

turning them into an analysis of cultural production, he never managed to develop a political economy that would ground his political and social analysis; he never managed to grasp the totality of the modern era as a form of capitalism. In the end he remained a modernization theorist who had no explanations for the twists and turns of modernity.

CONCLUSION

THE LIMITS OF SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

How should we engage our intellectual opponents? Ignore them? Demolish them? Absorb them? Within academia, where recognition is everything, denying recognition is often the most effective and least costly weapon. Refusing to recognize opponents only works, however, if they are not already in the limelight. When our opponents have won recognition, when they are powerful figures, what is to be done?

Within Marxism demolition has been a frequent practice, reducing opponents to intellectual rubble. Think of Lenin's withering criticism of opportunists, anarchists, social democrats. The only people worthy of such aggression, however, were competitors in the political field. There is a second tradition within Marxism: interrogating powerful opponents to assess their strength and then appropriating their ideas under an enlarged canvas. This is not vanquishing through demolition but domination through containment. Here the strategy is to critically appropriate the truth of the opponent by absorbing it within one's own expanded framework. This requires a certain appreciation of the opponent. Gramsci's critical appropriation of Croce, Marx's critical appropriation of Hegel or Ricardo, Lukács's critical appropriation of Weber, and Marcuse's critical appropriation of Freud come to mind.

Every strategy comes with risks. *Ignoring* the opponent leaves one unscathed, but it can also leave one out of touch with emerging intellectual currents. It can turn into a lost opportunity to expand one's own horizons through engaging others. *Demolition* can win one acclaim, and it can be accomplished without being accountable to an alternative perspective. But it can also bring free publicity and even support to the opponent. Distorting

the opponent, or forcing them into a straitjacket, risks heaping disrepute onto the critic. It can also provoke a belligerent reaction. Finally, neutralizing the opponent by *absorption*, taking the enemy seriously, can so transform one's own thinking that allies may accuse one of betrayal. After all, the practice of critique, if carried out properly, shapes the critic as much as the criticized.

As I indicated in the prologue, in my encounters with the work of Bourdieu, I have followed all three strategies. I began by ignoring him, but that could not be sustained as he gathered steam in the last two decades of the twentieth century. I then attempted demolition but I was certainly not adequate to that task. The more I read the more impressed I became, leading me to a more complex process of absorption and critical appreciation. The result are the essays in this book that put Bourdieu into conversation with others.

Turning the spotlight back on Bourdieu, we see he is a past master at dealing with intellectual opponents, pursuing a combination of all three strategies: ignoring, demolishing, and absorbing. The title, if not the content, of Pierre Carles's 2001 film on Bourdieu, *La sociologie est un sport de combat*, captures Bourdieu's often combative approach toward others, for which he achieved some infamy, especially in France. Like any other major figure he was very selective about whom he engaged, ignoring vast swaths of contemporary sociology. Thus, much of this book is recovering conversations that never took place—conversations that Bourdieu refused. It is as if by showing the limitations of Marx's theory, it was not necessary to engage Marxism, even though Marxism had earlier made the same critiques of Marx as Bourdieu had. He followed the first principle of intellectual combat—to recognize, even critically, is to arm the enemy.¹

Compared to Talcott Parsons or Jürgen Habermas, who built on the shoulders of giants, Bourdieu tends to bury the shoulders on which he stands, so that he becomes his own giant, the source of his own genius. He is well-known for appropriating the ideas of opponents without recognition. When the original author is well-known, he turns them into an enemy, distorts their ideas in order to facilitate their demolition, and thereby rises above them as a superior thinker. This is especially the case with regard to Marxism. Thus, he tries to hide the influence of Althusser and other structuralists with a two-pronged strategy: for the most part ignoring them while occasionally subjecting them to withering attacks. In ignoring or dismissing Gramsci (chapter 3), he deliberately overlooks the parallels between symbolic violence and hegemony. He claimed not to have read Gramsci,

although that does not stop him from opportunistically citing Gramsci's critique of the sectarian tendencies of the Italian Communist Party. Similarly, he largely ignores his archenemy, Fanon, except for the occasional denunciation (chapter 4). This strategy reaches a climax in his dismissal of Simone de Beauvoir (chapter 6). He conceals the fact that *Masculine Domination* is a pale imitation of *The Second Sex* by ignoring Beauvoir except in a single footnote, where he dismisses her, and thus her work, as being in thrall to the symbolic violence of Sartre. It is ironic that, in a book devoted to exposing the way men silence women, Bourdieu should dismiss the author of the foundational work of second-wave feminism.

