

all the more necessary. Bourdieu's vigorous defence of reason, scholarship and the logic of theory is attractive in a society rapidly losing its way, and where an increasingly divided and paralysed ANC becomes susceptible to defensiveness and the seductions of control and repression. Indeed, it may evoke a longing to abandon the compromised truth that seems so much part of the symbolic negotiation with the world of politics, for an uncompromised and denunciatory truth freed from politics. The transformation of our society requires the defence of reason and poses the obligation to speak truth to power, nothing less.

But what our history of practice suggests is that such truth does not emerge only from the practice of theory in scholarly fields, but also from the actions and thoughts of the people, that is, from the logic of practice, from the truth of ordinary lives. Moreover, and necessarily, it has to find an existence in the form of a symbolic power that can enter into symbolic contestation in the political field. Once again, we return to the necessity for negotiation. Only from a dialogue between these two truths may emerge a combined truth that has the symbolic force to truly remake authority.

NOTES

- 1 Thus, one is surprised by the way he treats 'love' and gay-lesbian movements in *Masculine Domination*.
- 2 Obviously, Mills and Bourdieu are also affected by the styles of thinking and writing that prevail in their own national intellectual fields, manifested in the opposed styles of Continental and Anglo-American philosophy.
- 3 Those who did had, perforce, to engage the political, developing what Burawoy in his study of Eddie Webster's sociological life calls a 'political imagination', in contrast to Mills's idea of a 'sociological imagination' (Burawoy, 2010).
- 4 Omar was a leading figure in the Unity Movement, a Trotskyist grouping in the Cape, shifted allegiance to the Congress movement in the early 1980s, and served as justice minister and transport minister in post-apartheid governments.

CONVERSATION 8

MANUFACTURING DISSENT

MICHAEL BURAWOY

Burawoy Meets Bourdieu¹

Like the gift, labour can be understood in its objectively twofold truth only if one performs the second reversal needed in order to break with the scholastic error of failing to include in the theory the 'subjective' truth with which it was necessary to break, in a first para-doxal reversal, in order to construct the object of analysis. The objectification that was necessary to constitute wage labour in its objective truth has masked the fact which, as Marx himself indicates, only becomes the objective truth in certain exceptional labour situations: the investment in labour, and therefore miscognition of the objective truth of labour as exploitation, which leads people to find an extrinsic profit in labour, irreducible to simple monetary income, is part of the real conditions of the performance of labour, and of exploitation.

Bourdieu (2000 [1997]: 202)

The defining essence of the capitalist labor process is the simultaneous obscuring and securing of surplus value. How does the capitalist assure himself of surplus value when its production is invisible?

Burawoy (1979: 30)

Tucked away toward the end of Bourdieu's masterpiece, *Pascalian Meditations*, are four startling pages under the heading 'The twofold truth of labour' (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 202–5). They are startling, firstly, because they deal with the labour process, a topic Bourdieu rarely broached, and, secondly, because his interpretive framework follows Marxist orthodoxy, a framework he generally dismissed as anachronistic and misguided.

His argument is presented in typically intricate form in the quotation above. Let me translate. In constituting the object of knowledge – i.e. the notion of wage labour – Marx breaks with the subjective (lived) experience of workers that they are paid for a full day's work, for eight hours in an eight-hour day. In reality, workers are exploited and only receive wages that are equivalent to a portion of the working day, say five hours, leaving three hours as surplus labour, which is the basis of profit. So far, this is straightforward Marx. But, says Bourdieu, it is not enough to make this first break – first reversal – with lived experience to produce the objective truth of exploitation, it is further necessary for theory to make a second break, a second reversal, this time *against* the 'objective truth' in order to reincorporate the 'subjective truth' – the lived experience of workers. It is one thing to discover the objective truth of labour, i.e. exploitation; it is another to show how exploitation is sustained by workers themselves.

More concretely, how is it that workers work sufficiently hard so as to produce surplus value and thus make exploitation possible, even while it is invisible? The answer, Bourdieu claims, lies in the workers' 'investment in labour', through which they find an 'extrinsic profit in labour, irreducible to simple monetary income', with the result that exploitation is assured even as it is not experienced as such. In other words, in the organisation of work there is 'a miscognition of the objective truth of labour as exploitation', which induces the hard work that is the foundation of exploitation. Further – and here too Bourdieu follows Marxist orthodoxy – the less autonomy a worker has, the less room for meaningful investment in labour and the more likely workers will see themselves as exploited, i.e. the more likely there is a convergence of objective and subjective truths.

I find these pages startling not only for their focus on labour and their unqualified embrace of the Marxist theory of exploitation, but for their convergence with the argument I made 20 years earlier in *Manufacturing Consent* – an ethnography of an industrial plant in south Chicago where I worked as a machine operator for ten months between 1974 and 1975. In *Manufacturing Consent* I formulated the twofold truth of labour as follows: if surplus labour is *obscured* (the objective truth of capitalist work, first break), then the question becomes how it is *secured* (the

subjective truth of capitalist work, second break). Marx assumed it was secured through coercion, the fear of loss of the job, but under advanced capitalism, I argued, there were employment guarantees and legal constraints on managerial despotism that made the arbitrary application of coercion impossible. This gave workers a certain autonomy on the shop floor that allowed them to 'invest in labour' through constituting work as a 'game'. In my case it was a piece-rate game that we called 'making out'. The game compensates workers for their intrinsically boring work, by giving them 'extrinsic profits' – emotional satisfaction and symbolic rewards. Taking Gramsci's ideas to the workplace, I argue that consent rather than fear ruled the shop floor. We were subject to what I call a hegemonic rather than a despotic regime of production.

I used the game metaphor as Bourdieu sometimes used it – as a way of understanding the reproduction of social structure and its patterns of domination. Games obscure the conditions of their own playing through the very process of securing participation. Just as one cannot play chess and at the same time question its rules, so one cannot play the game of 'making out' on the shop floor and at the same time question its rules – rules that are socially sanctioned by workers and shop floor management alike. This is the twofold truth of the game – the truth of the outsider studying the game and the truth of the insider playing the game – with each truth hidden from the other and thereby reproducing the other. As I worked on the shop floor I operated with the truth of the machine operator; as a sociologist I interrogated those experiences for the objective truth underlying the game of making out. My sociology, however, did not affect the way I worked on the shop floor.

How had Bourdieu arrived at a seemingly identical formulation to my own? How could I be using the language of hegemony and consent to describe what, indeed, looked more like symbolic domination and misrecognition? Thus began five years of field work into the complex and fascinating texts of Bourdieu involving a reassessment of my own understanding of the nature of advanced capitalism and its durability, as well as of the nature of state socialism and its fragility. On the one hand, it compelled a critique of Gramsci for overlooking the *mystification* that characterises advanced capitalism. On the other hand, it led to a critique of Bourdieu for projecting *misrecognition* as a universal – the result of the incorporated and embodied habitus – rather than seeing it as mystification, i.e. something socially produced and historically contingent.

These investigations, therefore, examine the question: how durable is domination? – which divides into three related questions. If the habitus

of subjugation is universal and deep, how can domination be challenged? If, on the other hand, mystification is historical and contingent, when does domination become transparent? And under what conditions, if any, does the objective truth of the sociologist converge with the subjective truth of the worker? Here I address these questions through an examination of the stability of workplace regimes in advanced capitalism and state socialism.

HOMO LUDENS VS. HOMO HABITUS

Bourdieu is always seeking to transcend antinomies, subject and object, micro and macro, voluntarism and determinism. All too often, however, he does not so much transcend the antinomy as combine the two opposed perspectives. Such is the case, I believe, for his conception of structure and agency, where he fuses *homo ludens* and *homo habitus*.

Sometimes, Bourdieu starts with *homo habitus* – with habitus, as we have seen, being the notion that the human psyche is composed of ‘durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations’, producing ‘practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle’ (Bourdieu, 1977 [1972]: 78). Here the emphasis is on doxic submission, but one that allows for improvisation within limits. We might call this a deep notion of social reproduction.

On other occasions, Bourdieu starts with *homo ludens* – the individual whose character is given by the games he/she plays, giving rise to a notion of social structure as rules that guide individual strategies. Human beings are players motivated by the stakes and constrained by the rules that define the game. This is a contingent notion of social reproduction that depends on the continuity of a particular game embedded in a particular institution. The only assumption it makes about human beings is that they are game players seeking control of their environment.

Bourdieu has both a contingent notion and a deep notion of social action, alternating between the two and often fusing them – *homo ludens* and *homo habitus*. Game playing accompanies deeply inculcated, almost irremovable dispositions, which vary from individual to individual, depending on their biographies. Here, however, I want to oppose rather than merge these two notions of human action: on the one hand, *homo habitus*, for whom social structure is internalised, and, on the other hand, *homo ludens*, for whom social structure is a set of external constraints to be negotiated. Is submission deeply engraved in the psyche or the product

of institutionally ordered practices? Bourdieu wants it both ways, but the result is a notion of social structure that can never change and a pseudo-science that is unfalsifiable.

