

Key Sociological Thinkers: Pierre Bourdieu.

Section 1.

The very last sentence of the ‘auto-analysis’ which Bourdieu wrote during the last six months of his life, between the autumn of 2001 and the spring of 2002, reads:

“Nothing would make me more happy than to have succeeded in enabling some of my readers, male or female, to recognize their own experiences, difficulties, questions, sorrows, etc., in mine so that they can derive from this realist identification, which is completely opposed to an exalted perspective, some means to act and live a little better in how they live and behave.”¹

The passage contains some key indicators of the impulses which governed Bourdieu’s work throughout his career. His motivation was primarily moral, but this was a motivation which he regarded as a process of sharing rather than imposition. He knew that he derived his moral imperative from the social conditions of his formation and he believed that his moral intention should be prosecuted by offering his own attempts to reconcile his emotional and intellectual drives as models to be adopted and adapted by other people in relation to the different conditions of their formation. His sociological work was not undertaken to disclose objective ‘truths’ about universal social behaviour or even about the society within which he lived. His sociological enquiries were always rooted, methodologically and epistemologically, in his own lived experience and he was always systematically conscious of the extent to which his ‘findings’ reflected his personal perspective. Accordingly, he offered these findings provisionally in the expectation that they would elicit a ‘socio-analytic encounter’ between the observer and the observed which, in turn, would facilitate a ‘recognition’ of their situations in the readers of the published observations. The passage spells out both that he was sceptical about the intrinsic value of ‘exalted perspectives’ or objective analyses, and also that he was aware of the difficulties involved in offering realist moral prescriptions across cultures (in this case, in particular, across gender). He always believed that his ‘work’ was the product of three dimensions - the social conditions of generation of his research enquiries and procedures (the socio-logic of his discovery); the process of ‘writing-up’ ‘findings’ (the rhetoric of textual communication within a ‘field’ of discourse); and the social conditions of reception, whether by those whose experiences were in affinity with the objects of the research or by those who extrapolated them to contexts of intellectual exchange.

Bourdieu's work reflects a fundamental tension or dissociation between affectivity and intellectuality which he attributed to his upbringing. We can say that his career and life represented an attempt to cultivate both aspects of his personality and to engineer a conjunction between the two which did not allow either to be submerged within the other. He was brought up in a rural community in provincial France – in Béarn in Gascony in South-West France near to the Pyrenees and the border with Spain. After his primary education in his local village, Bourdieu received his secondary education as a boarder in the lycée in Pau, the main town of the region. He experienced a disjunction between the Béarnais dialect used in his home community and the French which was the language of scholastic instruction. He excelled as a student but he always considered this to be 'excellence' achieved within an artificial language game. His scholastic achievements propelled him to Paris and he entered the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) in 1950. This was an 'élite' institution which admitted the 'best' students from lycées throughout France. Admission institutionalised the 'distinction' from other students which Bourdieu experienced with unease.

At the ENS, Bourdieu's training was in philosophy. There were two main influences. He was interested in the history and philosophy of science. This led him to submit a thesis for a higher education diploma on Leibniz's critique of Descartes's philosophy of science. He was also influenced by Husserl's phenomenology, which led him to propose a doctoral thesis on 'the temporal structures of affective life'. His initiation into philosophical thinking provided him with a legitimate intellectual discourse within which to consider his life experiences – that is to say that he was influenced by a philosophy which enabled him to articulate the differences which he experienced between affectivity and cognition. Leibniz and Descartes provided alternative theories both of which suggested that empirical investigation is governed by prior, rational dispositions, while Husserl suggested that the crisis of European science was that it had lost contact with the affective origins of its rational conceptualisations.

