

Paul Redding

## **Pierre Bourdieu: From Neo-Kantian to Hegelian Critical Social Theory**

### ABSTRACT

This paper challenges the commonly made claim that the work of Pierre Bourdieu is fundamentally *anti*-Hegelian in orientation. In contrast, it argues that the development of Bourdieu's work from its earliest structuralist through its later 'post-structuralist' phase is better described in terms of a shift from a late nineteenth century *neo*-Kantian to a distinctly *Hegelian post*-Kantian outlook. In his break with structuralism, Bourdieu appealed to a bodily based 'logic of practice' to explain the binaristic logic of Lévi-Strauss' structuralist analyses of myth. Effectively working within the tradition of the Durkheimian approach to symbolic classification, Lévi-Strauss had inherited Durkheim's distinctly neo-Kantian understanding of the role of *categories* in experience and action—an account that conflated two forms of representation—'intuitions' and 'concepts—that Kant himself had held distinct. Bourdieu's appeal to the role of the body's dispositional *habitus* can be considered as a retrieval of Hegel's earlier quite different reworking of Kant's intuition-concept distinction in terms of distinct 'logics' with different forms of 'negation'. Bourdieu commonly acknowledged the parallels of his analyses of social life to those of Hegel, but opposed Hegelianism because he believed that Hegel had remained entrapped within the dynamics of mythopoeic thought. In contrast, Durkheim and Lévi-Strauss, he claimed, by instituting a *science* of myth, had

broken with it. This *criticism* of Hegel, however, relies on an understanding of his philosophy that has been rejected by many contemporary Hegel scholars, and without it, the gap separating Hegel and Bourdieu narrows dramatically.

KEY WORDS: Bourdieu, Hegel, Durkheim, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Neo-Kantianism

Initially, the idea of linking the work of French ethnologist-sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to Hegel may seem surprising. Having emerged from the generation of structuralist thinkers in the 1960's, Bourdieu can thereby be regarded to have come from an intellectual movement that virtually defined itself in opposition to an 'Hegelian humanism' exemplified by Sartre. For Bourdieu, as for contemporaries like Foucault or Althusser, approaches to the history of the *sciences* found in epistemological thinkers such as Gaston Bachelard and George Canguilhem<sup>1</sup> replaced that humanistic variant of the Hegelian story of the teleological emergence of the essentially universal human subject. Moreover, in ethnography itself, Lévi-Strauss had explicitly opposed his structuralist thought to Sartre's version of Hegelian humanism,<sup>2</sup> and identified his approach as a type of "Kantianism without a transcendental subject."<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, along with Lévi-Strauss, Bourdieu can be thought of as continuing some of the features of late nineteenth-century French neo-Kantianism, thereby establishing a route 'back to Kant' which largely bypassed Hegel and other German idealists. Crucially, both Lévi-Strauss and Bourdieu were influenced by Émile Durkheim whose work showed strong neo-Kantian influences.<sup>4</sup> And while Bourdieu's 'structuralism' might have been relatively short lived,<sup>5</sup> his 'post-structuralist' work looks no friendlier to Hegelianism.<sup>6</sup> What we might regard as the first recognisably 'Bourdieuian' work, *Esquisse d'une Théorie de la Pratique*, published in 1972,<sup>7</sup> had been conceived as a critique of Lévi-Strauss, but with this Bourdieu seemed to *deepen* his earlier critique of the 'academic aristocratism' of any totalising philosophy, drawing upon further types of philosophical 'anti-philosophers'—'ordinary language' philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Austin, for example—who seem equally distant from Hegel's systematising. Even the Marxist elements in Bourdieu's work are commonly said to have a strikingly *anti-Hegelian* nature.<sup>8</sup>