In adopting *homo ludens* rather than *homo habitus*, I show how social structures are more malleable and unstable than Bourdieu admits, although some more so than others. Thus, I argue that capitalist hegemony requires and obtains mystification as its precondition, which makes it relatively stable, whereas state socialism, unable to produce such a mystification, could not sustain hegemony and instead alternated historically between coercion and legitimation – an unstable arrangement that, in the final analysis, proved to be its undoing. The comparative analysis of advanced capitalism and state socialism shows the limits of both Bourdieu and Gramsci – the first too pessimistic about the possibilities of social change, the second too optimistic about such change.

MYSTIFICATION VS. MISRECOGNITION

My disagreement with Bourdieu turns on the crucial distinction between *mystification* and *misrecognition*. When Karl Marx writes about the mechanism through which exploitation is hidden in the form of wage labour or when he writes about commodity fetishism and the way the market obscures the human labour that goes into the commodity, he insists that this happens automatically and independently of the particular characteristics of any individual who experiences it – male or female, black or white. Thus, Marx and Engels famously write in *The German Ideology* (1978 [1845–46]: 154): ‘If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.’ There is no psychology here – there is only the ‘historical life-process’. Individuals are both the carriers and the effects of social relations, so if they experience things upside down, then this is the consequence of the social relations into which they enter. *Mystification* is the term we use to describe the social process that produces the gap between experience and reality for all who enter a specific set of social relations.

We can find examples of mystification in Bourdieu, most notably his repeated analysis of the gift economy in which the gift is experienced by givers and receivers as an act of generosity, while to the outside ‘scientist’ it is viewed as an act of self-interested economic behaviour – an act that will reap its rewards – or as the collective creation of social bonds

of interdependence. Bourdieu says that the scientists who impose their views on the agents misunderstand the nature of the gift exchange, which depends on the coexistence and separation of the subjective truth (an act of generosity) and the objective truth (building symbolic domination or social solidarity). But how are the two truths sustained? In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu (1977 [1972]: 1–9) focuses on the separation in time of successive gift giving, so that the gift appears to be an isolated act of generosity. Thus, any attempt at immediate reciprocity is regarded as a crude violation of the basic norms. So here the structuring of exchange as a process evolving over time explains the misrecognition or, more precisely, the mystification.

When he turns to the gift exchange in *Pascalian Meditations*, however, the emphasis is more on the inculcation of perceptions and appreciations (*habitus*) that is shared by gift giver and receiver. This *habitus* of generosity is at the foundation of the gift economy, a *habitus* that is being replaced by the calculative disposition, making gift exchange rarer and more difficult to sustain. Insofar as the gift economy depends on the prior inculcation of a certain *habitus*, so we are shifting from mystification that is the product of social processes to misrecognition that is the result of an individual's internalised *habitus* (which in turn mediates and reflects social processes).

Reading *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu's climactic theoretical work, I was struck by how much it sounded like Talcott Parsons's sealing of the social order. Individuals internalise the norms of the social order: 'incorporated cognitive structures attuned to the objective structures' secure 'doxic submission to the established order' (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 178); or, in other words, there is a mutual adjustment of position and disposition, or expectations and possibilities, of *habitus* and *habitat*. 'The schemes applied to the world are the product of the world to which they are applied' (2000 [1997]: 147), which guarantees the unknowing, unconscious adaptation to the world:

The agent engaged in practice knows the world but with a knowledge which, as Merleau-Ponty showed, is not set up in the relation of externality of a knowing consciousness. He knows it, in a sense, too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up with it; he inhabits it like a garment [*un habit*] or a familiar habitat. He feels at home in the world because the world is also in him, in the form of *habitus*, a virtue made of necessity which implies a form of love of necessity, *amor fati* (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 141–42).

Just as Parsons acknowledges the existence of 'deviance' when role expectations are not complementary, so Bourdieu acknowledges that there can be mismatches between *habitus* and *field* – misfirings – that may or may not lead to new adaptations. But just as deviance is a residual category for Parsons, mismatches and misfirings are residual categories for Bourdieu. In both cases, the weight of the argument is to show the impossibility of contesting a social order, which means in Bourdieu's case bending the stick against Marxism, feminism, populism and any other 'ism' that celebrates transformation from below. It is not that some social orders lead to mystification and others to transparency, but that all social orders reproduce themselves through the inculcation of *habitus* and necessary misrecognition. We are all fish in water, unable to comprehend the environment in which we swim – except, of course, Bourdieu and his fellow sociologists.

The question we have to ask is whether social orders are held together by mystification, with the emphasis on *social relations independent of the particular individual*, or by misrecognition constituted through a *deeply implanted habitus at least partially independent of the particular social relations into which an individual is inserted*. How can one discriminate between these alternative explanations for social order: a contingent domination dependent on social relations producing an *ideology as mystification* versus an internalised deep *symbolic domination that works through misrecognition*? To adjudicate between these rival notions requires a comparative study that compares submission in different societies. In what follows, I undertake such a comparative analysis by reconstructing my studies of the subjectivities that arise from work organisation and its regulation in advanced capitalist and state socialist workplaces. I show that mystification of domination is present in advanced capitalism, but not in state socialism, explaining the durability of the one and the instability of the other. Symbolic domination through misrecognition, however, being universal, cannot discriminate between societies. Bourdieu falsely generalises from his conception of contemporary France and pre-capitalist Kabyle society to all social orders. He cannot – and, indeed, makes no attempt to – explain how it is that state socialism collapses while advanced capitalism endures. That is what I attempt to do in the following pages through a reconstruction of arguments I have been making over the last 30 years.

THE GRAMSCIAN MOMENT: MANUFACTURING CONSENT

I begin again with Antonio Gramsci, whose originality lay in a periodisation of capitalism not on the basis of the economy, but on the basis of

its superstructures, and in particular on the rise of the state-civil society nexus that organised consent and absorbed challenges to capitalism. This was the story of the rise of capitalist hegemony in Europe. In the United States, by contrast, without parasitic feudal residues, Gramsci writes that 'hegemony was born in the factory' and not in civil society – a streamlining of domination that allows the forces of production to expand more rapidly than elsewhere – what he calls Fordism.

Manufacturing Consent (Burawoy, 1979) endeavoured to elaborate on what Gramsci might have meant when he spoke of hegemony being born in the factory. The study was based on participant observation in a south Chicago factory where I was a machine operator for ten months, from July 1974 to May 1975. I was a wage labourer like everyone else, although it was apparent that I was from a different background, not least because of my limited skills and my strange English accent. I made no secret of my reason for being there, i.e. to gather material for my dissertation.

Influenced by the French structuralist Marxism of the 1970s and its appropriations of Gramsci, I argued that the theories of the state developed by Althusser, Poulantzas and Gramsci could be applied to the internal workings of the factory. In my Chicago plant, an *internal state*² constituted workers as industrial citizens, individuals with rights and obligations, recognised in grievance machinery and in the details of the labour contract. Here I could see in miniature Poulantzas's 'national popular state'. At the same time, the internal state orchestrated what Gramsci called the concrete coordination of the interests of capital and labour through collective bargaining, which provided the material basis of hegemony. Capital granted labour concessions that were necessary for the latter's consent – concessions, as Gramsci would say, that do not touch the essential. Finally, following Gramsci, but also Poulantzas's analysis of the dominant classes and their relation to the state, I saw factory management as a power bloc, made up of different divisions (fractions) under the hegemony of its manufacturing division.

As well as an internal state, there was also an *internal labour market* that reinforced the individualising effects of the internal state. It gave workers the opportunity to bid on other jobs within the factory, which were then allocated on the basis of seniority and experience. This internal labour market gave individual workers power and leverage against management. If workers did not like their job or their supervisor, they could bid on and then move to an alternative job. Workers who somehow made themselves indispensable to their foremen could wield considerable power. Like the internal state, the internal labour market constituted

workers as individuals and, through rewards based on seniority, tied their interest to capital. If it gave workers some power on the shop floor, it also cultivated their loyalty, since moving to another firm would put them at the bottom of the seniority ladder. Workers had another interest, therefore, in the success – profitability – of their enterprise, even at their own expense, as happened when in the 1980s workers entered into concession bargaining just to keep their jobs.

The internal state and internal labour market were the conditions for a third source of consent, the constitution of *work as a game* – in my case, the game of making out, whose rules were understood and accepted by operators, auxiliary workers and shop-floor supervisors alike. It was a piecework game and the goal was to 'make out', i.e. make an acceptable percentage output, one that was not higher than 140% and not lower than 125%. The details need not detain us here; suffice to say that constituting work as a game is common in many workplaces because it counters ennui and arduousness, and it makes time pass quickly, enabling workers to endure otherwise meaningless work. There were good psychological reasons to participate in such a game, but, just as important, the social order pressured everyone into playing the same game with more or less the same rules. We continually evaluated each other as to how well we were playing the game. It was also difficult to opt out without being ostracised.