Bourdieu was not able to pursue his proposed doctoral research. Instead, he was conscripted in 1956 to serve in the French army in Algeria. After military service, he was appointed a lecturer in the University of Algiers where he remained from 1958 to 1960. During these years he began what he was to call 'fieldwork in philosophy'. He carried out research on the implications for individuals of the process of transition from traditional to modern social

organization. This was a process of affective adaptation or acculturation imposed by French colonial intervention. Bourdieu was interested in the process itself and, even more, in seeking to come to terms with the fact that his analyses were the products of observations made by the socio-politically dominant of the behaviour of the dominated. His Algerian research was the foundation of all his subsequent work, especially in as much as the experience confirmed for him that researchers are immanently present within the phenomena which they study (following Leibniz) and should not cultivate a detached objectivity (as would be the logic of the mind/body dualism of Descartes).

On returning to mainland France in 1960, Bourdieu became secretary to a new research group which had just been established by Raymond Aron. During the 1960s, he carried out sociological research on education and culture within which he developed many of the concepts which have been used by subsequent researchers – ‘habitus’, ‘field’, ‘cultural capital’. He remained concerned about the power relationship between researchers and researched and, in 1968, he co-edited *Le métier de sociologue* [the craft of sociology] which attempted to offer a manual of methodology for students. The title indicated that the activity of the sociologist should be regarded as a form of labour in society rather than as an opportunity to observe society in detachment. Influenced by Bachelard’s historical epistemology, Bourdieu and his co-editors argued that to practise their craft sociologists must ‘win’ social facts against commonsense social knowledge; must ‘construct’ a discourse for communication; and must ‘confirm’ their findings in discussion with others in an epistemic community of like-minded intellectuals. However, after witnessing the unsuccessful ‘student revolt’ of May, 1968, Bourdieu became more inclined to regard institutionalised sociological practice as one of the factors sustaining social inequalities. He took control of Aron’s research group and began to articulate a ‘post-structuralist’ philosophy of social science. The ‘epistemological breaks’ recommended by Bachelard had been used in *Le métier de sociologue* as a way of legitimising sociological distinction. Following Husserl more than Bachelard, Bourdieu transformed the notion of ‘breaks’ to suggest that rigorous scrutiny of the language of science might be the means to understanding the primary experience which underlies scientific objectification. Bourdieu proposed that there are ‘three modes of theoretical knowledge’. In respect of social science, there is, firstly, the unreflecting experience of our social worlds which we all have, and then, secondly, there is the objective knowledge of that world which professional sociologists develop. Bourdieu was not content to accept this division. He emphasized a third ‘break’. He came to insist that

all sociological practice should be 'reflexive', by which he meant that it should be an intrinsic element in the work of sociologists to subject to sociological scrutiny the origins and development of the conceptual language they use to attempt to interpret social behaviour. By this means, Bourdieu contended, the tendency of sociology to sustain the social domination of sociologists would be diminished.

The corollary of Bourdieu's 'reflexivity', therefore, was that sociological discourse has to be recognized as being a language game which constructs social meanings in accordance with the predispositions of a group of social actors whose interpretations are conditioned by their social positions which must themselves be analysed sociologically. By developing and seeking to deploy this philosophy of social science, Bourdieu tried to reconcile his orientation to understand phenomena sociologically with his principled commitment to egalitarianism. In his later work, such as the project he directed leading to the publication of *La misère du monde* [the Weight of the World] (1993), Bourdieu tried to practise what he preached. He contended that sociologists are particular kinds of participants in general 'socio-analytic encounter' and that the function of social research is to be 'maieutic', to be midwife to the voice of citizens. Bourdieu's orientation was not at all to denigrate sociological research but, rather, to insist on the benefits which would follow if mass democratic society were to become sociologically self-aware.

Section 2.