In this case Bourdieu deploys all three strategies—ignoring Beauvoir, appropriating Beauvoir (without recognition), and then belittling her by reducing her ideas to those of Sartre. What is Bourdieu up to? A Bourdieusian approach might focus on Bourdieu's place in the French academic field, which he enters with little inherited cultural capital, developing what he calls his cleft habitus, a psychic reaction to his own sense of estrangement and marginality. Analysis of habitus goes hand in hand with an examination of the distinctiveness of the academic field and, in particular, its rules of combat that make dismissal and demolition such an acceptable strategy in France but a dangerous game to play in the US. The logic of the scientific field, the practices it legitimates, and the corresponding habitus it cultivates vary across countries.

INTELLECTUALS ON THE ROAD TO CLASS POWER

As Bourdieu's field analysis defines struggle for domination through the accumulation of field-specific capital, so there is always the temptation to reduce ideas and projects to interests defined by position in the field. Indeed, Bourdieu's shift from being concerned with developing an inaccessible scientific sociology to being more focused on public engagement can be explained in terms of his ascendancy to a dominant position within the academic field. However, his contradictory assessment of the character of working class struggles as between Algeria and France might be explained by the different contexts of the working class or different class habitus or by Bourdieu's shift from the Algerian political field to the French political field.

Looking at the field itself, individuals might adopt a strategy that maximizes resources through playing the game, but they may take a more risky strategy of trying to change the rules of the game, or even change the game altogether. Bourdieu had a political project that launched him from

the academic field into public and political spheres—we can call it intellectuals on the road to class power.

The roots of this project were planted in Algeria, but the project really begins when he returns to France. Accordingly, I represent his career as having three stages: in the first stage, he reconstitutes sociology as a respectable academic discipline by changing the rules; in the second stage, he presents sociology as the vanguard of intellectuals by moving beyond the academic field into the public sphere; and in the third stage, the purely political phase, sociology comes to represent the interests of humanity.

In his early writings on France—*Reproduction* and *Distinction*—he seeks to establish the distinctive place of the sociologist as scientist. Here Bourdieu develops the unique science of sociology—at that time a moribund discipline in France—centering on the theory of symbolic violence, the cement that holds society together. This gives sociology privileged access to the hidden abodes of domination. As a science competing with other sciences and especially philosophy, its status is at least partly established through its *inaccessibility* to all but the initiated.

Once established as the theory of symbolic violence, sociology can presume to represent the interests of all intellectuals, defending cultural production in toto. The driving force for stasis and change is not class struggle but classification struggle—a struggle by and for intellectuals. This second phase of intellectuals on the road to class power coincides with Bourdieu's election to an exalted professorship in the Collège de France, allowing him to move from representing a single segment of the intellectual stratum to representing the stratum as a whole. From being the vanguard of sociologists Bourdieu seeks to make sociology the vanguard discipline of all intellectuals. His sociology embraces the work of artists, scientists, literary figures, journalists, lawyers, teachers. Few intellectuals are left out of account. He is now operating in the public sphere.

The third and final phase, the hegemonic phase, occurs when Bourdieu presents intellectuals as representing the interests of all—a move that calls for a far more sympathetic view of the dominated. He has to recognize them and support their collective action. He dignifies them with a rationality corresponding to their subjugation, rather than pejoratively describing them as blinded by their habitus, subject to misrecognition, and bereft of any positive cultural capital. Starting with *The Weight of the World*, the last ten years of Bourdieu's life were, indeed, devoted to intellectuals aspiring to power, standing at the head of social movements to combat a deepening neoliberalism. As he writes in *On Television* ([1996] 1999), the intellectual

must pay not only an “entry fee” to acquire expertise in science or art that excludes the dilettante but also an “exit duty”—the obligation to speak to and for all. In his later years Bourdieu did gather around him a group of internationally distinguished intellectuals who defended social justice and human rights. This was his Internationale of intellectuals.

The idea of intellectuals on the road to class power derives from György Konrád and Iván Szelényi's (1979) classic work on state socialism. They claimed that in *state socialism* the dominant class performed the intellectual function of teleological redistributor, that is, the role of the planner who appropriates and then redistributes goods and services. The planners' job is to define the needs of society and who shall realize them—the function of an intellectual. Of course, it is one thing to say planners perform an intellectual *function* and another to claim that intellectuals, defined by their specialization in the production of ideas and techniques, actually *occupy* a dominant position. In the economic reforms of the 1970s across Eastern Europe, Konrád and Szelényi envisioned intellectuals arriving at their destiny, their true place in society.