Playing the game had two important consequences. First, the game certainly limited output through goldbricking (going slow on difficult piece rates in the hope that they would be loosened) and quota restriction (limiting output to 140% so as to avoid rate increases), but it also got operators to work much harder, and often with ingenious improvisation. It was a game that favoured the application of effort and thus increased profits for management, and with only small monetary concessions. Second, it not only contributed to profit, but also to hegemony. The very act of playing the game simultaneously produced consent to its rules. As we've seen, you can't be serious about playing a game – and this was a very serious game for those who played it – if at the same time you question its rules and goals.³

If the organisation of work as a game was the third prong of hegemony, it was effective in generating consent only because it was protected from the *arbitrary* application of coercion (punitive sanctions that ranged from disciplinary procedures to firing) – a protection that was made possible by the constraints imposed on management by the internal labour market and internal state. This three-pronged hegemony was a distinctive feature

of advanced capitalism in which management could no longer hire and fire at will. No longer able to rely on the arbitrary rule of the despotic regime of production of early capitalism, management had to *persuade* workers to deliver surplus; i.e. management had to manufacture consent. Thus, the internal state and the internal labour market were the apparatuses of hegemony, constituting workers as individuals and coordinating their interests with those of management, applying coercion only under well-defined and restricted conditions. Management could not arbitrarily close down the game or violate its rules – at least, if it wanted to uphold its hegemony.

A game has to have sufficient uncertainty to draw in players, but it also has to provide players with sufficient control over outcomes. A despotic regime, in which management applies sanctions in an arbitrary fashion, creates too much uncertainty for a game to produce consent. In short, the hegemonic regime creates a relatively autonomous arena of work with an appropriate balance of certainty and uncertainty, so that a game can be constituted and consent produced. In a hegemonic regime, the application of force (ultimately being fired), whether it occurs as a result of a worker's violation of the rules or as a result of the demise of the enterprise, must itself be the object of consent. Thus, we have Gramsci's 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (1971: 263).

In short, the *economic* process of producing things constituted as a game is simultaneously a *political* process of reproducing social relations and an *ideological* process of producing consent to these relations, made possible by the relatively autonomous internal state and internal labour market. I had advanced Gramsci's analysis by taking his analysis of the state and civil society into the factory, applying it to the micro-physics of power and, further, adding a new dimension to organising consent – the idea of social structure as a game.⁴

THE BOURDIEUSIAN MOMENT: THE TWOFOLD TRUTH OF LABOUR

The preceding account of manufacturing consent derives from Gramsci, but it misses the fundamental dilemma capitalists face: to secure surplus (unpaid) labour at the same time as its existence is obscured. The organisation of consent is concerned only with the securing of surplus, but it coexists with the mystification of exploitation. This is none other than Bourdieu's twofold truth of labour: (1) the objective existence of exploitation, and (2) the subjective conditions of its simultaneous concealment and realisation. It took my engagement with Bourdieu to realise

that mystification is simply not part of Gramsci's theoretical toolkit. His idea of hegemony is not about mystification or misrecognition, but largely about the rational and conscious basis of consent. At most, it is an account of the naturalisation of domination, not the concealment of exploitation.

A Bourdieusian moment, therefore, is powerfully at work in my analysis of games. The peculiarities of the game of making out – and, indeed, all workplace games – lie in the way playing the game enlists workers not only in defending its rules and thereby producing surplus, but also in mystifying the conditions of its existence, i.e. the relations of production between capital and labour. This is how Bourdieu presents the same point:

Social games are in any case very difficult to describe in their twofold truth. Those who are caught up in them have little interest in seeing the game objectified, and those who are not are often ill-placed to experience and feel everything that can only be learned and understood when one takes part in the game – so that their descriptions, which fail to evoke the enchanted experience of the believer, are likely to strike the participants as both trivial and sacrilegious. The 'half-learned', eager to demystify and denounce, do not realize that those they seek to disabuse, or unmask, both know and resist the truth they claim to reveal. They cannot understand, or take into account, the games of self-deception which make it possible to perpetuate an illusion for oneself and to safeguard a bearable form of 'subjective truth' in the face of calls to reality and to realism, and often with the complicity of the institution (the latter – the university, for example, for all its love of classifications and hierarchies – always offers compensatory satisfactions and consolation prizes that tend to blur the perception and evaluation of self and others) (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 189–90).

In 'making out', workers secure 'compensatory satisfactions and consolation prizes', winning freedoms at the margin that become the centre of their lives on the shop floor. To the outsider, 'making out' appears as absurd; to the insider, it is what gives meaning to life. Through their small gains and the relative satisfactions these gains bring – 'I'm so excited; today I made 129% on that lousy drilling job' – alienating work not only becomes enchanting, but workers think they are outwitting management even as they are unwittingly contributing to their own exploitation. Management succeeds in securing surplus labour through the rebellion of workers against management. Bourdieu follows suit: 'Workers may contribute to their own exploitation through the very effort they make to appropriate

their work, which binds them to it through the freedoms – often minute and almost always ‘functional’ – that are left to them’ (2000 [1997]: 203).

If both I and Bourdieu emphasise the concealing of the underlying social relations – and here we are continuous with the Marxist tradition from Marx through Lukács and the Frankfurt School, although, unlike them, Bourdieu considers the mystification to involve an almost unalterable misrecognition – how is it that it plays no role in Gramsci, who instead develops a theory of conscious consent to domination? The most general answer must be that he participated in revolutionary struggles at a time when socialist transformation was on the political agenda, when capitalism did appear to be in some deep organic crisis – although, in the end, it gave rise to fascism rather than socialism. Capitalism was not the stable and enduring order it appeared to Bourdieu. For Gramsci, we can say, capitalism was more durable than it appeared to classical Marxism, but it appeared less durable than it appears to us today in our post-socialist pathos.

A more specific answer has to do with his participation in the factory council movement and the occupation of the factories in Turin in 1919–20. As skilled workers, many of them craft workers, those involved experienced deskilling and separation from the means of production much more directly than the unskilled workers of today who take for granted wage labour and the private ownership of the means of production. Moreover, the occupation of their factories and the collective self-organisation of production through their councils meant that they understood only too well the meaning of capitalist exploitation. For Gramsci, whose experience of the working class was through the factory council movement, exploitation was hardly hidden and, on this occasion, the working class really did exhibit a good sense within the common sense. In Gramsci’s eyes, the factory occupations failed because working-class *organs* – trade unions and the Socialist Party – were wedded to capitalism, i.e. their interests were coordinated with those of capital. For Gramsci, this ‘betrayal’ would have to be rectified by the development of a ‘Modern Prince’ – the Communist Party – that understood and challenged capitalist hegemony. There was nothing hidden or unconscious about the consent of parties and trade unions to capitalism.⁵

Bourdieu makes the opposite argument, namely that craft workers are not the most likely, but the least likely to see through their subjective experience to the objective truth of exploitation: ‘It can be assumed that the subjective truth is that much further removed from the objective truth when the worker has greater control over his own labour’ (2000 [1997]: 203). Curiously, Bourdieu is at his most Marxist here in arguing that

subjective truth converges with objective truth, and exploitation becomes transparent as labour is deskilled. As barriers to labour mobility are swept away, workers lose any attachment to their work and can no longer win for themselves the freedoms that bind them to work. Fearing such stripped and homogenised labour, modern management tries to recreate those freedoms through participatory management: ‘It is on this principle that modern management theory, while taking care to keep control of the instruments of profit, leaves workers the freedom to organize their own work, thus helping to increase their well-being but also to displace their interest from the external profit of labour (the wage) to the intrinsic profit’ (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 204–5), i.e. the profits from partial control over work.

While Bourdieu seems to be following my argument about the mystification of social relations through compensatory game playing, he is actually saying something quite different. For him, the power of misrecognition is linked to the level of skill, whereas I argue it has to do with the political and ideological apparatuses of production. Thus, in my case, the internal labour market and internal state create attachments to the employer and restrictions on employer interventions, so workers will be able to carve out those workplace games that give them their subjective sense of freedom. That is to say, hegemonic regimes are the necessary and sufficient condition for the mystification of exploitation, no matter how unskilled the work may be. Indeed, the more labour is unskilled, the more important become the games of work as compensation for arduousness and estrangement.

In short, for Bourdieu the convergence of the objective truth (exploitation) and the worker’s subjective experience of work *increases* with the degradation of work, whereas I argue the opposite. The craft worker of the 19th century, as described by E. P. Thompson (1963), exhibits deeper class awareness of exploitation than the autoworker of the 20th century. Behind our differences lies a very different analysis of the basis of domination and subjugation.