'Habitus'

Bourdieu used a word borrowed from scholastic philosophy to indicate an aspect of human behaviour in society which is not adequately conveyed by the word 'habit'. Bourdieu suggested that our dispositions to act in society are circumscribed by the attitudes and characteristics which we inherit. They are circumscribed, but he developed the concept of 'habitus' to suggest that our dispositions are not conditioned. He insisted that the ways in which people behave are distinguished by their positions on a continuum which means that, at one extreme, people are closely conditioned by their class and family backgrounds while, at the other extreme, they shape their own futures in relative freedom, guided by personal aspirations. Bourdieu called the first extreme that which led to 'mechanistic' explanatory

theories, and the second extreme that which led to 'finalist' theories. Bourdieu resisted theorising which supposed that there might be an absolute and static correlation between individuals and society. Bourdieu's scepticism about 'mechanism' caused him to resist forms of crude Marxism but he also opposed the legacy of Sartre's existentialism which pre-supposed absolute freedom. The fact that he thought that French existentialist thinking was an expression of the social conditions of resistance to Nazi occupation is an example of the way in which he always argued that conceptual formulae have to be understood in relation to the social conditions of their production. The 'habitus' of every individual is different. It is not a 'thing' but, rather, it is an attempt to register the components of characteristics which are unique for every individual. Neither does it represent exclusively 'rational' dispositions. It is closely related to the concept of 'hexis' by which Bourdieu tried to suggest that mental and physical behaviours are mutually reinforcing.

'cultural capital'.

Bourdieu developed the idea of 'cultural capital' in the research which he carried out in the early 1960s on the performance of socially disadvantaged students in French universities. In part he did this in opposition to the idea of 'human capital' outlined in the United States by Gary Becker at the time. Bourdieu thought that Becker was treating individual capacities as absolutes and as measurable assets. Bourdieu sought to oppose an economic approach to the securing of life chances. He tried to appropriate the language of economics to suggest that the exchange of capital assets is relative to the social estimation of value and the social construction of hierarchies of culture. For Bourdieu, there is no gold standard of cultural value. He accepted the view that the French higher education system excluded many students at the point of admission, but he went further to demonstrate that the curriculum discriminated against the minority of working-class or provincial students who did gain admission. Structural discrimination was intrinsic to the system since educational success was secured by assessment in terms of cultural knowledge which was already familiar to middle class students prior to entry rather than in terms of the degree of knowledge acquired by those who had no such privilege. He maintained, therefore, that the education system consolidated existing class distinctions in society through the arbitrary imposition of arbitrary power. Disadvantaged students failed in this system because their lack of 'cultural capital' on entry was deliberately misrecognized as their individual intellectual deficiency rather than as the consequence of a conspiracy

enabling the socially dominant to continue to exclude the socially dominated. This misrecognition preserved the social status quo, and, for Bourdieu, this confirmed that an educational system which he supposed had been devised to maximise the learning opportunities for all was no longer fit for this egalitarian purpose. If the education system could not be reformed, the quest for social equality would have to turn to other, new cultural forms which might achieve a more equitable transmission and distribution of cultural values. Bourdieu hoped that photographic practice might democratize art, but he was depressed to find that it quickly absorbed aesthetic assumptions. For Bourdieu, photography was a new cultural technology. His hopes, and his despondency, might be mirrored today in relation to the ambivalent value of social media.

Bourdieu also developed the idea of 'social capital' by analogy, but this was in order to analyse the ways in which people use relations with others to establish and strengthen their social positions. Bourdieu did not see it as a thing which can be quantified and mobilised in the way in which the term has been used since by Coleman and Putnam.

At the time of writing *La Distinction* (1979), Bourdieu refined his concept of 'cultural capital'. He wrote an article ('Les trois états du capital culturel') in which he distinguished between 'incorporated', 'objectivated' and 'instituted' cultural capitals. The first made cultural capital very like the 'habitus'. The second and third were recognitions that individual cultural dispositions become objectified in markets of symbols and institutions which then become as potent influences over individual choices as background family or class interests. Historically, this represented Bourdieu's recognition that traditional and modern assumptions about the nature of the inter-generational transmission of values were challenged by the view of postmodernism advanced by Lyotard.

'field'.

