co-terminously subject and object. What is important here is not their respective identities – even when shared – but the (social) force that binds their entanglement – the *ethos* of the formed relation – whether empirical or scientific. To observe the observer, to watch the watcher at the point of watching/ observing is not to simply create another substantialised object as, at that point, the observer/ watcher disappears and we are indeed left with nothing other to experience than the power of observing (and what is the nature to observe this relational consciousness) – an experience that can be connected to what we understand epistemologically and thus ontologically. This process is akin to a *samyag darshan*. Little surprise therefore that Bourdieu refers to it as a ‘spiritual exercise’

(1999/ 93: 612) and a sort of 'intellectual love' (a term borrowed from Spinoza) - a 'non-violent' method since it offers no imposition of a pre-conceived meaning/ value/ no interpretation – no *symbolic violence* – other than what is brought to that relationship as purged of social *interest* so to manifest a social praxeology. There is here no authority, no *symbolic violence* - nor the faculty to 'think things independently': only to grasp the relational totality – its structural relationships and their generating principles - a kind of 'aspect seeing' to reference Wittgenstein (see references).

It can be grasped as a kind of love because it is based on mutual recognition and regard; a high form (the highest!) of attention. It might be seen as the product of Being reflecting on Being itself, but still in a state of collective social identity. At this point, Bourdieu's epistemology does indeed become an ontology. We might call this Objective Subjectivity or Subjective Objectivity, which amount to one and the same. We might also articulate this level of understanding and knowledge as always *a posteriori*. But, mostly, in reality it is realised at its single point of instantiation. Here, the past and the future literally *being* in the present, which is, really, the only place they can exist. This is a consciousness or reflexive refraction through Bourdieusian theory of practice and concepts such as *habitus*, *field*, and *capital*. The empirical *habitus* is scientific and the scientific *habitus* is empirical. To re-emphasise, the transcendental sense beyond the power to form concepts then becomes less the bourgeois sense of nothingness - the pure objective or aesthetic gaze - but *the logical essence (sociological) of practice itself*, which is nothing other than the past (a sociological history) instantiating itself in the present (a historical sociology) – a kind of

sociological *karma*. This power *to be* present – this process - is ‘grasped’ at the point of and *in* becoming rather than in the thing itself formed.

This is the collective-singular condition that lies at the heart of Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology: a singular subjectivity that does not make of itself an object; a subject that instead sees itself in the object, and the object as an expression of the subject - but this time not empirical and un-reflexive but as a ‘scientific’ presence within a self-acknowledged collectivity. In this way, Bourdieu calls on all of us to see ourselves in society but also society in ourselves ; not as two separated events but as co-terminus – thus, the individual and the community: because God and Man, as he reminds us at the end of *Pascalian Meditations*, ‘society is God’ (2000c: 245), meaning that such is not simply an academic or intellectual activity, but an expression of truth - a consciousness/attention that is indeed a higher form of love – identification of sameness and difference as one and the same thing. We then see the social forces of what is potential, impossible and necessary – even what is good and evil in the world - since it allows a view which is able to observe the very point where the empirical self (Ego – Subject even!) enters between subject and object to allow *misrecognition* in terms of judgement and the expression of self/ group *interests*, turning away from and at the expense of a potential liberatorial reflexive scientific view. To grasp this ethical dimension of Bourdieu, if only for an instant, is certainly beyond the words we use to express it but can still guide what we do as a result.

We might conclude that subject/ object reflexivity, therefore, is less concerned with ‘how *to do* it’ than ‘how *to be* it’. Moreover, it entails a socio-historical self-analysis

that seems indeed close to Lacan's psychoanalysis, but one which focuses on the social whole rather than the individual Subject psyche. The researcher is always implicated in their theorising: the gaze is necessarily 'personal' but with the potential for a collective praxeological science. It might be seen as a theory that is a gaze and a gaze that is expressed in theoretical terms, but one that also furnishes us with a theory that can generate the gaze in practice – if understood in terms beyond the concepts to their generation – in and through practice. The gaze is then subject to the gaze which is subject to the gaze which is subject to the gaze as an kind of internal recurrence, but is not eternally recurrent in a nihilistic post-modernist way as it is bounded by reflexive concepts of practice in practice. Basically, we always return to the same principles of practice. The ultimate problem is Time here.

Such a journey of personal (and collective) sociological analysis clearly leads to a social deconstruction no less profound than a psychological one since it involves the 'loss of the social self (Subject)'. There is consequent bereavement over this loss, what I earlier described in terms of Lacan's phrase that post-analysis, the individual 'eats their dasein' (Lacan, 1991/ 78: 205). They/ we are hence left without their/ our (social) Being, or at least with a new (liberated) Being to live by. We might well dwell on the nature of this 'new' identity and what is its potential.

