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The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

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Abstract and Keywords

Chapter abstract Marx and Bourdieu embark from similar criticisms of philosophers as suffering from the illusion that ideas make history—what Marx calls ideology and Bourdieu calls scholastic reason. Accordingly, both turn from the logic of theory to the logic of practice. However, where Marx sees the relations of production as leading to class struggle and revolution, Bourdieu sees bodily practice as instilling symbolic domination through habitus. This leads Marx and Bourdieu to adopt divergent views of history, divergent approaches to social change, divergent roots of symbolic domination, and divergent perspectives on contentious politics. If the followers of Marx seek to explain the quiescence of the working class by developing theories of cultural hegemony, will the followers of Bourdieu build a research program that focuses on the internal contradictions and external anomalies of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic domination?

Keywords: Chapter, Bourdieu, Marx, class struggle, revolution, domination, habitus

Economic conditions first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle.

—Karl Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847

The historical success of Marxist theory, the first social theory to claim scientific status that has so completely realized its potential in the social world, thus contributes to ensuring that the theory of the social world which is the least capable of integrating the *theory effect*—that it, more than any other, has created

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

—is doubtless, today, the most powerful obstacle to the progress of the adequate theory of the social world to which it has, in times gone by, more than any other contributed.

—Pierre Bourdieu, *Social Spaces and the Genesis of “Classes,”* 1984

WHAT IS Bourdieu saying here? The historical success of Marxism is to have constituted the idea of *class* out of a bundle of attributes shared by an arbitrary assemblage of people, what he calls “class on paper.” Aided by parties, trade unions, the media, and propaganda—an “immense historical labor of theoretical and practical invention, starting with Marx himself” (Bourdieu 1991 [1984]: 251)—Marxism effectively called forth the representation and, through representation, the belief in the existence of the “working class” as a real “social fiction” that otherwise would have had only potential existence.

(p. 376) However, this social fiction, this belief in the existence of the working class, is a far cry from “class as action, a real and really mobilized group,” (Bourdieu 1991 [1984]: 251), let alone a revolutionary actor as imagined by the Marxist tradition—a tradition that suffers from a self-misunderstanding. The Marxist tradition does not see itself as *constituting* the idea and representation of the working class, but rather as a scientific theory *discovering* and then *expressing* the historical emergence of an objective “class-in-itself” that was destined to become a “class-for-itself,” making history in its own image. Marx’s claim is summarized in the preceding quotation from the *Poverty of Philosophy*, where Marx excoriates Proudhon for confusing reality and economic categories, for making the intellectualist error of seeing history as the emanation of ideas, rather than ideas as the expression of reality. Bourdieu is now turning the tables back against Marxism, accusing Marx of being a crude materialist, overlooking the importance of the symbolic.

In this chapter I give Marx the chance to respond to Bourdieu, by putting the two theorists into dialogue around their divergent theories of history, social transformation, symbolic domination, and contentious politics. To construct such an imaginary conversation, I set out from what they share, namely a contempt for the illusory nature of philosophy. In following their disparate engagements with the conundrum of intellectuals repudiating intellectualism, I trace a succession of parallel steps that reveal the internal tensions and contradictions of each body of theory. But first, we must comprehend Bourdieu’s complex critique of *Marxism*, which he reduces to the shortcomings of Marx’s own theory.

Bourdieu Meets Marxism

Bourdieu acknowledges the immense influence of Marxism. But, Bourdieu argued, Marxism did not have the tools to understand its influence, its own effect—its “theory effect”—without which, according to Bourdieu, there would have been no “working class.” As a powerful symbolic system, Marxism gave life and meaning to the category “working class,” which then had a significant impact on history.¹ But Marxism could not comprehend its own power—the power of its symbols and its political interventions—because it did not possess and incorporate a theory of symbolic domination. When Marx was writing, this lacuna did not matter, as the economy still constituted the only autonomous field in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, and the symbolic world was still underdeveloped. However, with the elaboration of separate cultural, scientific, educational, legal, and bureaucratic fields in the late nineteenth century, and without an understanding of these fields, Marxism lost its grip on reality and its theory became retrograde, becoming a “powerful obstacle to the progress of the adequate theory of the social world” (Bourdieu 1991 [1984]: 251). These fields of symbolic production engendered their own domination effects, overriding and countering Marxism’s symbolic power, which had depended on the overriding predominance of the economy.

(p. 377) Disarmed both as science and ideology, Marxism is unable to compete with other theories that place symbolic power at the center of analysis. As *science*, Marxism does not understand that a classification or representational struggle has to precede class struggle (i.e., classes have to be constituted symbolically before they can engage in struggle). This requires a theory of cultural production that it fails to elaborate. As *ideology*, without such a theory of cultural production, Marxism can no longer compete in the classification struggle over the visions and divisions of society. Marxism loses its symbolic power, and the working class retreats back to a class on paper—merely an analytical category of an academic theory. Marxism becomes regressive, an obstacle to the development of social theory.²

Bourdieu mounts a powerful indictment of Marx, but pointedly ignores the significance of Western Marxism—from Korsch to Lukacs, from the Frankfurt School to Gramsci—whose *raison d’être* was to wrestle with the problem of cultural domination and the meaning of Marxism in a world of ideological hegemony. Many of their ideas are congruent with Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic domination.³ To understand what the Marxist tradition has accomplished in this regard, it is necessary, as a first step, to concentrate on the real limitations of Marx. Against Bourdieu’s sweeping dismissal, I restore the voice of Marx, repressed or contorted in Bourdieu’s writings, to create a more balanced exchange. The imaginary conversation that follows, therefore, is neither a combat sport nor a higher synthesis, but rather aims at mutual clarification. Following Bourdieu’s own call for relational analysis—although he rarely applies this to himself—we cannot appreciate the field of intellectual contest without representing both players, Marx and Bourdieu. By

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

posing each theory as a challenge to the other, we can better appreciate their distinctiveness—their defining anomalies and contradictions, as well as their divergent *problematiques*.

Since Marx pre-dates Bourdieu, it is he who sets the terms of the conversation, but my framing will be one that is favorable to Bourdieu's critique, namely Marx's four postulates of historical materialism. First, *history* is seen as a succession of modes of production, arranged in ascending order according to the development of the forces of production. Second, each mode of production has a *dynamics* of its own, within which reproduction gives rise to transformation and finally self-destruction. Third, *ideological domination* is secured through the superstructures of society, as well as through the mystifying powers of economic activity, both in production and in exchange. Fourth, *class struggle* arches forward, dissolving mystification and the "muck of ages" to usher in the era of communism. As I will show, each postulate raises as many questions for Bourdieu's counter-theory as it does for Marx's historical materialism.