But that was not to be.² Instead of intellectuals ascending into command positions, the entire order dissolved. The central appropriation and redistribution of surplus was overt and therefore only assured through some combination of force and legitimation that often followed each other in cyclical fashion. This proved to be a precarious way of sustaining domination—making legitimation claims for socialism encouraged dissent which only intensified when force was applied.

The stability of advanced capitalism and the instability of state socialism cannot be attributed to processes of socialization, as this was as intensive and systematic in state socialism as in advanced capitalism.³ In explaining the difference we might do better to consider the structure of these two societies and the social games they generate. Advanced capitalism possesses a relatively open and autonomous civil society that effectively absorbs and diverts practices into self-contained institutions (or fields, in Bourdieu's terms). Each institution organizes its own distinctive game or games—defined by taken-for-granted assumptions (*illusio*) and guiding principle (*nomos*). If advanced capitalism is distinguished by its civil society, it might follow that symbolic violence is a phenomenon of advanced capitalism, at least in regard to the game-metaphoric conception of social structure. In state socialism there is only a limited civil society and, moreover, one that superimposes a game-like structure defined by the party state. There's no concealing class domination. For Bourdieu, however, symbolic violence ha

a universal validity; it has no historical limits. It is a general theory of social order without a corresponding particular theory of particular societies.

Returning to the question of intellectuals, if they are on the road to class power under state socialism, what is their position under capitalism? Szelenyi (1982) himself argued that, in contrast to state socialism, under capitalism where private property rules and markets distribute, intellectuals play a subsidiary role. They hold a contradictory class position, as Erik Wright (1978) once put it, divided in their allegiance between dominant and dominated classes. Once we introduce capitalism as the context for intellectuals, Bourdieu's project takes on an entirely different meaning. An Internationale of intellectuals, seemingly autonomous from and even critical of the dominant class, becomes a vehicle for the reproduction of capitalism by suppressing the very idea of capitalism and failing to project an alternative beyond capitalism. In failing to give capitalism its due place in history, Bourdieu exaggerates the importance of intellectuals and the state—overlooking the multiple institutions that conspire to reproduce symbolic violence as mystification, starting with the capitalist economy itself but extending to all the institutions of civil society. In misrecognizing capitalism Bourdieu is committing his own scholastic fallacy.

MISRECOGNIZING CAPITALISM

Like Marx, Weber, and Durkheim before him, the genius of Bourdieu lies in his theory of social reproduction, specifically his *theory of symbolic violence*—a still unexplored combination of a psychology of internalization and a sociology of games. As I have been at pains to suggest, there are two prongs to symbolic violence—a prereflexive unconscious element and a more reflexive, conscious game-playing element. What is left unresolved in Bourdieu's account is the relationship between the reflexive and the prereflexive, the conscious and the unconscious dimensions of the habitus. How does each influence the other? For that he needs a far richer psychology.⁴

Nonetheless, his theory of symbolic violence raises the question as to how it is that sociology can excavate a truth inaccessible to the agents it studies but also a truth more valid than that of neighboring disciplines. Here Bourdieu goes beyond the canon, subjecting sociology to the sociological eye. He develops a *reflexive sociology*—a sociology of the scientific field that is rooted in his theory of symbolic violence. The sociologist works in a competitive field that incentivizes the advance of science and that develops an interest in disinterestedness. This is the nature of all scientific fields, but sociology is special in that it does not commit the scholastic fallacy of mis-

taking the field of science for the world of the participant, the logic of theory for the logic of practice. Bourdieu asks how it is that everyday practices create a world which conforms to the social theory discovered in the “laboratory.” Theory is incomplete if the sociologist does not understand how the practice of subjects makes sociology simultaneously true and obscure.

This is the third distinctive feature of Bourdieu's sociology—*engagement with the world of the participant*. Through such an engagement the participant observer can understand how agents simultaneously secure and obscure the relations of domination. Even so, it is not clear how this combination of theoretical reflection and practical engagement can transcend the deeply embedded and embodied habitus that occupies the sociologist like anyone else. Do sociologists have some privileged access to their own unconscious habitus?