After his turn away from structuralism, Bourdieu criticised Lévi-Strauss' approach as suffering from a tendency to intellectualise the objects of its own field of study—the field of *mythopoeic thought*. Indeed, structuralism was seen

as suffering from a form of *logicism* akin to Hegel's, Bourdieu comparing Lévi-Strauss' inquiry into the "universal laws which govern the unconscious activities of the mind" to Hegel's account of the universal spirit that "thinks itself."<sup>9</sup> While Lévi-Strauss had looked to the structure of myth and ritual to disclose the universal structures of human thought, from Bourdieu's post-structuralist perspective, an examination of the context within which mythopoeic thought was enacted revealed its 'logic' to be generated not from some underlying formal structure, nor from any *mythopoeic* version of 'transcendental consciousness', but from an ensemble of unconscious practically oriented bodily dispositions—what Bourdieu termed 'habitus'—responsive to the demands of varying and particular circumstances within a socially encoded environment.<sup>10</sup>

Bourdieu's move beyond structuralism can easily be seen as strengthening and deepening certain Kantian dimensions of his thought, as he was now concerned with criticising the *hypostatisation* of a form of thought—that of the scientific ethnologist—beyond the conditions of its own functioning. Like the pre-Copernican cosmologist, the scholastic ethnologist appeared to project the conditions of his own experience onto the object of inquiry. Bourdieu's response was thus to extend Kant's critique of *pure* reason into what he called a 'critique of *scholastic* reason'. And yet this familiar anti-Hegelian reading of Bourdieu, I suggest, is confounded by the remarkable points of convergence one finds within Bourdieu's work—often signalled by Bourdieu himself—with the thought of Hegel. It is such points of convergence that I want to broach here, first, that between Bourdieu's 'logic of practice' and Hegel's account of the structure of what can be termed 'immediate thought', and next, that between the respective accounts each give of the conditions under which systematic 'reflective' thought can break with the socially conditioned logic of practice. This is done not for the purpose of reducing Bourdieu's remarkably innovative work to the status of repetition of a thinker regarded as having brought intellectual history to a close, but more to question the degree to which Hegel himself can be reduced to the image of that philosopher against which Bourdieu and his generation had reacted.

## I. Practical versus Theoretical Logic and the Critique of Scholastic Reason

After his break with structuralist formalism, Bourdieu came to regard Lévi-Strauss' intellectualising analyses of mythopoeic thought as exemplifying a danger implicit in the very move which liberates scientific thought from the constraints of everyday life: the danger of a 'scholastic forgetting' of the historical specificity of those conditions allowing the reflexively epistemic orientation to the world characteristic of scholarship itself. While still maintaining his earlier positive 'Bachelardian' stance towards the establishment of the sciences in their break with the schemas of everyday life, Bourdieu's attitude was now tempered by a sensitivity to the ambiguity of such epistemological breaks: "The *fundamental ambiguity* of the scholastic universes and of all their productions . . . lies in the fact that their apartness from the world of production is both a liberatory break and a disconnection, a potentially crippling separation."<sup>11</sup>

In order to capture the peculiarity of the theoretical attitude and the conditions that underlie its emergence in various realms, as well as its inherent ambiguity, Bourdieu employed the notion of the '*skholè*'. Exploiting the etymological connection between scholarship and leisure, Bourdieu used this concept to refer to those historically created social contexts, which "liberated from practical occupations and preoccupations," were able to provide the cultural spaces for the development of the type of *scholarly/scholastic* linguistic practice. For example, within the school it is "studious leisure" which becomes "the precondition for scholastic exercises and activities removed from immediate necessity, such as sport, play, the production and contemplation of works of art and all forms of gratuitous speculation with no other end than themselves." These historically specific contexts liberating an activity from the immediate demands of economic and social necessity in turn foster the "scholastic disposition which inclines its possessors to suspend the demands of the situation, the constraints of economic and social necessity, and the urgencies it imposes or the ends it proposes" to meet the demands of detached and disinterested inquiry.<sup>12</sup>