To begin a conversation, there needs to be a point of departure that is also a point of agreement. That point of agreement is their common critique of philosophy that Marx⁴ calls "ideology" and Bourdieu calls "scholastic reason." They both repudiate the illusory ideas of intellectuals and turn to the logic of practice—labor in the case of Marx, bodily practice in the case of Bourdieu. This leads Marx to the working class and its revolutionary potential, while Bourdieu moves in the opposite direction—from the dominated back to the dominant classes who exercise symbolic violence. I show how Marx ends (p. 378) up in a materialist cul-de-sac, while Bourdieu ends up in an idealist cul-de-sac. No less than Marx, but for different reasons, Bourdieu cannot grasp his own "theory effect." They each break out of their respective dead ends in ad hoc ways that contradict the premises of their theories—paradoxes that lay the foundations for the elaboration of two opposed traditions.

Divergent Paths from the Poverty of Philosophy

Uncanny parallels join Marx and Engels's critique of the "German ideology" (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]) and Bourdieu's critique of "scholastic reason" in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000 [1997]). In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels settle accounts with Hegel and the Young Hegelians, just as Bourdieu in *The Logic of Practice* and, later, in *Pascalian Meditations* settles his scores with his own philosophical rivals, especially Sartre and Althusser. Both Marx and Bourdieu condemn philosophy's disposition to dismiss practical engagement with the world. As Marx writes in the first thesis on Feuerbach, the German philosophers elevate the theoretical attitude as the "only genuinely human attitude," while practice is only conceived in "its dirty-judaical manifestation." Bourdieu's immersion in the Algerian war of independence and his experience of the raw violence of colonialism call into question the relevance of his

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

philosophical training at the *École Normale Supérieure*, just as, for Marx, the horrors of the industrial revolution in Britain made nonsense of the lofty pretensions of German idealism.⁵

Still, *Pascalian Meditations* is Bourdieu's culminating theoretical work in which Pascal is presented as an inspirational philosophical break with philosophy, centering the importance of the practice of ordinary people, emphasizing symbolic power exercised over the body, and refusing the emanation of pure philosophy from the heads of philosophers. *The German Ideology*, on the other hand, is not a culminating work, but an originating work that clears the foundations for Marx's theory of historical materialism and materialist history. Although they appear at different stages in their careers, their arguments against philosophy are, nonetheless, surprisingly convergent.

Let us begin with Marx and Engels scoffing at the Young Hegelians, who think they are making history, when they are but counter-posing one phrase to another:

As we hear from German ideologists, Germany has in the last few years gone through an unparalleled revolution. The decomposition of the Hegelian philosophy . . . has developed into a universal ferment into which all the "powers of the past" are swept. . . . It was a revolution besides which the French Revolution was child's play, a world struggle beside which the struggles of the Diadochi appear insignificant. Principles ousted one another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard-of rapidity and in the three years 1842–45 more of the past (p. 379) was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries. All this is supposed to have taken place in the realm of pure thought. (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]: 147)

Here is Bourdieu's parallel attack on modern and postmodern philosophers:

Now, if there is one thing that our "modern" or "postmodern" philosophers have in common, beyond the conflicts that divide them, it is this excessive confidence in the powers of language. It is the typical illusion of the *lector*, who can regard an academic commentary as a political act or the critique of texts as a feat of resistance, and experience revolutions in the order of words as radical revolutions in the order of things. (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 2)

The argument is the same: we must not confuse a war of words with the transformation of the real world, the power of language with the power of practice, things of logic with the logic of things.

But how is it that philosophers mistake their own world for the real world? The answer lies in their oblivion to the social and economic conditions under which they produce knowledge. For Marx, it is simply the division between mental and manual labor that encourages the illusion that ideas or consciousness drives history:

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears. *From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice*, that it *really* represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of “pure” theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]: 159; emphasis added)

Emancipated from manual labor, upon which their existence nevertheless rests, philosophers imagine that history is moved by their thought. “It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers,” Marx and Engels (1978 [1845–1846]: 149) write, “to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings.”

In identical fashion, Bourdieu argues that philosophers fail to understand the peculiarity of the conditions that make it possible to produce “pure” theory:

But there is no doubt nothing more difficult to apprehend, for those who are immersed in universes in which it goes without saying, than the scholastic disposition demanded by those universes. There is nothing that “pure” thought finds it harder to think than *skholé*, the first and most determinant of all the social conditions of possibility of “pure” thought, and also the scholastic disposition which inclines its possessors to suspend the demands of the situation, the constraints of economic and social necessity. (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 12)

(p. 380) The scholastic disposition calls forth the illusion that knowledge is freely produced and that it is not the product of specific conditions—unlike the knowledge of the dominated classes, which is driven by material necessity. Bourdieu does not limit his critique of the scholastic fallacy—that is, repression of the conditions peculiar to intellectual life—to philosophers, but broadens it to other disciplines. He criticizes anthropologists, such as Lévi-Strauss, and economists for universalizing their own particular experience, foisting their abstract models onto the recalcitrant practice of ordinary mortals. Much as Marx is contemptuous of the Young Hegelians, Bourdieu satirizes Sartre’s existentialist renditions of everyday life—the waiter who contemplates the heavy decision of whether to get up in the morning or not. For most people, most of the time, argues Bourdieu, mundane tasks are accomplished without reflection. Only *sociologists*—reflexively applying sociology to themselves and, more generally, to the production of knowledge—can potentially appreciate the limitations of scholastic reason, and the necessary distinction between the logic of theory and the logic of practice.

If both Marx and Bourdieu are critical of intellectuals who think ideas drive history, their corresponding turns to practice are very different. For Marx, it is a turn to the conditions of labor that produce the means of existence:

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]: 149)

It is from these material conditions of production that Marx derives the dynamics of capitalism and deepening class struggle: as capitalists compete, so they innovate in ways that lead to the polarization of wealth and poverty, giving rise to crises of overproduction on the one side and intensifying class struggles on the other. For Bourdieu this is an (unexamined) mythology—albeit a powerful one at certain points in history—created by intellectuals unable to comprehend the inurement of workers to their conditions of existence because, as intellectuals, they misrecognize the peculiarity of their own conditions of existence. Or, as he pithily puts it, “[p]opulism is never anything other than an inverted ethnocentrism” (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]: 374). Instead of the transformative power of the working class, Bourdieu turns to the generative power of *habitus* implanted in a socialized body.