Bourdieu developed 'field' theory to enable him to analyse the ways in which knowledge is produced and consolidated – in discourses and in institutions. Bourdieu worked with Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms which had been an attempt to elaborate on Kant's understanding that there are a priori categories of knowledge which shape our perceptions of the world. Bourdieu transformed Cassirer's thinking by arguing that the varieties of 'forms' of apprehension are socially constructed. What we regard as 'disciplines' or forms of knowledge originate in particular socio-historical conditions but they also acquire a life of their own which is then inter-generationally transmitted.

Bourdieu derived 'field' terminology from the theory of electromagnetic fields of James Clerk Maxwell in the 19th century and, more proximately, from its use in the 20th Century in psychology and phenomenology by Kurt Lewin and Aron Gurwitsch. In the 1960s, Bourdieu used it as a way of counteracting the hermeneutic and subjectivist orientation in social science so as to undertake analyses which showed that individuals constitute themselves within social networks rather than ego-centrally. Increasingly, however, subjectivism crept back in as much as Bourdieu presented his objectivist science as the product of his particular individual trajectory. His posthumously published *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse* was an attempt to analyse his own formation in terms of the fields within which his thought was constituted. It was quite deliberately not an auto-biography.

Reproduction.

The three 'key' concepts described above were deliberately deployed as concepts, that is to say as devices to grasp the meaning of phenomena with language (con [with]-cipere [grasp]). Bourdieu was influenced by Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* and was, therefore, well aware of the necessary distinction between *perception* and *conception*. Concepts do not refer to antecedent realities. They deploy words tangentially as instruments which enable new ways of perception.

The development of the concept of 'reproduction' has been one in which, most acutely, there has been tension in understanding whether Bourdieu was offering it as a representation of general reality or as a word which functioned pragmatically at the time to explain what was happening in French higher education. The culmination of the educational research which Bourdieu undertook in the 1960s was the publication, with Jean-Claude Passeron, of *La reproduction* [Reproduction] in 1970. The sub-title of the French text was: 'Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement' [elements for a theory of the educational system]. It was in this book that they argued that the educational system was a mechanism whereby those with 'arbitrary' power transmitted 'arbitrary' culture as if it possessed absolute value. The concept of 'cultural capital' was a device to understand the possession or dispossession of the culture necessary to be deemed educationally successful.

Very soon after the publication of the book, Bourdieu gave a paper which was published in 1973 as 'Reproduction culturelle et reproduction sociale' [cultural reproduction and social

reproduction]. Bourdieu articulated the view that ‘cultures’ are reflections of social position and that hierarchies of taste perpetuate social hierarchies. This refusal to accept the autonomy of cultures was developed analytically in *La distinction*. Passeron disowned this representation of their jointly authored book. He suspected that Bourdieu was introducing an universally valid relationship between culture and society, whereas the intention of the book was that it should generate concepts which provisionally explained relations which would always be in transition. The concept of ‘reproduction’ is an important test-case in terms of whether it is a generalisable account of actuality or a temporary analysis of a contingent set of circumstances.

Section 3.

Luigi Pirandello’s *Sei personaggi in cerca d’autore* [Six Characters in Search of an Author] was first performed in May, 1921, in the Teatro Valle, Rome. Pirandello was born in Sicily in 1867 and died in Rome in 1936. There is little overlap in the lifetimes of Pirandello and Bourdieu, but there is some affinity between the two men in that they both felt that they were brought up at the margins of their nation-states and both felt that early circumstances (the prosperity of Pirandello’s father and Bourdieu’s elitist education) had separated them from the disadvantages experienced by their contemporaries in their childhood. Perhaps this explains why Pirandello’s ‘absurd’ drama about identity provides a perspective on Bourdieu’s ‘world-view’.