More specifically concerned with the emergence of objective thought about the *social field*, Bourdieu's telling of the story of the epistemological rupture is further marked by the details of his own *ethnographically* derived account

of the form of thought with which the scholarly language game breaks and with which it is to be contrasted—*mythopoeic thought*. Following Durkheim and Mauss,<sup>13</sup> Bourdieu understands human practices as needing the articulation provided by socially generated symbolic systems that, in pre-modern societies, are objectified and transmitted in ritual and myth. Such mythopoeic thought thus reflects and reproduces just those types of “primitive classification” structuring social activity within pre-modern communities—those systems of “inseparably cognitive and evaluative structures that organise perception of the world and action in the world in accordance with the objective structures of a given state of the social world.”<sup>14</sup> But going beyond Durkheim’s neo-Kantian formalism and in the direction of Marx, Bourdieu draws attention to the role played by such classifications in the articulation of relations of *domination*. It is in virtue of the *evaluative* dimension of such differences instituted in the world that they thereby articulate a type of social domination via a “symbolic violence” which constrains by neither overt force nor reason, but by something in between.<sup>15</sup>

The emergence of philosophy in classical Greece, which provides the *skholè* with its “ideal type,” exemplifies such a break with systems of mythopoeic thought. There “myths and rites ceased to be practical acts of belief . . . and became instead matter for theoretical astonishment and questioning, or objects of hermeneutic rivalry.”<sup>16</sup> But *as an ethnologist* Bourdieu was interested in the break from mythical thought in the context of the *inquiry into myth itself*—a break, he claimed, which was not achieved *until* the work of Durkheim and Mauss, and, importantly, Lévi-Strauss. It was Lévi-Strauss’ achievement, Bourdieu tells us, to have “provided the means of completing the abandonment of recourse to the mythological mode of thought in the science of mythologies . . . by resolutely taking this mode of thought as his object instead of setting it to work, as native mythologists always do, in order to provide a mythological solution to mythological problems.”<sup>17</sup> And yet, as we have seen, in his structuralist search for some universal grammar or ‘logic’ underlying the outputs of mythical thought, Lévi-Strauss had projected onto his subjects the disengaged dispositions of his own scholastic context—forgetting, and thereby universalising, the historical specificity of his own intellectual practice.

Following his break with structuralism, in works like *Esquisse d’une Théorie de la Pratique* and *Le sens Pratique*, Bourdieu attempted to reinterpret the type

of binaristic grammar to which both Durkheim and Lévi-Strauss had appealed by showing its generation from responses of the body's *dispositional habitus* to the practical demands of a socially codified everyday existence. These are the demands from which the scholastic disposition had itself abstracted, and which in so doing had become prey to a type of *forgetting* or *repression* of the peculiarities of its own conditions, projecting its own *theoretical* rather than *practical* orientation back onto the objects—in this case, the agents—it studies. This 'logic' of mythopoeic thought is fundamentally a logic of *practice* rather than thought. Reconstructed by the analyst as a structure holding among representations, it is effectively reconstructed *as* a form of thought, but this must not obscure the point that the primary field within which it seeks coherencies is one of *actions*, not *representations*.<sup>18</sup> The *practical* logic of these systems, therefore, need not have the sort of coherence demanded of sets of concepts functioning in purely discursive theoretical domains.

This practical logic . . . is able to organize all thoughts, perceptions and actions by means of a few generative principles, which are closely interrelated and constitute a practically integrated whole, only because its whole economy, based on the principle of the economy of logic, presupposes a sacrifice of rigor for the sake of simplicity and generality and because it finds in 'polythesis' the conditions required for successful use of polysemy.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the 'illogicality' of practice is not simply quantitative but *qualitative* as well. When one regards its *reconstruction* in terms of its structures and processes informing it, practical logic has a distinctly 'illogical' form, as it is effectively marked by principles of *contrariety* or *polarity* on the one hand, and *analogical projection* on the other. Furthermore, this is a 'logic' that is reflected in the Pythagorean "columns of contraries"<sup>20</sup> which, as Geoffrey Lloyd has pointed out,<sup>21</sup> are at work in the thought of the pre-Socratics more generally.