In other words, one has to construct a materialist theory which (in accordance with the wish that Marx expressed in the *Theses on Feuerbach*) is capable of taking from idealism the “active side” of practical knowledge that the materialist tradition has abandoned to it. This is precisely the notion of the function of *habitus*, which restores to the agent a generating, unifying, constructing, classifying power, while recalling that this capacity to construct social reality, itself socially constructed, is not that of a (p. 381) transcendental subject but of a socialized body, investing in its practice socially constructed organizing principles that are acquired in the course of a situated and dated social experience. (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 136–137)

As the unconscious incorporation of social structure, *habitus* leads Bourdieu not only to abandon the working class as “transcendental subject,” but also to deny the very possibility that the dominated can grasp the conditions of their subjugation, something only the sociologist can apprehend. The sociologist, and more broadly the “International of Intellectuals,” thereby becomes Bourdieu’s putative “transcendental subject.”

In short, after breaking with ideology/scholastic reason and arriving at the logic of practice, Marx and Bourdieu then take diametrically opposed paths—the one focuses on the dominated embedded in production relations, whereas the other turns his back on the dominated in order to return to the dominant class-producing symbolic relations. The remainder of this chapter explores these two roads—how they diverge and create their own distinctive sets of paradoxes and dilemmas.

History: Modes of Productions versus Differentiated Fields

Out of their common critiques of philosophy arise divergent conceptions of history. For Marx the logic of practice is embedded in the concrete social relations into which men and women enter as they transform nature. These social relations form the mode of production with two components: the forces of production (relations through which men and women collaborate in producing the means of existence, including the mode of cooperation and the technology it deploys) and the relations of production (the relations of exploitation and ownership through which surplus is produced by a class of direct producers and appropriated by a dominant class). Modes of production succeed each other—ancient, feudal, and capitalist—in a sequence measured by the expansion of the forces of production. As the final mode of production, capitalism gives way to communism, which, being without classes and thus without exploitation, allows for the realization of human talents and needs. It is only with capitalism that the direct producers (i.e., the working class), through their struggles against capital, come to recognize their role as agents of human emancipation.

In rejecting Marx's teleology as an intellectual fantasy, one might expect Bourdieu to offer an alternative theory of history and a conception of the future. But neither are forthcoming. Instead, his work *describes* a movement from traditional to modern marked, first and foremost, by different conceptions of time—the one in which the future is the repetition of the past (cyclical time), and the other in which the future is indefinite, full of possibilities, and susceptible to rational planning. Additionally, along Durkheimian lines, Bourdieu (1979 [1963]) distinguishes traditional society in Algeria (p. 382) from the modern society in France by the emergence and differentiation of *fields* (autonomous spheres of action) and by the pluralization of *capitals*—resources accumulated within fields, and partially convertible across fields.

Whereas Marx has a succession of modes of production that govern human behavior, Bourdieu has multiple coexisting "fields." They appear as elaborations of Marx's "superstructures," which, as he writes in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, are the "legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophical forms in which men become conscious of this [class] conflict and fight it out" (Marx and Engels 1978 [1859]: 5). Thus, Bourdieu has written extended essays on the legal, the political, the bureaucratic, the religious, the philosophical, the journalistic, the scientific, the artistic, and the educational fields. The notion of field draws on and generalizes certain features of Marx's concept of the capitalist mode of production. Indeed, underlining that association, Bourdieu refers to cultural fields as the *political economy* of symbolic goods.

As with the capitalist mode of production, so with the notion of field, individuals enter into relations of competition to accumulate field-specific capital according to field-specific rules. Competition among actors takes place alongside struggles for domination of the

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

field—struggles whose objects are the very rules and stakes that define the field and its capital. In Bourdieu's (1975) analysis of the scientific field, for example, competition leads to the concentration of academic capital, so that challenges from below can either follow a pattern of succession, holding onto the coat tails of a powerful figure, or the more risky subversive strategies that change the rules of the game, and if successful, can generate far more capital in the long run. When capital is diffused and competition intense, dominant groups can be overthrown in a "revolution," but when capital is more heavily concentrated, then change is more continuous, what he calls a "permanent revolution."

The analogy to Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production is clear, except that in Bourdieu's notion of field there is no mention of exploitation. It is as if capitalism were confined to competition and domination among capitalists, with workers removed from the field. As Mathieu Desan (2013) has argued at length, Bourdieu's conception of field rests on a notion of capital that is far from Marx's—the accumulation of resources, rather than a relation of exploitation.⁶ Indeed, Bourdieu's only book devoted to the economy as such, *The Social Structures of the Economy* (2005), concerns the social underpinning of the housing market. Here Bourdieu focuses on the role of habitus and taste in the matching of supply and demand for different types of housing. There is no attempt to study housing from the standpoint of its production process—from the standpoint of construction workers, for example. When he turns to the firm as a field, again he focuses on the managers and directors who make decisions, rather than workers who produce the goods (without which there would be no decisions). Fields are confined to the dominant classes, whereas the dominated classes only inhabit the structures of social space.

Bourdieu replaces Marx's *diachronic* succession of modes of production, which pays little attention to the superstructures, with a *synchronic* account of the functioning and coexistence of fields. This poses the question of the relations among fields, marked by (p. 383) the recognition of autonomous and heteronomous poles within each field. In *Rules of Art* (1996 [1992]) Bourdieu describes the genesis of the literary field in nineteenth-century France. At its core was Flaubert's drive for literature for literature's sake, which required a break, on the one hand, from art sponsored by the bourgeoisie, and, on the other hand, from social realism connected to everyday life. Bourdieu builds into each field a struggle for autonomy against the heteronomous influence of external fields—a struggle that is complicated by challenges to the consecrated elites from the avant-garde.

In his later writings he was particularly concerned with the economic field's subversion of the autonomy of other fields. Thus, in his book *On Television*, Bourdieu (1999 [1996]) describes the subjugation of the journalistic field to the economic field through advertising revenue that demands the widest appeal through the propagation of banalities, sensationalism, and fabrication. This, in turn, distorted the dissemination of knowledge and accomplishments of other fields, not least the field of social science, through amateurish intermediaries he calls "doxosophers" who neutralize any critical message. No less than other fields, the political field is also subject to controlling

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

intervention from economic actors. Although he alludes to the domination of the economic field over other fields, Bourdieu has no theory of the economy and its expansive tendencies.