CONDITIONS OF DOMINATION: INSTITUTIONS OR DISPOSITIONS

Instead of exploring the *institutional conditions* of mystification – the political and ideological apparatuses of the enterprise – Bourdieu turns to the *dispositional conditions* of misrecognition – ‘the effect of these structural factors obviously depends on workers’ dispositions’ (2000 [1997]: 203). In an earlier piece, he is most explicit:

Differences in dispositions, like differences in position (to which they are often linked), engender real differences in perception and appreciation. Thus the recent changes in factory work, toward the limit predicted by Marx, with the disappearance of 'job satisfaction', 'responsibility' and 'skill' (and all the corresponding hierarchies), are appreciated and accepted very differently by different groups of workers. Those whose roots are in the industrial working class, who possess skills and relative 'privileges', are inclined to defend past gains, i.e., job satisfaction, skills and hierarchies and therefore a form of established order; those who have nothing to lose because they have no skills, who are in a sense a working-class embodiment of the populist chimera, such as young people who have stayed at school longer than their elders, are more inclined to radicalize their struggles and challenge the whole system: other, equally disadvantaged workers, such as first-generation industrial workers, women, and especially immigrants, have a tolerance of exploitation which seems to belong to another age (Bourdieu, 1981: 315).

The propensity to submission is not an invariant, but depends on the inculcated habitus. Those who have been socialised to industrial work or who come from oppressed conditions accommodate to it; those young people who have few skills but extended education and nothing to lose are likely to 'radicalize their struggles and challenge the whole system', while immigrants and women are supposedly submissive beyond the pale. What sort of folk sociology is this, dependent on conventional wisdom and belied by history? We know that immigrants and women are quite capable of being militant and of organising themselves into strong trade unions, whether this be in South Africa, China, Brazil or the United States. Since we have no way of measuring 'disposition' or 'habitus' independent of behaviour, the argument is simply tautological – immigrants and women are submissive because of their habitus of submission as demonstrated by their submissiveness.

The argument of *Manufacturing Consent* was directly opposed to this commonsense or 'spontaneous' sociology. I tried to bend the stick in the other direction, showing that externally derived dispositions made no difference to the way people responded to production or to the intensity with which they were drawn into the game of making out. Our experience on the shop floor was more or less the same, irrespective of our 'habitus'. Thus, I was struck by my own absorption into the game that I knew to be furthering my exploitation. I was not coerced into hard work. As my day man told me on my first shift, 'no one pushes you around

here', and he was right. Nor could the extra money explain my devotion to hard work. Rather, it was the symbolic rewards and emotional satisfaction of making out that drove the rhythm of work.

Using quantitative and qualitative data, I showed that race, age, marital status and education had little to do with performance at work, whereas the workplace attributes of seniority and experience made a significant difference (Burawoy, 1979: chap. 9). Observing interactions on the shop floor, I argued that joking relations established between races underscored that differences in background, and racial prejudices were not relevant within the workplace, even as they were relevant with regard to the institutional racism beyond the workplace. I contrasted the situation in a Chicago factory with the mining industry in Zambia, where racism was, indeed, institutionalised *within* the workplace in the form of the colour bar, differential pay scales and differential legal codes. I described that system as one of colonial despotism, many of whose elements continued into the post-colonial era, despite the democratisation of the political sphere. While there is no denying that racial mindsets continue to exist, their significance at the point of production depends on the racial form of the political regime of production.

So we arrive at my crucial difference with Bourdieu. In contrast to Gramsci, both of us recognise a fundamental gap between the objective and subjective truth of labour, but for Bourdieu this is achieved through *misrecognition* rooted in the individual's habitus, whereas I claim it is achieved through *mystification* rooted in the social relations into which men and women enter – a mystification that operates on all individuals, independently of their inherited dispositions. Symbolic domination through misrecognition rests on the bodily inculcation of social structure and the formation of a deep, unconscious habitus. There is no need for any concept of hegemony, because we are programmed to act out the social structure. Mystification, on the other hand, rests on individuals being inserted into specific social relations. Mystification is the necessary condition for a stable hegemony, i.e. for the organisation of consent to domination.

If this is the difference that separates us, then examining consent/submission under different institutional complexes could corroborate or disconfirm our different theories. Thus, state socialism becomes a laboratory for the adjudication of our two theories. I will try to show that intensive inculcation from the party state and its institutions does not produce misrecognition, because these self-same institutions generate a transparency in their functioning. Without mystification, hegemony is not sustainable.

In other words, as I will now show, the contradictions sowed by its institutions prove stronger than the incorporation of habitus.

THE PRECARIOUS HEGEMONY OF STATE SOCIALISM

I went in search of factory work in Hungary for two reasons. The first is that I missed the boat with the Polish Solidarity movement, 1980–81, which had absorbed my attention as an extraordinary working-class movement. When General Jaruzelski got there before I had packed my bags, I did the next best thing – took up jobs in Hungary and asked why the Solidarity movement took place in Poland rather than Hungary, and, more broadly, why in state socialism rather than advanced capitalism. What were the possibilities for a democratic socialism to emerge from such struggles against state socialism? The second reason to draw me to the socialist world was the specificity of my Chicago experience – was it the product of capitalism or of industrialism? Would I find the same work organisation, factory regime and working-class consciousness in the industries of state socialism?

Between 1982 and 1989 I spent my summers and three sabbatical semesters studying and working in Hungarian factories (Burawoy & Lukács, 1992). I began in a champagne factory on a collective farm and moved to a textile factory on an agricultural cooperative, before graduating to industrial work in a machine shop very similar to the Chicago plant. Finally, I would spend about 11 months in three separate stints working as a furnace man in the Lenin Steel Works of Miskolc. Based on this research, I concluded that the workplace regimes of advanced capitalism and state socialism were indeed very different: if the former produced consent, the latter produced dissent, which was the disposition that fired the Polish Solidarity movement, but also the collective mobilisation in East Germany in 1953, in Poland and Hungary in 1956, and even in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The argument was a simple one: unlike capitalism, the appropriation of surplus under state socialism is a transparent process, recognised as such by all. The party, the trade union and management are all extensions of the state at the point of production – extensions designed to maximise the appropriation of surplus for the fulfilment of plans. Being transparent, exploitation is justified as being in the interests of all. Like any process of legitimisation, it is susceptible to being challenged on its own terms – the party state is vulnerable to the accusation that it is not delivering on its promises of serving the universal interest. Whereas under capitalism legitimisation is secondary, because exploitation is hidden, under state

socialism it is primary, necessary to justify the open exploitation of state socialism, but also the latter's undoing.

Thus, the party state organises rituals on the shop floor (what I called painting socialism) that celebrate its virtues – efficiency, justice, equality – yet all around workers see inefficiency, injustice and inequality. Workers turn the ruling ideology against the rulers, demanding that they realise the claims of their socialist propaganda. The state socialist bureaucratic regime of production sows the seeds of dissent rather than consent. As regards the organisation of work itself, the key games that dominate work are those involving the negotiation with management over the fulfillment of plan targets, so that the relations of exploitation are not obscured, but define the relations among the players. Furthermore, given the shortage economy – shortages of materials, their poor quality, the breakdown of machinery and so forth, all of which stem from the central administration of the economy – the games at work aimed to cope with those shortages, demonstrating the hollowness of official claims about the efficiency of state socialism. Moreover, this adaptation to shortages required far more autonomy than the bureaucratic apparatus regulating production would allow. Work games were transposed into games directed at the system of planning, bringing the shop floor into opposition to the production regime and the party state.

Far from social structure indelibly imprinting itself on the habitus of the worker and thus inducing doxic submission, the state socialist regime systematically produces the opposite – dissent rather than consent; even counter-hegemonic organisation to despotic controls. Indeed, more broadly, state socialism generated its own counter-socialisms from below – the cooperative movement in Hungary, Solidarity in Poland and the civics in *perestroika* Russia. From the beginning, state socialism was a far more unstable order, not because its socialising agencies were weaker – far from it – but because of the contradictions generated by the institutions themselves. State socialism was held together by a precarious hegemony that was always in danger of slipping back into a despotism that relied on secret police, tanks, prisons and show trials. In other words, where advanced capitalism organised simultaneously the mystification of exploitation and the consent to domination, so now we see how the hegemony of state socialism – the attempt to present the interests of the party state as the interests of all – is a fragile edifice that was always threatened by the transparency of exploitation.

Bourdieu's notion of symbolic domination assured through a deeply inscribed misrecognition cannot explain the instability of state socialism.

Within Bourdieu's framework of internalisation, there is no reason to believe that symbolic domination through misrecognition is any shallower or weaker in state socialism than in advanced capitalism. Quite the contrary: the coordination among fields – economic, educational, political and cultural – should have led to a far more coherent and submissive habitus than under capitalism, where such fields have far greater autonomy and are more contradictory in their effects. An analysis of the logic of institutions and their immediate effects on the individual and on collective experience goes much further in explaining the fragility of state socialist hegemony.