As the opening stage instruction puts it: “The audience enters the theatre to find the curtain already raised, and the stage looking as it does during the day, with no wings or scenery, almost completely dark and empty, ...”. A Technician appears and makes some repairs. The Stage Manager comes on and urges the Technician to finish his job at the end of the rehearsal. The company is about to work on Act Two of *Rules of the Game* (an earlier Pirandello play which had been first performed in 1918). Nine or ten actors drift in casually. These include ‘the Leading Lady’ and ‘the Leading Man’. They are followed by the Director and the Prompter. At the Director’s request, the Prompter begins to read the stage directions for the scene. When the prompter reads that the scene is set in ‘an unusual room, serving as both dining-room and study’, the Director intervenes to instruct the Stage Manager that the company will be using ‘the red room set’. When the Prompter reads that

the main male character is 'wearing a chef's hat and apron' when the curtain rises and is busy 'beating an egg in a bowl', the Leading Man asks whether he has to wear a chef's hat because, surely, 'it's a bit silly'. The Director insists that he must because 'it *is* in the script' and then he proceeds to try to explain the meaning of the egg-shells to the Leading Man, concluding with the comment that 'you're involved in a game, playing a part you've been assigned, and you consciously become your own puppet'. Almost immediately after the director offers this interpretation of *Rules of the Game*, a doorman interrupts the Director to announce the arrival of 'six Characters'. The stage instruction emphasizes that 'every effort should be made not to confuse' these six Characters with the Actors. Pirandello goes so far as to suggest that one way to ensure this differentiation would be if the six Characters were to wear masks representing their 'fundamental emotion' – 'remorse', 'revenge', 'contempt' and 'sorrow' in four cases. It is important, Pirandello adds, that the characters 'should not appear as unreal beings, but rather as created reality, immutable constructs of the imagination' and 'the masks will help to give the impression of figures created by art, ...'.

The Characters explain to the Director that they have a story to tell but are in search of an author. When the director retorts that 'there's no author here – it's not a new play we're doing', one of the characters excitedly remarks: 'That's all the better – that's so much better, sir! We can be your new play!'. The Director gradually gets drawn into allowing the narrative offered by the Characters to become the play to be performed by his company. The Prompter becomes the mediator, transcribing the narrative of the Characters to become the script for the Actors. There are tensions as the narrative is translated into the script of a drama, but, in spite of the fact that the Characters sometimes feel that their narrative is misrepresented in the language of the play, they are satisfied because the process transforms their everyday experience into an aesthetic product which transcends the contingency of their situations.

My suggestion is that Pirandello's play gives a perspective on Bourdieu's intellectual work. Durkheim had distinguished between the social organisations of traditional and modern societies by arguing that the former exhibited 'mechanical' and the latter 'organic' solidarity. In traditional societies, Durkheim claimed, people behaved mechanically in accordance with prescribed roles, whereas the characteristic of modern society is that people have become individuated and are able to participate in determining how their societies should be organized. Bourdieu sought to maximise self-determination for all

social actors. He would have been sympathetic to Sartre's account, in *Being and Nothingness*, of the 'bad faith' of the waiter in failing to exercise his freedom to disown his prescribed professional role. Unlike Sartre, however, Bourdieu argued that we exercise freedom within inherited constraints (the 'habitus') rather than absolutely. Pirandello's Director at first insists that his Actors must adhere precisely to the prescribed script of the play which they are rehearsing (even though that play itself is about the attempt of characters to define their own identities within the rules of the game). Six Characters arrive who want the Director to represent their everyday experience as a play to be performed still by Actors. For Pirandello, perhaps, drama offers the characters the opportunity for their experiences to be transformed, securing transcendental immortality for the disadvantaged through the mediation of art. The Characters acquiesce in this process of transformation even though they find that it distorts their own sense of the meaning of their experiences. By contrast, Bourdieu did not accept that artistic forms possess any intrinsic capacity to provide transcendence. Bourdieu would have recognized that we have hitherto, for over one hundred years in Western Europe, accepted the representation of social reality provided by social scientists (Actors). By training, he operated as an Actor but, during his career, he saw his task as being one which would break down the distinction between Actors and Characters. Following Goffman, Bourdieu would have been prepared to see social life as dramatic, but as a drama in which actors are characters, without a priori authority.