In addition to the domination of the economic field, Bourdieu describes a field of power that traverses different fields, bringing together their elites into a shared competition for power. This rather amorphous arrangement reminds one of Weber's separate value spheres with a realm of power that oversees society, but again there is no analysis of its dynamics. What is notably missing is any theory of the relations of interdependence and domination *among* fields. As Gil Eyal (2013) has noted, it is curious that someone so concerned about relations *within* fields pays so little attention to the relations *among* fields. Just as there is no theory of history, there is no theory of the totality, just an arbitrary assemblage of supposedly "homologous" fields.⁷

Social Change: Systemic Transformation versus Hysteresis

We have seen the contrast between Marx's history as the succession of modes of production and Bourdieu's vision of coexisting fields, but Marx also has a notion of history as the dynamics of a mode of production, namely the way the reproduction of capitalism is simultaneously its transformation. Indeed, the capitalist mode of production distinguishes itself by reproducing itself, which is a mechanism of reproduction that operates without recourse to external forces, very different from the feudal mode of production that requires extra-economic coercion. Under capitalism the worker arrives at work each day to produce value that contributes to her wage on the one side and to capitalist profit on the other. Needing to survive, she comes to work and does the same the next day. But as capitalism reproduces itself in this way, so it also transforms itself. As (p. 384) capitalists compete with one another, they innovate by reducing the proportion of the worker's day contributing to the wage (necessary labor) and increasing the proportion contributing to profit (surplus labor)—through the intensification of work, deskilling, new technology, and so on—which leads to class polarization and crises of overproduction. Is there an equivalent in Bourdieu whereby reproduction becomes the basis of social change?

At the heart of Bourdieu's theory of reproduction is the notion of *habitus*, a concept first developed in relation to the traditional Kabyle society.

The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus. (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]: 78)

Structures generate practices that reproduce structures through the mediation of habitus, which is itself the product of structures, but such reproduction allows room for innovation within limits defined by structures. It is parallel to Marx's formula: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx and Engels 1978 [1852]: 595). From Bourdieu's point of view, what is missing here is the way not just circumstances but individuals carry the past within themselves, so that their innovative power is limited as well as facilitated not just by external but also by internal structures.

Through the *habitus*, the structure of which it is the product governs practice, not along the paths of a mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions. . . . Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning. (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: 55)

Just as moves in a game are improvisations limited by and, thereby, reproducing the rules of the game, so habitus is the generative principle of practices that are innovative, but only within limits defined by the social structures they reproduce. Bourdieu often uses the game metaphor to illustrate the spontaneous and unthinking responses of players. He is thinking of tennis or rugby, where players develop a sense of the game and there's no time to reflect, but of course there are games like American football where self-conscious reflection plays its part, or games like chess where it is key. Still, the point stands, habitus is the development of skills to improvise within limits defined by the rules. The social order inscribes itself in the largely unconscious habitus through regularized participation in successive social structures. The development of habitus proceeds (p. 385) in phases, with each phase the basis of subsequent formations. Thus, the primary habitus formed in childhood through parenting lays the foundation for the secondary habitus formed in school, which in turn lays the foundations for a tertiary habitus formed at work, so that habitus is subject to continual revision, but within limits defined by its past, largely repressed and unconscious.⁸

Armed with habitus, Bourdieu's individual has much greater weight and depth than Marx's individual, who is the effect and support of the social relations into which she enters. For Bourdieu social relations become lodged in a durable, transposable and irreversible habitus, which has an autonomous effect through participation in different social structures. Marx, on the other hand, gives priority to social relations that impose themselves on individuals as "indispensable and independent of their will" (Marx and Engels 1978 [1859]: 4) without leaving any permanent psychic trace. Capitalist relations

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

impose themselves on individuals inexorably, irrespective of their experience in different institutions in society. Marx does not consider the effects of schools or family on the way people work or invest—he is solely interested in the logic of social relations independent of the distinctive features of individuals who support them. Bourdieu, by contrast, makes spheres beyond the economy key to understanding a given social order, and here lies the secret of both continuity and social change, or social change through continuity.

Habitus is durable; it has a tendency to persist when it confronts new social structures, a phenomenon he calls “hysteresis.” The resulting clash between habitus and structure can come about in many ways. First, it arises from the mobility of individuals, who carry a habitus cultivated in one set of structures and come up against the imperatives of another. Students from lower classes who enter a middle-class school find it difficult to adapt and either withdraw or rebel.⁹ When Algerian peasants with a traditional habitus migrate to an urban context, they suffer from anomie, leading to resignation or revolt (Bourdieu 1979 [1963]).

The disjuncture of structure and habitus can also come about through the superimposition of social structures. Bourdieu (1979 [1963]) describes the imposition of a colonial order on a traditional Kabyle society, disrupting accepted patterns of behavior and leading to anti-colonial revolution. In that revolution, however, Algerians develop a habitus, more in keeping with modernity, that embraces nationalist aspirations, what Bourdieu calls the “revolution in the revolution” (Bourdieu 1962 [1961]: Chapter 7). Or back in southern France in the Béarn where Bourdieu grew up, the modernization of agriculture disinherits the peasant farmer, who can no longer find a marriage partner with whom to produce the next generation of inheritors (Bourdieu 2008 [2002]). The farmer retreats into morose resignation, while young women, who are no longer prepared to put up with the drudgery of rural life, exit for the city—the one exhibiting an enduring habitus unable to adapt, the other endowed with a more flexible habitus generative of innovative response. The divergent responses of men and women are captured in the “bachelors’ ball,” where the degradation of the inheritors expresses itself in bodily discomfort and embarrassment as they ring the dance floor, watching the young women freely dancing with men from the town.

(p. 386) Bourdieu’s most often cited example of hysteresis is the devaluation of educational credentials that, in his view, explains the student protests in France of May 1968. In *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu (1988 [1984]) describes how the expansion of higher education created an oversupply of assistant lecturers whose upward mobility was consequently blocked. The ensuing tension between aspirations and opportunities not only affected the young assistants, but students more generally, who found that their degrees did not translate into expected jobs. The discordance between class habitus and the labor market appeared simultaneously in a number of fields so that their normally disparate temporal rhythms merged into a general crisis conducted in a singular public time and producing a historical drama that suspended common sense. In this view, we

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

might say that history is a succession of unanticipated “conjunctures,” unpredictable clashes that punctuate equilibria.