FOLLOWING BOURDIEU: THE POWER OF FIELDS

Bourdieu never paid much theoretical attention to one of the signal events of his time – the collapse of the Soviet Union. I have found only one sociological writing by him on state socialism – the four-page text of an address he gave in East Berlin on 25 October 1989, just two weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall, amid massive demonstrations. Curiously, according to the published article, Bourdieu invoked the concepts of political and cultural capital to describe the tensions among the communist elites (Bourdieu, 1998 [1989]). Still, his notion of field can help us explain the dramatic demise of communism, so long as we drop the notion of habitus.⁶

Recall that Bourdieu's theory of social change rests on the discrepancy between position and disposition, between opportunities and expectations within a given field.⁷ This is precisely what I described above for Hungarian workers – they were led to expect the wonders of socialism, yet they found themselves in a world of its inversions. Not only they, but the dominant class, trying as it might in reform after reform, could not bring reality into conformity with its ideology. The discrepancy was not due to some psychic lag between an inherited habitus and a rigid field ('hysteresis', as Bourdieu might call it), but was generated by the field itself. State socialism created expectations it could not fulfil. As the gap between official ideology and reality widens, and as attempts to reduce the gap violated that official ideology (as in market reforms), so the ruling class lost confidence in its capacity to rule and the enactment of socialist ideology became a meaningless ritual. Without capacity or belief, the dominant class's hegemony collapses. Again, there is no need to resort to the existence of a deep-seated habitus that resists change.

This line of argument can also be used to shed light on the timing of the collapse. To understand the dynamics of 1989 we have to look at

the Soviet bloc as a transnational political field dominated by the Soviet Union, which defined the terms of competition among the dependent states – much as the state defines the terms of competition among elites. This certainly captures the way in which state socialism dissolves. The Soviet Union changed the rules of the game and then the national governments (themselves divided) acted in anticipation of the reaction of the others. Thus, the Hungarian government of Németh, being the first to determine how the rules had changed, opened its border with Austria, allowing East Germans to flood into the West. Honecker's East German government reacted by requesting the Czechoslovakian government to bottle up East German nationals, but then transported them to the West in a sealed train that went across Germany. Influenced by Solidarity sweeping the Polish elections and the movements in Hungary, as well as huge demonstrations against the party state, Egon Krenz realised that Honecker had to go, but in so doing laid the basis of his own burial in the rubble of the Berlin Wall. All this inspired the Czechoslovakian people to assemble in Wenceslas Square in their hundreds of thousands to listen to Havel and other dissidents. After the Czechoslovakian party had wilted, only Romania's Ceausescu remained obdurate, putting down protest with violence and ultimately succumbing to a palace coup that put an end to his dictatorship. This thumbnail sketch of the events of 1989 shows how national actors acted strategically in a common transnational field. Strategy, as Bourdieu insists, only becomes conscious in exceptional crisis times when rules are in flux.

This would require much further elaboration, but it indicates the importance of studying the *interaction* of fields – something Bourdieu never addresses systematically – in this case the field of transnational relations within the Soviet bloc (itself nested in a larger field of international relations) and the political field within each nation. Underlying these inter-field dynamics, however, is the underlying instability of the state socialist order, unable to create a stable hegemony due to the palpable transparency of exploitation and domination.

FOLLOWING GRAMSCI: THE GOOD SENSE OF SOCIALIST WORKERS

Just as Bourdieu's field analysis can be usefully reconstructed to shed light on the unfolding crisis of the Soviet empire, so reconstructing Gramsci also illuminates what transpired in 1989. Let me return to the shop floor and to the methodological issues raised by Bourdieu in the epigraph that opened this conversation. There, Bourdieu writes of the double truth of

labour and that it was not enough to construct the objective truth by breaking with common sense (first reversal), but it was also necessary to break with this objective truth to understand how common sense both produced and concealed the objective truth (second reversal). That was how I approached the Chicago factory, first recognising the underlying truth of surplus labour and then trying to understand how that surplus labour was experienced subjectively in a way that explained its production. Unpaid labour was simultaneously obscured, but also secured through constituting work as a game, itself made possible by the internal labour market and internal state.

Like Bourdieu, I did not believe that my fellow workers grasped the conditions of their subordination in the way a sociologist might, but even if they did, it would have made little difference. In other words, I did not find any Gramscian good sense within the common sense of workers, so instead of trying to convince my fellow workers of my Marxist theory – a daunting project indeed – I sought to persuade my fellow academics of the superiority of my theory of the labour process and of manufacturing consent. This was so very different from my experience in Hungary where my fellow workers – no less hostile to Marxism – nonetheless were possessed of ‘good sense’, not because they were superior beings, but because the institutions created the basis of good sense. Therefore, I did not have to make a *break* with common sense, but instead I *elaborated* its kernel of good sense, including the immanent critique of state socialism, through dialogue with my fellow operators, contextualising it in terms of the political economy of state socialism.

Here in Hungary, Bourdieu’s strict opposition of science and common sense was replaced by Gramsci’s (1971: 333) account of the dual consciousness, i.e. a practical consciousness stemming from production and an ideological consciousness superimposed by the party state or inherited from the past. I was riveted to the practical consciousness of my fellow workers ‘implicit’ in their activity and which united them ‘in the practical transformation of the real world’, paying less attention to the ideologies ‘superficially explicit or verbal ... inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed’, which included racist, sexist, religious and localist sentiments. Yet it is true that these latter sentiments formed powerful bonds among workers, often overwhelming their incipient class consciousness.

Together with my collaborator, János Lukács, we focused on the capacity and necessity of workers to autonomously and flexibly organise production in the face of shortages. We defended this practice to managers who strove to impose bureaucratic controls over production. Infuriated

by our claims, they insisted that we redo our study. This was not just a struggle within the consciousness of workers, but between workers and management, and once again it would be the explicit and verbal consciousness perpetrated and perpetuated by management that ultimately prevailed. By the time Hungarian socialism entered its final years, bombarded by bureaucratic managers, workers had lost any confidence in the very idea of socialism and certainly had little imagination of an alternative democratic socialism, even though it had been implicit in the logic of their own practice. Inspired by the ‘good sense’ of workers, and what he saw as a great potential for some sort of worker-owned enterprises, in the immediate years after the collapse of state socialism, Lukács tried to work with labour collectives to create the foundations of an alternative to capitalism, but this withered on the vine as capitalist ideology gained the upper hand.

In short, the analysis of state socialism – how it generated dissent and ultimately collapsed – does not call for a theory of deep-seated habitus, but can remain at the level of social relations of production. It could not sustain its precarious hegemony, and the attempts to shore up such an hegemony only hastened its demise. By the same token, as we saw earlier, the reproduction of durable domination under capitalism does not require the *inculcation* of social structure. Such submission that exists can be explained by the configuration of institutions that elicit consent to domination based on the mystification of exploitation. *Homo habitus* is not necessary to explain submission and resistance; *homo ludens* is sufficient.

THE LOGIC OF PRACTICE: BEYOND GRAMSCI AND BOURDIEU

We can summarise my argument by referring back to the notion of *false consciousness*. For Gramsci, the problem with false consciousness lies not with consciousness, but with its falseness. That is to say, Gramsci believed that workers actively, deliberately, and consciously collaborate in the reproduction of capitalism and consent to a domination defined as hegemony. They understand what they are doing; they simply have difficulty appreciating that there could be anything beyond capitalism. Domination was not mystified, but naturalised, eternalised. Yet at the same time, by virtue of their position in production, workers also possessed a critical perspective on capitalism and an embryonic sense of an alternative – one that could be jointly elaborated in dialogue with intellectuals. They have a *dual* consciousness rather than a *false* consciousness.

If for Gramsci the questionable part of false consciousness was its ‘falseness’, for Bourdieu the problem lies not with ‘falseness’, but with

'consciousness' that denies the depth of symbolic domination – a domination that settles within the unconscious through the accumulated sedimentations of social structure.

In the notion of 'false consciousness' which some Marxists invoke to explain the effect of symbolic domination, it is the word 'consciousness' which is excessive; and to speak of 'ideology' is to place in the order of *representations*, capable of being transformed by the intellectual conversion that is called the 'awakening of consciousness', what belongs to the order of *beliefs*, that is, at the deepest level of bodily dispositions (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 177).

Similarly, for Bourdieu, consent is far too thin a notion to express submission to domination and must be replaced by the idea of misrecognition, which is embedded within the habitus.⁸ Because the dominated internalise the social structure in which they exist, they do not recognise it as such. They have, in Gramscian terms, only bad sense. Only the dominators – and then only privileged intellectuals – can distance themselves from, and thus objectivise, their relation to social structure. Only they can have access to its secrets. And not all intellectuals, to be sure – only those who are reflexive about their luxurious place in the world and who use that reflexivity to examine the lives of others can understand domination.