Section 4.

Bourdieu's work was little known in the English-speaking world until the mid-1980s when Polity Press, Cambridge began to publish it in translation such that, by the time of his death in 2002, most of his many major texts had become available in English. Polity Press sustains Bourdieu's global influence still with the publication of some of Bourdieu's previously untranslated early work in Algeria and, now, through the publication of the editions currently under preparation in France of the courses of lectures which Bourdieu gave from 1981 at the Collège de France, Paris. During his lifetime, his work was also translated extensively into many other languages and the study of the pattern of translations is revealing about cross-cultural transmission between 'fields' of production and reception. Precisely because Bourdieu attempted to offer his methodology as a model to be adapted

pragmatically, his influence has not been prescriptive. He wanted to offer his science for the benefit of social movements, both in France and internationally. Based on lectures which he gave in Tokyo, his *Practical Reason* discusses the international transferability of his concepts, and a book such as Lardinois & Thapan: *Reading Pierre Bourdieu in a Dual Context* (2006) pursues the same question in respect of Franco-Indian conceptual transfer.

Bourdieu's work has been so influential because it is in accord with what appears to be a global trend towards mass democratic participation. Because his thinking emerged out of his observations of the 'clash of civilizations' and of tensions between traditionalism, modernity and postmodernity, it has consistently spoken to the situations of peoples at different points on a supposed scale of 'progress'.

Trained as a philosopher, Bourdieu achieved his academic status and authority at a time when 'sociology' was becoming professionalised as a discipline in France. His research was always 'fieldwork in philosophy'. *Le métier de sociologue* was an attempt to safeguard philosophical sociology from the ostentatiously a-philosophical incursions of American neo-positivist sociology. The text which he co-edited with James Coleman (*Social Theory for a Changing Society*, 1989) exposed the nature of this methodological and ideological conflict. Consideration of the work of Luc Boltanski enables us to reflect on the consequences of the professionalization of social science. Boltanski trained as a sociologist and then became a follower of Bourdieu until about 1980. Still sympathetic towards his 'patron', Boltanski nevertheless was critical of what he thought to be the philosophical errors of the 1968 generation, including Bourdieu, in Boltanski & Chiapello: *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2007). Michèle Lamont's work follows on from that of Bourdieu in a critical fashion. Her *Money, Morals, Manners*, 1992, corresponds with Bourdieu's *Distinction*, while her *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment*, 2009, corresponds with Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus*.

Recent work in the UK which has built on Bourdieu's *Distinction* to carry out an analysis of contemporary British culture (in Bennett, Savage, Warde, et al., *Culture, Class, Distinction*, 2009) is questioning Bourdieu's reluctance to allow aesthetic practice to function as an instrument for political change.

Section 5.

Recommended works by Bourdieu (in chronological order of their first French publication):

a.

“Champ intellectuel et projet créateur”, *Les temps modernes*, 246, 1966, 865-906, translated as « Intellectual field and creative project » in M.F.D. Young, ed., 1971, *Knowledge and Control. New Directions for the Sociology of Education*, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1971, 161-88.

This article first appeared in a number of Sartre’s journal devoted to the ‘Problems of structuralism’. Bourdieu introduced the concept of ‘field’ to explain the structures of relations between artists and their publics, but, importantly, he was already suggesting that these structures are internalised by artists as intrinsic components of the creative process and, further, that there is a need to be clear about the differences between immanent processes in history and our present impositions of meaning. What he said here about art also applied to knowledge production in general.

b.

Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977.

This is regarded as the translation of *Esquisse d’une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d’ethnologie kabyle*, Droz, Geneva, 1972, but Bourdieu took the opportunity provided by the English translation to reorganise his text. In the French text Bourdieu re-published three of his early ‘structuralist’ articles on Algeria and then criticised their methodology whereas in the English text he advanced a positive theory which can be called post-structuralist. In the English-speaking world this has been regarded as a contribution to anthropological theory, but it is a crucial text for understanding a key moment in the development of Bourdieu’s thinking generally.

c.