Bourdieu’s account of the dynamics of higher education is analogous to Marx’s account of the expansion of capitalism through capitalist competition, leading to the degradation of the working class, with two provisos. First, where Bourdieu takes the expansion of education as an unexplained given, an exogenous variable, Marx shows how the internal dynamics of capitalism leads to the concentration of capital and the immiseration of the working class. He has a theory of the rise and fall of capitalism. Second, where Bourdieu explains student revolt in terms of the mismatch of expectation and opportunity, disposition and position, Marx stresses the formation of a revolutionary working class as a response to changing social relations.

The fact that people move among a plurality of structures implies the ever-present *possibility* of social change. But this is not a *theory* of social change, which would require a far deeper understanding of the durability of the habitus—how it develops, how new layers of the habitus affect existing layers, leading to a dynamic psychology. But equally, it would require a theory of the resilience of social structures in the face of collective challenge from an enduring habitus. In other words, we need to theorize the consequences as well as the origins of the inevitable clashes between habitus and structure: when it leads to rebellion or revolution, when it leads to resignation or innovation, when it leads to exit or voice. Change is ubiquitous, but why and how are very unclear.

While the idea of habitus can be deployed to interpret social change and social protest, its main purpose is to explain continuity and underline how difficult social change is to accomplish. Like the French Marxism of the 1960s and 1970s—Althusser, Balibar, Godelier, Poulantzas (with whom he shares so much, leading him to stage exaggerated critiques)—Bourdieu’s functionalism was not necessarily an expression of conservatism that all is well in society, but rather an attempt to understand the resilience of social structures in the face of contestation, which brings us to the heart of his theory—symbolic domination.

Symbolic Domination: Mystification versus Misrecognition

Bourdieu developed a set of generative concepts—habitus, capital, and field—but without a theory of history, totality, or even collective action. What he does have, however, is (p. 387) a theory of symbolic domination. Once again, we would do well to begin with Marx and Engels, who famously write of the way ideology both appeals and obscures:

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, *the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it*, (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]: 172; emphasis added).

Having broken with ideology in order to make material relations the foundation of history, here Marx and Engels temporarily break back to ideology, namely to the power of illusory ideas in sustaining the domination of the dominant class. We should note that, like Bourdieu, Marx and Engels privilege intellectuals in the production of representations of society.

There is ambiguity in the meaning of Marx and Engels' notion of ideological subjugation. What does it mean to "subject" the dominated to the ideas of the ruling class? Bourdieu might be said to be elaborating Marx and Engels' ideological subjection when he writes,

Symbolic violence is the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator (and therefore to the domination) when their understanding of the situation and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which, being merely the incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination, make this relation appear as natural; or, in other words, when the schemes they implement in order to perceive and evaluate themselves or to perceive and evaluate the dominators (high/low, male/female, white/black, etc.) are the product of the incorporation of the (thus neutralized) classifications of which their social being is the product. (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 170)

Bourdieu's symbolic violence is irreversible and irrevocable. Subjugation inhabits the *habitus*, deep and unconscious. Bourdieu invokes the notion of *misrecognition* to convey the depth of subjugation. There is recognition, but it is false, inasmuch as it is based on the repression of the conditions of its production. We are like fish in water, unable to see the classifications we take for granted, arbitrary classifications that are the basis of an arbitrary domination.

Marx takes the idea of subjugation to ruling ideas in a different direction, arguing that the effectiveness of ruling ideology depends on their resonance with the *lived experience* of economic relations. Instead of misrecognition, with its implied depth psychology, Marx writes of *mystification* that affects anyone who enters capitalist relations. *It is an attribute of relations rather than the individual habitus*. Thus, under capitalism, exploitation is not experienced as such because it is hidden by the very character of production, which obscures the distinction between necessary and surplus labor, since workers appear to be paid for the entire workday. Similarly, participation in market exchange leads to

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

“commodity fetishism” whereby objects, which are bought and sold, are (p. 388) disconnected from their production—the social relations and human labor necessary to produce them. Again, capitalist relations of production are obscured not through an incorporated habitus, but through the relations of exchange.

For Marx, however, such mystification is dissolved through class struggle, leading the working class to see the truth of capitalism, on the one hand, and their role in transforming it, on the other:

It is not a matter of what this or that proletarian or even the proletariat as a whole *pictures* at present as its goal. It is a matter of *what the proletariat is in actuality*, and what in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do. Its goal and its historical action are prefigured in the most clear and ineluctable way in its own life-situation as well as in the whole organization of contemporary bourgeois society. There is no need to harp on the fact that a large part of the English and French proletariat is already *conscious* of its historic task and is continually working to bring this consciousness to full clarity. (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]: 134–135)

Yet, as Bourdieu insists, for the proletariat to rid itself of the “muck of ages,” as Marx and Engels put it in *The Germany Ideology* (1978 [1845–1846]: 193), is not easy. Only under unusual circumstances—and to some extent they pertained in nineteenth-century Europe—does class struggle assume an ascendant path, intensifying itself as it expands, demystifying relations of exploitation as described in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. There Marx and Engels support their claim by reference to class formation in nineteenth-century England—from scattered struggles to the advance of trade unions and finally to the formation of a national party that would seize state power. In *Class Struggles in France*, Marx (1964: 54) argues that the extension of suffrage would “unchain class struggle,” although Engels (some 50 years later and 50 years wiser) would be more cautious in proclaiming the imminent victory of the German working class.

This period of history corresponds to Bourdieu’s positive assessment of Marxism when it realized its potential in the social world. Subsequently, through its victories, through the concessions that the working class wins, its revolutionary temper weakens and its struggles come to be organized, increasingly *within* the framework of capitalism. From then on, Bourdieu can say that the symbolic violence incorporated in the lived experience prevails over the cathartic effect of struggle.