In adjudicating between these positions, I have argued that both are problematic. Gramsci does not recognise the mystification of exploitation upon which hegemony – i.e. consent to domination – rests. In other words, capitalist workers do suffer from 'false consciousness', but this falseness emanates from the social structure itself, which is where I depart from Bourdieu. Insofar as we participate in capitalist relations of production, we all experience the obscuring of surplus labour, independent of our habitus. Mystification is a product of the social structure itself and is not so deeply implanted within the individual that it cannot be undone, whereas Bourdieu's misrecognition is lodged deep within the individual psyche, assuring the harmonisation of habitus and field.

Accordingly, Bourdieu cannot explain why symbolic domination is effective in some societies, but not in others. Thus, why did state socialism, where one would have expected submission to be most deeply embedded, systematically produce dissent? For Bourdieu, social change, if it occurs at all, springs from the mismatch of habitus and field, but there is no systematic account of how this mismatch is produced, whether it is produced *situationally* through a cultural lag (hysteresis) – i.e. through

habitus cultivated in one field clashing with the logic of another field – or *processually* through the very dynamics of social structure. Nor is there an analysis of the consequences of that mismatch in terms of whether it produces accommodation or rebellion. In other words, Bourdieu points to the *possibility* of social change, but has no *theory* of social change.

In the final analysis, habitus is an intuitively appealing concept that can explain any behaviour, precisely because it is unknowable and unverifiable. Bourdieu never gives us the tools to examine what a given individual's habitus might be. It's a black box. We infer the habitus from behaviour – a shop lifter is a shop lifter because he/she has the habitus of a shop lifter. We only know the habitus from its effects; there is no theory of its components or how they are formed as in psychoanalytical theory. In short, habitus is not a scientific concept, but a folk concept with a fancy name – a concept without content that might equally well be translated as character or personality.

Far more than Bourdieu, Gramsci is concerned with social transformation. He sees this as taking place through the breakdown of hegemony and the creation of a new subaltern hegemony, whether this comes through organic crises (balance of class forces) or through the war of position mounted from below on the basis of the kernel of good sense, or, what is more likely, a combination of the two. What my research suggests is that there is more to hegemony than the concrete coordination of interests or the ties linking state and civil society – there is more to hegemony than consent. There are non-hegemonic foundations of hegemony, namely the mystification of exploitation, which is why hegemony is so effective in advanced capitalism and so precarious in state socialism.

Because exploitation was so transparent in state socialism, it gave far more scope for intellectuals to engage with workers in the elaboration of alternative 'hegemonies' from below – the Hungarian worker councils in 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968, the Polish Solidarity Movement of 1980–81, the market socialism of Hungary's reform period of the 1980s, the effervescence of civil society under Soviet *perestroika*. These counter-hegemonies were formed by different configurations of intellectuals and workers. They were eventually swept away, but they did provide the embryos of alternative socialist social orders.

We live in depressing times of capitalist entrenchment when the failure of actually existing socialism buttresses dominant ideologies. We should not compound the forcefulness and eternalisation of the present by subscribing to unsubstantiated claims about the deep internalisation of social structure, reminiscent of the structural functionalism of the 1950s

and its 'oversocialised man'. Remember, those theories were overthrown by a critical collective effervescence that structural functionalism did not, but also could not, anticipate. Each era has its own Cairo.

KARL VON HOLDT

The Margin of Freedom

Pascalian Meditations is, as Michael points out, Bourdieu's 'culminating theoretical work', in which he draws together and elaborates on the core concepts developed in a lifetime's research and reflection, referring back as he does so to his wide-ranging empirical studies. The main force of the book's arguments is to explain the stability and durability of social order: field, habitus and symbolic violence form an interlocking whole that ensures the reproduction of existing hierarchies and social orders.

Yet there is an undercurrent to the main argument, or a counter-current, that emerges briefly but vividly at certain points – a probing of the conditions under which the weight of social order may be destabilised or challenged. Some of these concern the potential of a destabilised field, or a contradictory habitus, to generate dynamics of change; Michael and I touch on these in some of the pieces in this book. However, in the final chapter of *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu returns to symbolic struggle, and in this account he introduces an entirely new dimension: the symbolic order constitutes a *space of relative autonomy with a margin of freedom for redefining the world* and opening up new possibilities:

But there is also the relative autonomy of the symbolic order, which, in all circumstances and especially in periods in which expectations and chances fall out of line, can leave a margin of freedom for political action aimed at reopening the space of possibles. Symbolic power, which can

manipulate hopes and expectations, especially through a more or less inspired and uplifting performative evocation of the future – prophecy, forecast or prediction – can introduce a degree of play into the correspondence between expectations and chances and open up a space of freedom through the more or less voluntarist positioning of more less improbable possibles – utopia, project, programme or plan – which the pure logic of probabilities would lead one to regard as practically excluded (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 234).

The symbolic order introduces a crucial new dimension into an analysis of social reality dominated by the concepts of field and habitus, i.e. a flexibility or freedom through which the determinism of structure can be challenged by imagining alternatives. It is worth exploring Bourdieu's meaning as far as possible:

... symbolic power ... intervenes in that uncertain site of social existence where practice is converted into signs, symbols, discourses, and it introduces a margin of freedom between their objective chances, or the implicit dispositions that are tacitly adjusted to them, and *explicit aspirations*, people's representations and manifestations (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 235).

That is, symbolic power implies 'a margin of freedom' between habitus and field, a space for interpretation and therefore contestation. This becomes a site of 'twofold uncertainty', because the meaning of the social structure remains open to several interpretations at the same time as agents are capable of multiple ways of understanding their actions. In other words, both habitus and field become sites of uncertainty, in radical contrast to the full and forceful weight of Bourdieu's main line of argument:

This margin of freedom is the basis of the autonomy of struggles over the sense of the social world, its meaning and orientation, its present and its future, one of the major stakes in symbolic struggles. The belief that this or that future, either desired or feared, is possible, probable or inevitable can, in some historical conditions, mobilise a group around it and so help to favour or prevent the coming of that future (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 235).

This account differs from those summarised elsewhere in this book in that it does not end with the alienated, maladjusted individual left disoriented

by changing fields, nor does it rely on the intellectual who has the power to unmask domination to mobilise the masses, but rather suggests a significant indeterminacy in which a group can mobilise to shape the future. Here we have collective agency to imagine a different future and disrupt the social order. Finally

... the discourses or actions of subversion ... have the functions and in any case the effect of showing in practice that it is possible to transgress the limits imposed, in particular the most inflexible ones, which are set in people's minds ... The symbolic transgression of a social frontier has a liberatory effect in its own right because it enacts the unthinkable (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 236).

Bourdieu was evidently grappling with the different possibilities for disruption and change available in different locations within his interlocking system of concepts, and in the passages quoted here finds in the indeterminacy of symbolic order a possibility of critical consciousness on the part of the dominated, resting on the ability to *imagine* an alternative future. Imagination calls forth a potential agency beyond the determinism of structure, although, to be comprehensible rather than 'unreal and foolhardy' (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 236), it has to call on dispositions and structural possibilities that already exist in the world. These passages hold the clues we require in bringing Bourdieu to bear on South Africa – or in bringing South Africa to bear on Bourdieu.

THE RESISTANCE

It would be difficult to understand the re-emergence of resistance to apartheid in the 1970s and 1980s in terms of the dynamic between field and habitus. Certainly, changing social structures – the rapid growth of a mass semi-skilled working class based in the expansion of manufacturing, and the dramatic increase in the student population concentrated in township secondary schools and in 'bush universities' – meant that sectors of the black population had increased structural power in the economy and in communities, while the capitalist expansion of the 1950s and 1960s was mired in structural constraints.

These factors provided the material foundation for the formation of the two key forces in the new resistance – the black working class and its new trade unions, and the students and their organisations. In both cases, though, the substance of their struggles was a challenge to the symbolic

order of apartheid. For workers, the trade union struggle was a struggle to be treated as a *human being*: 'Today I see myself as a human being because of the union', said one illiterate steelworker; and, 'Now you can actually tell the white man what you want, you can speak for yourself; those things were impossible in the dark years of the past, especially for the people before us, our fathers', said another (Von Holdt, 2003: 299).

For students, there was the elaboration of Black Consciousness as a symbolic counter-discourse to the racism of apartheid, and then the revolt against apartheid schooling triggered by the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction – again, a highly charged moment of symbolic struggle. To the extent that these assertions of agency could be said to involve habitus, the crucial factor is the 'margin of freedom' that symbolic struggle over the definition of social reality afforded first activists and then growing numbers of supporters to reimagine themselves – to 'see [themselves] as a human being' against a system that denigrated and commodified blacks.