“Sur le pouvoir symbolique”, *Annales*, 3, May-June, 1977, 405-11. Translated as « On symbolic Power » in J. Thompson, ed., *Language & Symbolic Power*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, 163-70.

This was originally given as a paper at Harvard University in 1973 and so belongs to the period in which Bourdieu was consolidating the development of his post-structuralist thinking. Bourdieu situates his thinking in relation to Panofsky (a pupil of Cassirer) and others, and articulates a distinction between two kinds of structure. Analysis of ‘structuring structures’ involves consideration of the social conditions of construction of the ‘structured

structures' which operate according to the rules of 'fields' or, as Bourdieu puts it, which operate tautologically.

d.

Distinction. A social critique of the judgement of taste, London & New York, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.

This is the English translation of *La distinction*, Paris, Minuit, 1979. The French sub-title is: Critique sociale du jugement [a social critique of judgment] which makes it clear that the book is Bourdieu's sociological response to the aesthetic philosophy contained in Kant's third Critique (of Judgment). Bourdieu analyses a variety of cultural tastes, including food, sport, and fashion as well as 'art' in terms of people's strategies of position-taking designed to secure social distinction for themselves. Many followers of Bourdieu defected because they thought that his book denigrated working-class culture, but it is actually a subtle and complex recognition of relativities of judgement.

Recommended secondary texts.

e.

Richard Jenkins: *Pierre Bourdieu*, London & New York, 1992.

This was one of the earliest attempts to understand the totality of Bourdieu's work (up to the date of publication). Jenkins's introduction is deficient in thinking that much of Bourdieu's Algerian work 'is not particularly germane' to its discussion. He was also amongst those who disliked *Distinction*, but his general view is that Bourdieu is 'good to think with' even if you don't accept his findings. This raises the wider question of the status of all canonical texts for present sociological enquiry.

f.

Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, & Moishe Postone, eds., *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1993.

This collection of essays grew out of Bourdieu's connections with the Centre for Psychosocial Studies in Chicago from 1983 onwards and emanated in particular from a conference held in the United States in 1989. Most of the contributors were American and the book is indicative of elements in the field of American reception of Bourdieu at the time. I specifically recommend Rogers Brubaker's "Social Theory as Habitus" which was an early recognition of the status of social theory in Bourdieu's thinking – as correlative to his social trajectory rather than autonomous. Bourdieu's concluding remarks in response to the

collection: “For a Sociogenetic Understanding of Intellectual Works” deserves attention in that he announces the way in which he thinks his texts should be read.

g.

Michael Grenfell, ed, *Pierre Bourdieu. Key Concepts*, Durham, Acumen. [1st edition, 2008; 2nd edition, 2012].

This collection is recommended because Grenfell adheres to the spirit of Bourdieu’s work in editing a volume which is designed to be of practical use and to encourage reflexivity in practitioners. It contains chapters in Parts entitled ‘biography, theory and practice’, ‘field theory – beyond subjectivity and objectivity’, ‘field mechanisms’, ‘field conditions’, and ‘applications’.

h.

Simon Susen & Bryan S. Turner, eds., *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu. Critical Essays*, London, Anthem Press, 2011.

This collection assembles 15 contributions from, mainly, European scholars. The editors’ introduction is particularly stimulating because it situates Bourdieu’s work in the socio-political context of post World War II Europe and in the context of different European intellectual traditions. The collection is recommended precisely because it is not partisanly ‘Bourdiesian’. Susen’s doctoral research was supervised in part by Luc Boltanski, and he has also published a book on ‘the foundations of the social’ in which he explores the relations between the work of Bourdieu and Habermas.

¹ Bourdieu, P., 2004, *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse*, Paris, Raisons d’Agir, 142.