Having tarred the whole Marxist tradition with Marx’s revolutionary optimism, Bourdieu, by labeling it a scholastic illusion, then bends the stick in the opposite direction:

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

And another effect of the scholastic illusion is seen when people describe resistance to domination in the language of consciousness—as does the whole Marxist tradition and also the feminist theorists who, giving way to habits of thought, expect political liberation to come from the “raising of consciousness”—ignoring the extraordinary inertia which results from the inscription of social structures in bodies, for lack of a dispositional theory of practices. While making things explicit can help, only a thoroughgoing process of countertraining, involving repeated exercises, can, like an athlete’s training, durably transform habitus. (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 172)

(p. 389) What this “countertraining” might look like is never elaborated, but it has to dislodge the internalized and embodied habitus. Whether class struggle might be a form of “countertraining” is especially unclear, as Bourdieu never entertains the idea of class struggle or even allows for “collective resistance” to the dominant culture. The working classes are driven by the exigencies of material necessity, leading them to make a virtue out of a necessity. They embrace their functional lifestyle rather than reject the dominant culture. An alternative culture remains beyond their grasp, because they have neither the tools nor the leisure to create it (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]: Chapter 7).¹⁰

Still, Bourdieu does say that “making things explicit” (i.e., critical reflection) “can help” (i.e., can foster some insight into the conditions of subjugation). Yet we know little about the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious. Can critical reflection change the habitus, and if so, how? There is no theory of habitus to even make sense of the question. Indeed, Bourdieu sometimes seem to dismiss the very vocabulary of consciousness and with it the idea of ideology:

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)

Here Bourdieu misunderstands Marx, who tries to grapple with the relationship between ideology as representation and ideology as belief—representations are only effective insofar as they resonate with beliefs. The issue between Marx and Bourdieu is not the distinction between ideology and bodily knowledge, but rather the character of beliefs themselves, whether they are immanent to particular social relations or whether they inhabit the habitus, the cumulative effect of embodied biography.

Having written off the working classes as incapable of grasping the conditions of their oppression, Bourdieu is compelled to look elsewhere for ways of contesting symbolic domination. Having broken from scholastic reason to the logic of practice and having discovered that the logic of practice is impervious to truth, he breaks back to the logic of

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

theory, this time to the emancipatory science of sociology and to symbolic struggles within the dominant class. Let us follow his argument.

Contentious Politics: Class Struggle versus Classification Struggle

While Marx does indeed endow the working class with a historic mission of securing emancipation for all, it is also true that he pays as much, if not more, historical attention to the driving force of capitalism: the dominant class and its fractions. His crowning achievement—the theory of capitalism elaborated in *Capital*—focuses on the economic (p. 390) activities of the dominant class, the competition and interdependence among capitalists, as well as their creative destruction. When writing of politics in mid-nineteenth-century France, he dissects the relationship among different elites; when writing of the factory acts in England, he recognizes the different interests of fractions of capital as well as the landed classes; and when writing of colonialism, it is the interests of the bourgeoisie that concern him. His correspondence about politics was almost solely devoted to the strategies of different national ruling classes and their states. Throughout he was acutely aware of the relationship between the bourgeoisie and its ideologists. As he and Engels write in *The German Ideology*,

The division of labour . . . manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and manual labour, so that inside this class one part appears as thinkers of the class (its active conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of the class and have less time to make up the illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts. (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845-1846]: 173)

Here Marx and Engels prefigure Bourdieu's division of the dominant class into those high in economic capital (and lower in cultural capital) and those high in cultural capital (and lower in economic capital.) Bourdieu, too, recognizes the conflict between these two fractions, and casts that conflict in terms of struggles over categories of representation—so-called classification struggles.

The classifications generated through struggles within the dominant class between its dominant and dominated fractions shape the way of life of different classes. *Distinction* works with a simple Marxian schema of class: dominant class, petite bourgeoisie, and working class. Each class has a distinctive set of patterns of consumption: the working class is driven by necessity, extending legitimacy to the dominant class's sense of taste even if that appears remote; the old petite bourgeoisie takes up a defensive posture while the new petite bourgeoisie seeks to become part of the grande bourgeoisie by adopting its standards and imitating the latter's style of life; the dominant class, with refined self-

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

assurance, is located in different fields, within which they compete to impose their vision and division on society.

This is a sophisticated elaboration of Marx's idea of the ruling ideology being the ideology of the ruling classes in which a system of classifications creates standards through which individuals from different classes evaluate themselves. The taste of the dominant class—as seen by itself and others—is an attribute of innate refinement, rather than a function of a cultivated habitus that derives from the privileged access to wealth and leisure, just as the dominated classes regard their own culture as a product of their own inferiority, rather than a derivative of necessity. The result is a belief in the legitimacy of the hierarchy of tastes and an enactment that obscures the class conditioning of the hierarchy.

(p. 391) Seemingly voluntary choices—the food we eat, the music we listen to, the films we watch, the sports we play, the photographs we take, and so on—draw us into a relatively autonomous hierarchy of consumption that obscures its underlying class determinants. The same goes for education, which, again, by virtue of its relative autonomy appears neutral vis-à-vis class, drawing students from dominated classes into the pursuit of performances that would lead to upward mobility (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977 [1970]). Failure to excel is blamed on inadequacies of the self, rather than the class character of the school, which privileges those with cultural capital. Education has, therefore, two functions: a technical function of slotting people into the labor market and a social function of masking the class determinants of educational outcomes. In *State Nobility*, Bourdieu (1996 [1989]) describes the struggles within the dominant class that determine the relative importance of educational credentials, as well as the structure of, access to, and content of education, thereby ensuring, once again, the misrecognition of class domination.

Having closed off the dominated as a source of social change, Bourdieu regards the classification struggles within the dominant class as potential instigators of “symbolic” revolutions capable of shaking the “deepest structures of the social order”:

Likewise, the arts and literature can no doubt offer the dominant agents some very powerful instruments of legitimation, either directly, through the celebration they confer, or indirectly, especially through the cult they enjoy, which also consecrates its celebrants. But it can also happen that artists or writers are, directly or indirectly, at the origin of large-scale symbolic revolutions (like the bohemian lifestyle in the nineteenth century, or, nowadays, the subversive provocations of the feminist or homosexual movements), capable of shaking the deepest structures of the social order, such as family structures, through transformation of the fundamental principles of division of the vision of the world (such as male/female opposition) and the corresponding challenges to the self-evidences of common sense. (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 105)

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

How does this “shaking” affect the sturdy structures of society, let alone threaten the symbolic domination of the dominant class? At one point he acknowledges the possibility that authors of such symbolic revolutions, through the transfer of cultural capital and in certain moments, can instigate subversive action from the dominated:

The symbolic work needed in order to break out of the silent self-evidence of doxa and to state and denounce the arbitrariness that it conceals presupposes instruments of expression and criticism which, like other forms of capital, are unequally distributed. As a consequence, there is every reason to think that it would not be possible without the intervention of professional practitioners of the work of making explicit, who, in certain historical conjunctures, may make themselves the *spokespersons* of the dominated on the basis of partial solidarities and *de facto* alliances springing from the homology between a dominated position in this or that field of cultural production and the position of the dominated in the social space. A solidarity of this (p. 392) kind, which is not without ambiguity, can bring about . . . the *transfer of cultural capital* which enables the dominated to achieve collective mobilization and subversive action against the established order; with, in return, the risk of hijacking which is contained in the imperfect correspondence between the interests of the dominated and those of the dominated-dominant who makes themselves the spokespersons of their demands or their revolts, on the basis of a partial analogy between different experiences of domination. (Bourdieu 2000 (1997): 188; italics in the original)

This is one of the rare places where Bourdieu allows for the possibility of collective mobilization of the dominated through their recognition, rather than misrecognition, of domination. Still, the initiatives always come from above, from the dominated fractions of the dominant class whose experience of domination allows for a fragile alliance with the dominated classes.