And, as Bourdieu writes, the 'symbolic transgression of a social frontier has a liberatory effect in its own right because it enacts the unthinkable' (2000 [1997]: 236) – and, indeed, with every such transgression, the popular movement won wider support and the granite-like solidity of the apartheid system was seen to be illusory. By the late 1970s and early 1980s the popular movement was increasingly drawing on the symbolic resources provided by earlier waves of mass resistance. I well remember the public meeting in the Western Cape in 1981 where the symbols of the banned ANC were first displayed. At the entrances into the hall, young activists proffered baskets of ANC ribbons, and soon the audience of 3,000 was wearing ANC colours. Halfway through the meeting, three young activists, their identities concealed with balaclavas, marched the ANC flag down the aisle and onto the stage in a moment of extraordinarily potent political symbolism as the popular movement 'unbanned' an organisation that was at the time illegal, exiled, and prosecuting an underground political and military struggle against the regime. This was 'symbolic transgression' at its most charged.⁹

Symbolic transgression and mobilisation were profoundly *embodied*, from the ritual raising of clenched fists and call-and-response salute of '*amandla!*', answered with '*ngawethu!*', to the chanting of freedom songs and marching to their rhythms, a practice that reached its apogee with the *toyitoyi*, a militant, chanted battle dance that originated in the Umkhonto we Sizwe camps outside the country and rapidly spread through the internal popular movement. Such rituals, songs and dances

conveyed both exuberance and resolve, welding huge gatherings of people in halls, factories, mines, streets, and funerals into mass phalanxes of resistance and insurgency. Indeed, public performance was a central dimension of the popular movement's power. Every death led to a funeral that became a mass theatre of community unity and refusal to submit. It could be said that a new habitus, a habitus composed of dispositions to resistance, bravery and defiance, was forged out of these bodily performances – and that such a habitus was necessary if people were to face the hazards of bullets, detention and torture that the struggle entailed.

Public performance of the popular movement also provided the arena in which was forged a new symbolic universe ordered around ideas of freedom, democracy, non-racialism, people's power, women's rights, workers' rights, socialism, armed struggle, making apartheid 'ungovernable' and so on. In the face of this symbolic universe and the organisational power that underlay it, the symbolic order of apartheid lost its hold and coherence and in the end the regime became less and less able to speak and therefore unable to act, beyond the spasmodic bouts of repression facilitated by national states of emergency.

Habitus does not seem able to explain the emergence of resistance to apartheid; rather, habitus provided one location – uncertain and contested – among others for symbolic struggle between the embodied submission demanded by apartheid and the embodied defiance evoked by resistance and democracy. In explaining the large-scale durability or overthrow of regimes, habitus can only be a secondary concept; of central importance are symbolic order and resistance, and their relation to structural and material power in the economy and society.

TRANSITION AND AFTER

The symbolic struggle between the popular movement and the apartheid regime continued through the process of negotiated transition and was stabilised in the form of the new democratic constitution, which laid the basis for the emergence of a new symbolic order centred on the idea of democracy and the transformation of the social structures of racial domination in the economy and society.

While at one level the new constitutional order backed by broader national consensus did appear to stabilise the symbolic universe of a new South Africa, at other levels it opened up new arenas of contestation, particularly racial contestation over institutional and economic transformation. Contestation within the state has already been discussed in

Conversation 3 (pp 68–70). But the destabilisation of symbolic order is not confined to racial contestation over the meaning of social reality in post-apartheid South Africa. Side by side with these transformations has gone a rapid process of black elite formation out of which a new black middle class, a new black business class and a political elite are emerging. At the same time, the growth of unemployment and the expansion of insecure work has driven the fragmentation of the working class and the formation of the poor, condemned to informal substance activities or idleness.

The formation of historically new classes is not simply a material process of accumulation, on the one hand, and dispossession, on the other, of struggles to enter one class or avoid being forced into another, and of attendant social dislocation; it also entails the disturbance or disruption of the existing symbolic order, and formative projects to reconstitute symbolic order so as to make sense of new hierarchies and distinctions, new interests, and new social distances.

How will it be known who has power, who is a member of the elite, who has status? This is a particularly urgent question when elite formation is so rapid and the trajectory from poverty and subaltern status to powerful elite is so steep. A long-established ruling class or a long-drawn-out intergenerational process of class formation may evolve more discrete or subtle expressions of status and distinction, but a class or classes that tear themselves forth from the subalterns through internecine struggles and in which individuals remain subject to sudden reversals of fortune necessarily have to rely on more robust, and even brash, assertions of status. This is doubly so in South Africa, given the nature of apartheid, which consistently denigrated and undermined the capabilities of black South Africans. Hence what Jacob Dlamini (2011) calls 'the politics of excess': conspicuous consumption, the emphasis on marks of distinction that bear witness to high levels of disposable income – designer clothes, powerful cars, large homes, expensive parties, and largesse to friends and associates. These are the signs through which the new elite attempts to stabilise its power and assuage its uncertainties.

The emerging symbolic order of the new elite is oppressive – and contested – in other ways too. Young male protesters in one town related angrily how the mayor had publicly dismissed the protesters as 'unemployed, unwashed boys who smoke dagga, *abongcolingcoli* [puppets] who are not members of the community'. They pointed out, as did many others, that the mayor herself did not live in the town and that she had minimal schooling (Langa, Dlamini & Von Holdt, 2011).

In a second town, the mayor refused to meet the community, and when she did she told them that residents were like Eno digestive salts: they might bubble up in protest, but that would quickly die away. Councillors 'disdained us, and said *asiphucukanga, sizohlala singaphucukanga* [we are not civilised, we shall remain uncivilised]'. But as in the first town, the mayor herself is disdained because she was for years a 'tea-girl' in the post office and had only reached grade 4 at school (Dlamini, 2011). Evident in these stories is the destabilisation of the symbolic order and uncertainties over the meaning of different markers of status. While insecure members of the new elite seek to establish their status in the symbolic order by denigrating subalterns – i.e. by establishing the terms of symbolic violence against them – subalterns counter with efforts to contest and undermine the oppressive terms of the symbolic order articulated by the elite.

While much of this subaltern contestation of the symbolic order takes place in language, it becomes most explicit through the insurgent citizenship claims that are articulated in direct protest action (Holston, 2008). So, for example, elite targets of protest claim that the youth protesters have been bought by disgruntled faction leaders who have their own agendas. Young protesters respond angrily:

It is an insult to my intelligence for people to think we are marching because someone has bought us liquor. We are not mindless. People, especially you who are educated, think we are marching because we are bored. We are dealing with real issues here. Like today we don't have electricity. We have not had water for the whole week (Langa, 2011: 61).

Insurgent citizenship in this context is defined by its claim for work and housing, for an improvement in municipal services, and to be heard and recognised. An end to corruption also features. The repertoires of protest resemble those that were used in the struggle for full citizenship rights against the racially closed citizenship defined by apartheid, and the protesters in post-apartheid South Africa explicitly claim the rights of democracy and citizenship, especially in relation to police violence against their protests:

The Freedom Charter says people shall govern, but now we are not governing, we are being governed (Langa, 2011: 51).

The constitution says we have rights. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion We have many freedoms ... but we get shot at for walking around at night (Langa, Dlamini & Von Holdt, 2011: 24).

The police want us to be in bed by midnight. It's taking us to the old days of curfews against blacks. What if I have been paid and want to enjoy my money? (Langa, Dlamini & Von Holdt, 2011: 51).

The elite engages in symbolic struggle in order to stabilise the material inequality between classes – what Holston calls 'differential citizenship' in the form of the differential access to basic services, housing, jobs and incomes between the underclass and the elite – and render it normal. However, the normality and justice of this state of things is contested by subalterns who qualify and reject the discourse of the elite, countering it with their own notions of a fair and just hierarchy and markers of status. The protest movements constitute an insurgent citizenship that demands the expansion of citizenship rights in the form of services and jobs, as well as in the form of respect by authority for all citizens, and protest action is itself a disruption of the symbolic order of the elite that controls the state.

The breakdown of the symbolic order of apartheid and contestation over its reconstruction go to the heart of many disputes in contemporary South Africa. Corruption, for example, is a lightning conductor for disputes over the meaning of the state and the legitimacy of elite formation. While the government and ANC routinely denounce corruption, their actual practices suggest that they are unwilling or unable to consistently crack down on it. So, when the chairman of the Northern Province ANC and MEC for finance was recently charged together with others for fraud amounting to over R100 million, both the Northern Cape ANC and the ANC Youth League immediately declared their support for him and it was announced that he would not be suspended from either of his two offices – a position that was later reversed. On the other hand, COSATU, formally in political alliance with the ANC, repeatedly lambasts the 'political hyenas' and 'predatory elite' in the ruling party, and challenges its leadership to undergo 'lifestyle audits'.