Returning to the discursive realm, Bourdieu's challenge to Marxism lies in his intellectualist theory of knowledge—that truth is produced in artistic and scientific fields, each requiring a certain leisured existence, removed from material necessity. A Marxist theory of knowledge, by contrast, claims that truth is ultimately rooted in and validated by the experience of subjugation. Truth is the standpoint of the subaltern, even if it is produced elsewhere. In Gramsci's terms, for Bourdieu the common sense of the subaltern is entirely bad sense, whereas for Marxism the common sense of the subaltern contains a kernel of good sense, even if the outer layers are subject to the distortions of ideology. In the Gramscian view organic intellectuals exist to elaborate the good sense of the subaltern, while traditional intellectuals create ideologies that justify and elicit participation in and consent to capitalism. The counterpart to Bourdieu's classification struggle is a struggle between intellectuals representing different classes—not between ideologies but on the terrain of a dominant ideology. The more autonomous and critical traditional intellectuals appear to be, the more effective their representation of a universal interest, but it is a false universality as it obscures the fundamental structures and strictures of capitalism.⁵

The university, especially the elite university, is the home of Bourdieu's corporatism of the universal, from which the organic intellectual of humanity can project itself. Fearing the doxosophers—the pretenders to the scholarly throne—or the opportunistic allies of the doxosophers, Bourdieu defends the autonomy of the university. But the university is undergoing a major transformation.

In the past we could speak of the *university in capitalist society*, hemmed in by all sorts of constraints but still a self-governing knowledge

workshop, designed to enhance the public good. It could be conceived of as a “subject” with its own agency or an “object” manipulated by outside forces, but, at its best, its internal structure was as close to a large-scale socialist cooperative as you’ll find under capitalism. Today, however, we must conceive of the university as a set of social relations embedded in the wider society. More and more it is a *capitalist university* whose very structure mimics a capitalist corporation.

As public funding is withdrawn, the university—the world over—becomes a profit center, cutting costs and creating revenues. It cuts costs through a vast array of strategies: from new digital technology that makes possible distance learning, to the expansion of contingent faculty and the steady decline (in numbers and in power) of faculty with security of employment, to an array of outsourcing arrangements, whether to janitors or management consultants. On the other hand, it increases revenue by seeking funds from alumni interested in immortality by sponsoring new buildings or athletics, from industries such as pharmaceuticals seeking partnerships based on cheap graduate student research, and, most notably, by increasing student tuition and creating new degree programs that charge exorbitant fees. All this is accomplished by an expanding administration bent on the proletarianization of university labor and the degradation of education, all disguised with corporate-speak. As the university becomes less hospitable to Bourdieu’s autonomous scientific field, as its capitalist structure becomes transparent, it becomes a terrain of struggle and its claims to autonomy becomes ever more illusory, not just from internal clash of interests but also from the invasion of outside forces.

In the US and elsewhere, the university is becoming a playground for the political Right as well as the political Left. The once-dominant liberal consensus is under assault from conservatives who no longer assume the university to be off-limits for their political projects. Small right-wing student cells with outside funding are abetting the invasion of campuses by extremist political forces. We can no longer imagine the university to be outside politics as Bourdieu seemed to believe—it is fast becoming a capitalist machine and a political battleground.

The university is still an arena for the production and reception of ideas, but the process of production has changed—faculty are losing control of their labor and of its products, while students are rapidly becoming indebted and desperate consumers. The class structure of the university is polarizing, and tenure-track academics have a choice: to collaborate with the administrative class or to side with dispossessed students, contingent lectur-

ers, and beleaguered staff. In the short term their interests are to preserve the privileges of a labor aristocracy, but in the long term their common interests lie with the dispossessed because, with the exception of an ever-dwindling minority, they too will be dispossessed of their security and autonomy.

Structure and superstructure are becoming one. As the university moves from an ivory tower to a key battleground over ideas, the struggle against pro-capitalist ideologies assumes greater urgency and renewed vigor. The “autonomous” traditional intellectual is being squeezed out of existence having now to take sides within as well as beyond the capitalist university—the claim of universality appears increasingly bogus. Anyone who examines the conditions of production of knowledge today cannot misrecognize capitalism.

If the followers of Bourdieu can no longer misrecognize capitalism and its pathologies, in grappling with the appeal of capitalism, Marxists have much to learn from Bourdieu’s explorations of symbolic violence.