More typically, Bourdieu relies on the inner logic of fields to move society toward a greater universalism, what he calls the *realpolitik* of reason that is wired into the character of the state:

Those who, like Marx, reverse the official image that the State bureaucracy seeks to give of itself and describe the bureaucrats as usurpers of the universal, acting like private proprietors of public resources, are not wrong. But they ignore the very real effects of the obligatory reference to the values of neutrality and disinterested devotion to the public good which becomes more and more incumbent on state functionaries in the successive stages of the long labor of symbolic construction which leads to the invention and imposition of the official representation of the State as the site of universality and the service of the general interest. (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 124)

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

This remarkable passage, in which Bourdieu is appealing to the state's "disinterested devotion to the public good" (that will eventually assert itself against the state's usurpers) is written at the very time he is also attacking the French state for continuing to violate its public function, in which the coercive right hand of the state is displacing its welfarist left hand, and when the state is openly assaulting the working class. In the long run, Bourdieu claims, the state will become the carrier of the general interest. But how?

The idea of universality will not prevail simply because it is an attractive ideal—that would be the worst form of idealism—but because certain fields, by their very functioning, by virtue of their internal struggles, give rise to a commitment to the universal:

In reality, if one is not, at best, to indulge in an irresponsible utopianism, which often has no other effect than to procure the short-lived euphoria of humanist hopes, almost always as brief as adolescence, and which produces effects quite as malign in the life of research as in political life, it is necessary I think to return to a "realistic" vision of the universes in which the universal is generated. To be content, as one might be tempted, with giving the universal the status of a "regulatory idea," capable of suggesting principles of action, would be to forget that there are universes in which (p. 393) it becomes a "constitutive" immanent principle of regulation, such as the scientific field, and to a lesser extent the bureaucratic field and the judicial field; and that, more generally, as soon as the principles claiming universal validity (those of democracy, for example) are stated and officially professed, there is no longer any social situation in which they cannot serve at least as symbolic weapons in struggles of interests or as instruments of critique for those who have a self-interest in truth and virtue (like, nowadays, all those, especially in the minor state nobility, whose interests are bound up with universal advances associated with the State and with law). (Bourdieu 2000 [1997]: 127)

Let us recall that Bourdieu sets out on his Pascalian journey with a critique of scholastic reason for overlooking the way theoretical models, such as those of "rational choice" or "deliberative democracy," are but projections of the very specific conditions under which knowledge is produced. After turning from this fallacious logic of theory to the logic of practice and finding there only misrecognition, Bourdieu returns to the same universalities produced in the scientific, legal, and bureaucratic fields, universalities that he had earlier called into question as scholastic fallacies—the product of the peculiar circumstances of their production. But now he turns to them as the source of hope for humanity.

We are back to the Enlightenment, to Hegel's view of the state, so trenchantly criticized not just by Marx but *also* by Bourdieu (in his earlier writings). Both define the state as having a monopoly of symbolic as well as material violence. Both see the state as presenting the interests of the dominant class as the general interest. But, where Marx sees the state as only serving the "common interests of the whole bourgeoisie" (with all

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

the concessions this might entail), Bourdieu sees the state's universalist claims as grounds for an imminent critique, demanding that the state live up to its pretensions. We can see a similar Enlightenment faith in Bourdieu's (1989) proposals for an International of Intellectuals—the organic intellectual of humanity—recognizing that they are a corporate body with their own interests, but regarding those interests as the carriers of universalism and, thus, forming a corporatism of the universal.¹¹

Toward the end of his life, Bourdieu was not only organizing intellectuals. He was to be found on the picket lines of striking workers, haranguing them about the evils of neoliberalism—even as his sociology claimed they could not understand the conditions of their own oppression. His two short volumes, *Acts of Resistance* (1998) and *Firing Back* (2001), justify the public engagement of the intellectual, not just exposing the mythologies of neoliberalism, but endorsing and even rousing social movements. Yet there is little in his corpus to see social movements as anything but the manipulation of its leaders—a far cry from his description of the spontaneous movements of unemployed workers and others against neoliberal policies. From a *theoretical standpoint* Bourdieu cannot explain either his enthusiasm for nor the source of the social movements he addressed. No different from the people he criticized, he too succumbed to a gap between his theory and his practice, especially when his theory led him into a political cul-de-sac.

Conclusion

Marx and Bourdieu set out from similar positions, but they end up in divergent places. They both start out as critics of intellectualist illusions or scholastic fallacies that privilege the role of ideas in the making of history. They both move to the logic of practice. Marx remains wedded to this logic, seeing in it a future emancipation realized through working-class revolution, but when the working class lets him down, he sets about theoretical work to demonstrate the inevitable collapse of capitalism. Bourdieu, by contrast, sees the logic of practice as deeply mired in domination inculcated in the habitus. So he breaks from the logic of practice back to the practice of logic and to a faith in reason, whether through symbolic revolutions organized by intellectuals or via the immanent logic of the state. Just as Marx revealed and relied on the inner contradictions of the economy, Bourdieu relied on the inner contradictions of the symbolic order. If Bourdieu starts out as a critic of philosophy and ends up as a Hegelian, believing in the universality of reason, Marx also starts out as a critic of philosophy, but ends up with material production, putting his faith in the universality of the working class through its realization of communism. Each would criticize the other as delusional.