Likewise, the conflict between the ANC and COSATU over the latter's strategy of developing alliances with independent organisations in civil society: the ANC secretary-general attacked COSATU for 'betraying' the ANC and planning to establish a new anti-ANC political party. This outburst suggests that the ANC's conception of democracy – i.e. that it has a monopoly on political legitimacy for representing the black majority and that independent organisations in civil society are a threat to that legitimacy – is fundamentally at odds with the concept of democracy enshrined in the constitution. Meanwhile, young protesters at the end

of their tether about the corruption and unresponsiveness of local politicians celebrate when their protests result in their (ANC) protest leaders winning local by-elections, but warn that they will resort to violence if the new councillors in turn betray them, as 'violence is the only language the government understands' (Langa, Dlamini & Von Holdt, 2011: 49).

These disputes are not simply spats between different political organisations or factions; they constitute heated disagreement over the nature of democracy and the new political order. They are, in other words, symbolic struggles over the meaning of social reality. The ANC itself is unstable and paralysed, not only by the rivalry between competing political factions for high office and access to patronage networks, but also because of its inability to speak for or invoke a consistent notion of symbolic order.

The current situation may be better described as a symbolic or classification crisis rather than a straightforward symbolic or classification struggle. There is, indeed, a widespread anxiety in South Africa about the breakdown of authority – within the ANC, within government, within schools and within the family. Crime is a lightning rod for this anxiety: while citizens bemoan their insecurity and berate government for not doing enough to protect them, each new police minister promises to use force to restore order. And indeed, while an average of about 100 police officers per year have been killed on duty over the past two years, an average of 590 people died as a result of police action over the same period, an average of 1,600 were assaulted by police, and over a one-year period 294 died in police custody, seven of them after torture and 90 due to 'injuries sustained in custody' (*Mail & Guardian*, 27 May–2 June 2011). The policing of protests and strikes has also been increasingly confrontational and violent over the same period, with the unprovoked killing of Andries Tatela in Ficksburg only the most recent.

It is not clear how this impasse will be resolved. Will one or other coalition of social forces gradually prevail in assembling sufficient symbolic power to dominate the process of forging a new hegemonic symbolic order? Will the current stalemate between contending social forces persist indefinitely, producing a kind of institutionalised and chronic disorder across society and the state? Will the state resort to a strategy of force to reinstall order and establish its monopoly over symbolic violence and symbolic power – demonstrating in the process the necessary relationship between physical violence and symbolic violence?

HABITUS: AN INTERMEDIATE CONCEPT?

As Michael argues, though, what is clear is the inability of the concept habitus to explain the durability or fragility of social order, notwithstanding Bourdieu's (2000 [1997]: 231) claim that it is 'no doubt one of the most powerful factors of conservation of the established order'. The concepts of symbolic power, symbolic order and symbolic struggle, I have tried to show, provide considerably more insight into exploration of order, disruption, resistance and disorder. It is these that restore indeterminacy to social structure and habitus, creating a 'margin of freedom', as Bourdieu describes it. In the light of this, it seems to me that Michael's analysis of the transparency of social structure and its role in the collapse of the state socialist order could be expanded. After all, the collapse took place not only in the workplace, but at the borders of countries and in their public squares – sites of tremendous symbolic force in the life of any nation.

Finally, I'm not sure that the inability of habitus to explain social change is sufficient reason to abandon the concept altogether, as Michael concludes. What do we do, then, with the insights into various forms of domination by some of the key Marxist thinkers whose engagement with Bourdieu through the medium of Michael makes these conversations so productive? How do we understand the symbolic violence of racial oppression explored by Fanon (or, indeed, by Steve Biko), or the symbolic violence of male domination explored by Beauvoir, without some kind of concept of an interiority, which is what Bourdieu attempts to map out with habitus? Is it sufficient to say that these forms of symbolic violence reside only in exterior social structures and that we do not need to understand how they inhabit our psyches in any way?

Without habitus, how do we think about Bourdieu's insight into the embodied nature of domination, the way in which submission, deference, and resistance are inscribed in the body and its stance and postures, as much as in the mind? Think here of the intersection between Bourdieu and Gramsci as they analyse the physical discipline that correlates to mental discipline as it is taught in the schools of the sanctified culture. Is the idea of social structure sufficient to grasp the physicality or corporeality of social relations and social repertoires?

Perhaps habitus is a useful concept at a more intermediate level of analysis. I'm thinking here of how the dispositions of defiance, bravery, and rebellion were embodied in the chants and dances of the toyi-toyi. This involved a kind of physical and emotional 'countertraining' in resistance (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]:172; see discussion in Conversation 2).

The toyi-toyi persists in the repertoires of strikes and protests in post-apartheid South Africa. Past dispositions and bodily repertoires have an ambiguous durability even in a substantially changed political context. Strikers and protesters explain that the toyi-toyi does not have the same meaning as in the past, when it marshalled insurrectionary struggles to overthrow the state; but, nonetheless, its current meaning partakes of the symbolism of violence and warfare, disrupting the authority of the state in order to call attention to the grievances of the people.

In the time of negotiated transition, a shop steward was referring to the depth of this habitus when he told me that 'a culture of resistance is inherent in the hearts and minds of the workers; I am sure to change that culture there has to be a process of learning' (Von Holdt, 2003: 194). And in 2008, discussing strike violence in the recent public service strike, a former shop steward said:

Since I was born, I have seen all strikes are violent. There are no such strikes as peaceful strikes. Some workers do not join a strike because of fear. By force they must join the strike. Otherwise anybody would do their own thing (Von Holdt, 2010b: 141).

This worker draws attention to a process of historical habituation through which a strike gathers certain meanings and bodily repertoires that are reproduced in new historical situations. Even more significant is the way youthful protesters in community protests, who are too young to have any direct experience of the toyi-toyi of the 1980s, have adopted exactly the same repertoires, chanting the same songs to the same bodily movements as they gather, throw stones at the police, barricade streets and burn down municipal buildings. They describe the excitement, bravery and fighting spirit that are involved in these confrontations.

In the light of these durable and embodied practices and the emotions they involve, habitus may be a useful concept for exploring the interplay of symbolic power and symbolic order with the individual psyche. It also suggests ways in which historically established repertoires of symbolic challenge may establish a durable presence in the life of a society. Such repertoires may become more or less stylised or ritualised over time, but in conditions of symbolic contestation and of the clash between contending symbolic orders such as exist today in South Africa, they remain a resonant and widely understood element in the struggle over the structures of domination.

NOTES

- 1 An earlier version of this conversation was published in *Sociology*. I am borrowing the term '*homo habitus*' from correspondence with Bridget Kenny, who coined it to express Bourdieu's deeply pessimistic view of human nature. '*Homo ludens*' comes from the famous Dutch theorist Johan Huizinga.
- 2 I would later call the internal state 'the political and ideological apparatuses of production' or 'the regime of production' (Burawoy, 1985).
- 3 There is no shortage of studies that suggest the ubiquity of games. For some outstanding recent examples, see Ofer Sharone's (2004) study of software engineers, Jeffrey Sallaz's (2002) study of casino dealers, Rachel Sherman's (2007) study of hotel workers and Adam Reich's (2010) study of juvenile prisoners.
- 4 It was while working and teaching with Adam Przeworski at the University of Chicago that I developed the idea of social structure as a game. It was during this time that he was developing his Gramscian theory of electoral politics in which party competition could be thought of as an absorbing game in which the struggle was over the distribution of economic resources at the margin, thereby eclipsing the fundamental inequality upon which the game was based (Przeworski, 1985).
- 5 Indeed, Przeworski (1985) has shown just how rational it is for socialist parties to fight for immediate material gains in order to attract the votes necessary to gain and then keep power.
- 6 Interestingly, the major Bourdieusian analysis of the transition in Eastern Europe – Eyal, Szelenyi and Townsley (2001) – is not an analysis of the collapse, but of the (dis)continuity of elites in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. Again, it is an examination of the inheritance, fate and the distribution of different forms of socialist capital (economic, cultural and political) in the post-socialist era.
- 7 This is most systematically elaborated in Bourdieu's (1988 [1984]) account of the crisis of May 1968, where he examines the consequences of the declining opportunities for expanding numbers of university graduates and the way the crisis in the university field dovetailed with the crisis in the wider political field.
- 8 '... knowledge and recognition have to be rooted in practical dispositions of acceptance and submission, which, because they do not pass through deliberation and decision, escape the dilemmas of consent or constraint' (Bourdieu, 2000 [1997]: 198).
- 9 This meeting was preceded by fierce struggles within the organising committee between activists who supported 'Congress' and those who favoured more 'workerist' political ideologies, and precipitated a split in the community movement and tensions with the trade unions; nonetheless, 'Congress' rapidly became the hegemonic force in the popular movement, partly because of the potency of its symbolic resources.