Brief Concluding Comments

In this piece, I have attempted to respond to the four questions posed to me with respect to Bourdieu's work and its possible relevance to Lacan's work. Certain questions have required more elaboration than others. I have made some attempt to compare and contrast Bourdieu and Lacan, and to set their work along side each other' albeit with an emphasis on the former. I have mentioned some places where Bourdieu does refer to Lacan, although these are comparatively infrequent.

There are, of course, many sociologies and many psychologies. Although distinct, my overall impression in undertaking this work is that Bourdieu is quite close to Lacan in some respects and Lacan is quite close to Bourdieu in some respects; although I would not want to relativise them and argue they are simply two side of the same social/ clinical coin. As noted, there are terms that Bourdieu 'borrows' from psychology, and anyone claiming to 'return to (wo)men the meaning of their actions' certainly needs to consider the psychological parameters of social action. Certain of Lacan's terminology can also be found to have direct connections to Bourdieu and *vice versa* – habitus/ Subject, symbolic order, recognition. Others have connections by association – imaginary/ phantasy, drive. Still others, less so – Mirror, Sinhome, etc.

Both Lacan and Bourdieu took existing paradigms and reconfigured them. For Lacan, he situated himself in the Freudian tradition but recast it in the light of contemporary linguistic philosophy. Bourdieu took anthropology and philosophised it.

Perhaps their key differences lay in method and epistemology. Both are confronted with the 'black box' paradox: they want to know what is going on inside it, but they can only surmise this from what appears on the outside. Both clearly dealt with empirical data: individual psychologies for Lacan; and social phenomena and Subjective orientations for Bourdieu. Nevertheless, to me at least, there seem aspects of Lacan – particularly his terminology - that are more akin to conjecture rather than an explicit coherent and cohesive theory grounded in empirically researched data and its analysis. Bourdieu's concepts do not make sense without the theory of practice that emerged from his practical field experiences: something that affected him personally and deeply – it is this he brought to his intellectual understanding. The results are set out in a number of publications which included narrative, ethnographic and statistical analyses. His consequent theory – as his concepts – are then 'logically necessitated' for him in the light of a high level attentiveness as described previously: an approach, which he connected and synthesised with a range of modern and contemporary philosophies. Much of his resulting work is predicated on ruptures with, refusals of, and breaks from, the pre-given. *Epistemological vigilance* is always to the fore for Bourdieu: as I have argued, his epistemology is an ontology and method; his varied conceptual terms are actually all facets of the same *metanoia* (see Grenfell, 2023). In this way, Bourdieu is comparatively stable and expansionist around a grounded theory of practice, which is articulated through a set of emergent concepts. In comparison, Lacan's theories seem more developmental and speculative: his work went through three clear 'phases' and many avenues of thinking are revised or abandoned altogether when hypotheses seem to lead up dead ends.

I would also note that both Lacan and Bourdieu came from a Republican tradition that stems from the Enlightenment. As such, both were concerned with a humanist project to improve the lot of (wo)men. This is not true of all other national philosophies, and there are many sociological and psychological approaches, which do not address how a better world might emerge out of a critique of the existing one. This project and its ambition will only ever be advanced with continued attention to psychological and sociological work that transforms human thought and action in a way, which shapes social and political life for the better in the modern world.

Postscript

Bourdieu and Psychology

Perhaps the most psychological Bourdieu gets is in a simple Foreword to a book entitled *L'autobiographie d'un paranoïaque* by Jacques Maître (see Bourdieu 1994b) where Bourdieu conducts a dialogue with the author. The subject is Abbé Berry (1878-1947) who was expelled from a seminary in Dijon in 1901 for holding a 'special kind of friendship' with an individual. The Bishop of the time, Le Nordez, subsequently resigned in 1904 for being too republican, which led to the break off of relations between France and papal authorities. The biography of Berry was later published under a pseudonym in 1939. Maître, himself a sociologist, historian and psychologist of the Church, presents the book along with an analysis of 'priestly vocation' and the training that it involved in France at the turn of the century.