We are on the horns of a dilemma: intellectuals without the subaltern, or the subaltern without intellectuals. Each recognizes the dilemma, and in practice each breaks with his theory. Bourdieu devotes the last years of his life appealing to social movements, challenging the turn to neoliberalism. However, for his theory to catch up with his practice, Bourdieu needs a far better account of the dynamics of the habitus, the way it changes, and, in particular, how it can be reshaped by critical reflection—how the habitus of consent becomes a habitus of defiance. Without such a move forward, we are left wondering how intellectuals can penetrate their own habitus, how they can escape symbolic domination. How is the habitus of intellectuals different from the habitus of the dominated? Bourdieu suffers from a duality: an optimistic faith in reason and critical reflection, on the one side, and a pessimistic account of durable bodily knowledge unaware of itself. After distinguishing between the logic of theory and the logic of practice, he needs to bring them into a dynamic relation.

Equally Marx, despairing of the working class that carries the burden of revolution, throws himself into the world of theory and devotes himself to demonstrating that capitalism must inherently destroy itself. Like the Young Hegelians he criticizes, Marx battles with intellectuals as though the fate of the world depended on it. As Bourdieu says in the opening epigraph, Marx failed to grasp the power of his own theory in moving people, but, in the final analysis, Bourdieu equally failed to understand how critical reflection or symbolic revolutions can have real effects.

It would take another Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, to transcend the separation of theory and practice. In a world defined by cultural domination, what he called hegemony, Gramsci develops a more balanced conception of class struggle, organized on the terrain of dominant ideology. In so doing, he distinguishes between traditional intellectuals like

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

(p. 395) Bourdieu, protecting their autonomy in order to project themselves as carrying some universal truth, and organic intellectuals like Marx, who sought a closer alliance with the dominated, elaborating their kernel of good sense, obtained through partaking in the collective transformation of nature (Burawoy 2012)

Gramsci is just one of a succession of Marxists who have dealt with questions that Marx failed to address adequately. This is what we might call the Marxist tradition or the Marxist research program. The question is whether a Bourdieusian research program will develop, tackling the abiding anomalies and contradiction of his corpus, or whether his followers will be content to apply the lexicon of “capital,” “habitus,” and “field” to different situations and allow his body of theory to be defined as a final and incontrovertible truth. The question, in other words, is whether Bourdieu’s disciples will do to Bourdieu what he erroneously tries to do to Marxism, to reduce everything to the founding figure as if there could never be any further advances. If Bourdieu is to live on and be a worthy competitor to Marx, it will be necessary to think with Bourdieu against Bourdieu.

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Notes:

(1.) Note how different this is from Edward Thompson's classic, *The Making of the English Working Class*, according to which the working class makes history itself without the aid of a distinct body of intellectuals, especially Marxist intellectuals. In effect, Bourdieu is saying that Thompson commits the typical Marxist error of regarding the working class as making itself. Not surprisingly, some have accused Bourdieu of being a "Leninist" for his emphasis on the central role of intellectuals (Lane 2006).

(2.) Bourdieu often failed to specify the people he was attacking, leaving that to the reader's imagination and thereby leaving the enemy undefined and defenseless. This idea of class on paper might well be associated with Erik Wright's successive theorizations of class, although even his successive formulations were based on the analysis of survey research.

(3.) Indeed, some, such as Perry Anderson (1976), regarded the "idealism" of Western Marxism as a betrayal of a "true" Marxism. Ironically, what Anderson regards as the essential truth of Marxism, Bourdieu considers to be its essential flaw.

(4.) Throughout this chapter I will be referring to Marx, except where he is a joint author with Engels. This is not to belittle the contribution of Engels, but rather to reflect Bourdieu's focus on Marx whenever he is not making blanket statements about Marxism.

(5.) Here is how Marx and Engels berate Feuerbach: "Thus if millions of proletarians feel by no means contented with their living conditions, if their 'existence' does not in the least correspond to their 'essence' then . . . this is an unavoidable misfortune, which must be borne quietly. The millions of proletarians and communists, however, think differently and will prove this in time, when they bring their 'existence' into harmony with their

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

'essence' in a practical way, by means of revolution" (Marx and Engels 1978 [1845–1846]: 168).

(6.) As Jacques Bidet (2008) emphasizes, the dynamics of Bourdieu's fields relies on the struggle and competition among its agents, rather than an underlying structure equivalent to the interaction of the forces and relations of production.

(7.) While Talcott Parsons and Pierre Bourdieu share a commitment to a general theory of action, Parsons develops four analytical subsystems (analogous to fields) whose functions—adaptive, goal attainment, integrative, and latency—contribute to society as a whole and whose interdependence is orchestrated through universal media of interchange (money, power, influence, and value commitments) that are parallel to Bourdieu's "capitals." From here, Parsons develops a theory of history as differentiation, governed by evolutionary universals. Bourdieu makes no attempt to advance such a grand account of history and totality. Indeed, he recoils from any such project. He systematically refuses systematicity.

(8.) There is a curious parallel between Bourdieu's conception of "habitus" and Marx's conception of "forces of production." Both are durable, transposable, and irreversible—the one a measure of the development of the individual, the other of society. Both come into conflict with wider structures within which they develop. For Marx, however, those structures (relations of production) are transformed through revolutions that allow a new higher mode of production that impel the expansion of the forces of production, whereas for Bourdieu, it is the opposite: habitus tends to give way to structures.

(9.) In the more abstract formulation of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977 [1970]), lower-class students accept the legitimacy of the school and exit quietly, but later, following the reform of secondary education, the school becomes embroiled in rebellion. See Bourdieu et al. (1999 [1993]: 421–506).

(10.) In writing about Algeria, however, Bourdieu (1979 [1963]: 62–63) argues that it is the relative stability and the "privilege" of experiencing "permanent, rational exploitation" that gives the working class revolutionary potential, very different from the dispossessed peasantry and subproletariat who live from hand to mouth and are, therefore, unable to plan for an alternative future. It is the distinction between a genuine "revolutionary force" and a spontaneous "force for revolution." This is a very different portrait from the one of the French working class weighed down by necessity, accepting the legitimacy of the dominant classes. While Bourdieu makes no effort to reconcile these opposed visions of the working class, he might argue that it revolves around the symbolic violence in France and the physical violence of colonialism. Alternatively, these may be strategic positions that Bourdieu takes up in two different political fields: against the FLN who favored the peasantry as a revolutionary class in Algeria, and against the Marxists who regarded the working class as inherently revolutionary in France.

The Poverty of Philosophy: Marx Meets Bourdieu

(11.) They are what Alvin Gouldner (1979) calls a flawed universal class, only he was more realistic about the corporatism of intellectuals. Antonio Gramsci would see Bourdieu's intellectuals as traditional, and the defense of their autonomy as serving their role in presenting the interests of the dominant class as the interests of all, as the universal interests.

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