Bourdieu begins by noting the commitment the author has made to analyzing the relations between psychoanalysis and sociology, especially as linked to social institutions – the Church as exemplar. He is particularly interested in the way social agents make use of these social institutions to integrate their impulses and how institutions put individuals' impulses to their own service: each according to their own history. Social institutions take advantage of individuals: the Church offers mystery and charisma – later comes bureaucracy. To offer something other than what is eventually received is something shared both by the Church and Schools. They achieve this through an 'elastic' and slightly confused character which operates on individual

Subjects/ social agents. There is strength in this lack of monopoly and the way positions within the institution are determined by social (capital) resources: even to the fact that contradictions and conflicts underpin institutions power. For Bourdieu, a social institution is a Field. Individual psychologies are therefore susceptible of being taken in by social institutions, which work on their individual impulses to 'capture' them. For example, Bourdieu sees how the choice of particular academic subjects can be shaped by a psychological nature. For example, he cites the case of mathematics and suggests that choice of such studies is a way of escaping from the crises of existence: social order, sexuality, etc. The hard sciences, he goes on to suggest, also bind those who practice them in a collectivity that is sure of itself, apart from existential doubt. In other words, the need to be received into a social group is insatiable. Bourdieu adds:

Another thing that I discovered by self-analysis, armed with the history of my disciple, at the time of the first World War, was that the constitution of social science set itself against religion, and that, in the unconscious of our discipline , there is a negation, an original refusal. I had to discover hence in my own mind the mutilations that I had inherited from a secular tradition, reinforced by the presuppositions of my science.

Bourdieu asks whether psychoanalysis within the collective conscience these days occupies an analogue function to religion in the past. This logic relates to the way mysticism operates: it is a outlet for something that must exist, like a symptom. In other words, the expression establishes the reality of the source. Issues of legitimacy are involved here and the way desire can 'choose' to what it will attach itself. He concludes that institutions are driven by their desires but they also drive desires. This kind of argument again sets up the opposition – if that is what it is – between sociology

and psychology. For Bourdieu, psychoanalysis often stops at the point where what drives desires becomes social. What he is looking for, as an alternative, is a theory of the socialization of the libido. Some might argue that Lacan does indeed provide this to the extent to which the Social Order is the source of the Subject and indeed desires.

Bourdieu goes on to recount the personal cost it takes to let go of what one has been taught to regard as socially and psychologically stable, to see a different provenance in what one thinks and how one acts. In this way, some of his work – particularly in *La Misère du Monde* - was a 'spiritual exercise' for him, perhaps an unusual experience in a scientific world that expects neutrality, rigor and the 'objective mentality'. For Bourdieu, the key object in question is indeed the way that family interests and the desires of individuals can be satisfied by diverting what is possible and embedding it in institutions, notably by inculcating institutional rites and rules, making use of impulses and passions which can then be channelled for their own use.

In this way, there is a two-way process: the work of desires on institutions and of institution on desires.

Such a position would seem congruent with Lacan, with more detailed account of what happens in the works between the two: social institutions – School, Church, Family – and the social agents caught by them. Both imply a social-historical analysis as well as an exact understanding of how the social impacts on the psychological at a deep level.

Coda

...Non entia enim licet quodammodo levibusque hominibus facilius atque incuriosius verbis reddere quam entia, veruntamen pio diligentique rerum scriptori plane aliter res se habet: nihil tantum repugnant ne verbis illustretur, at nihil adeo necesse est ante hominum oculos proponere ut certas quasdam res, quas esse neque demonstrari neque probari potest, quae contra eo ipso, quod pii diligentesque viri illas quasi ut entia tractant, entia nascendique facultati paululum appropinquant.

Albertos Secundus
tract. de cristall spirit.
Ed. Clangor et Collof. Lib. I. cap. 28.

References

Where necessary, I give the date of the English publication/ translation first and the date of the original French second. This to preserve what Bourdieu termed the 'socio-genesis' of his work, an element in understanding its socio-historical significance.

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Michael Grenfell has held Chair positions in Ireland, Scotland and England, including 1904 Chair of Education in Trinity College Dublin and Research Director at the University of Southampton, which is where he is now Emeritus. He is also Adjunct Professor at the University of Canberra, Australia. He is a French scholar and has an extensive background of research in language, linguistics and cultural studies. He is an international authority on the work of the French social philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, with whom he worked on various projects including three periods as visiting scholar at the *École des Hautes Études*, Paris. He has published some 25 books and numerous research articles on language, education, art, literature and music: including; *Bourdieu: Agent Provocateur* (Continuum, 2004), *Arts Rules* (Berg, 2007), *Language and Linguistics* (2007), *Pierre Bourdieu and Education* (Bloomsbury, 2014), *Learning Strategies* (Routledge, 2017), *Parallel Lives: the Biographies of Ralph McTell* (Pomera Press, 2016), *Language-based Ethnographies and Reflexivity* (Routledge, 2019), *Bourdieu's Metanoia* (Routledge, 2023), *Pierre Bourdieu – In Conversation with Michael Grenfell* (CCCR Canberra, 2019), and *William Blake and John Cowper Powys* (the Powys Review, 2023). He was a founder member of *The Blake Society of St James* and is an active musician, frequently performing in Europe and South America.

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