Within such systems, "based on a fundamental principle of division which distributes all the things of the world into two complementary classes,"<sup>22</sup> judgements about objects are usually expressed analogically by the use of vehicles drawn from a limited number of recurring contrary pairs—sun : moon, dry : wet, hot : cold, and so on, which are mapped onto the fundamental *social* distinction, male : female.<sup>23</sup> Easily learned, flexible and readily

applied, such predicates work on the principle of 'overall resemblance': exactly which aspect of the metaphorical vehicle is relevant to the analogy—its 'principle'—is neither explicit nor constant across different uses of the vehicle, rendering such thought redolent with contradictions when considered from a logical point of view:

Ritual practice performs an uncertain abstraction that brings the same symbol into different relationships by apprehending it through different aspects, or different aspects of the same referent into the same relationship of opposition. In other words, it excludes the Socratic question of the respect in which the referent is apprehended (shape, colour, function, etc.), thereby obviating the need to define in each case the criterion governing the choice of the aspect selected and, a fortiori, the need to keep to that criterion at all times.<sup>24</sup>

Bourdieu's insistent focus here is on the way that the primary products of such structures and processes—actions—are generated from 'habitus', that is, from "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them."<sup>25</sup> It is this that gives his approach its radically anti-subjective, anti-Cartesian thrust. Thus practical belief, he stresses, "is not a 'state of mind', still less a kind of arbitrary adherence to a set of instituted dogmas and doctrines ('beliefs'), but rather a state of the body."<sup>26</sup> This means, of course, that even "the language of overall resemblance and uncertain abstraction is still too intellectualist to be able to express a logic that is performed directly in bodily gymnastics, without passing through explicit apprehension of the 'aspects' chosen or rejected."<sup>27</sup> Thus we are to think of Durkheimian primitive classification as primarily working not at the level of the mind, but at that of the body "constituted as an analogical operator establishing all kinds of practical equivalences among the different divisions of the social world" by virtue of its postures, its reactions, and "gymnastics."<sup>28</sup>

## II. The Elements of Practical Logic in Bourdieu and Hegel

Bourdieu acknowledges that the notion of '*habitus*' is familiar from the work of "authors as different as Hegel, Husserl, Weber, Durkheim and Mauss."<sup>29</sup> In particular Hegel employed the notion in "an attempt to break with Kantian dualism and to reintroduce the permanent dispositions that are constitutive of realized morality (*Sittlichkeit*), as opposed to the moralism of duty."<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Bourdieu draws attention to the relevance of Hegel's analyses for his own analyses of the life forms of pre-modern societies articulated by a logic of practice. For example, Hegel, he notes, "had a very acute intuition" of the "concrete liberty as 'being at home' (*bei sich sein*) in what is" characterising those "stable and relatively undifferentiated societies," a liberty arising "from the quasi-perfect coincidence between habitus and habitat, between the schemes of the mythic vision of the world and the structure of domestic space, for example, organised according to the same oppositions, or between expectations and the objective chances of realizing them."<sup>31</sup> On examination, Bourdieu's binaried and body-centred 'logic of practice' bears striking similarities to the categorial structure of the logic that Hegel takes as structuring 'immediate' or non-reflective cognition. At issue here is Hegel's distinctive approach to what he called 'determinate negation', an idea that had its origins in elements of Kant's thought, which did not survive the neo-Kantian interpretation.

Like Kant, Durkheim had thought of 'categories' as concepts that somehow contributed to the pre-structuring of experience, but it is clear that what he had understood by this notion was not what *Kant* had intended. The most obvious difference here concerned Durkheim's belief that a culture's categorial structure derived from its *social* structure: "the classification of things" he claimed, "reproduces the classification of men,"<sup>32</sup> while Kant (somewhat like Lévi-Strauss) held the categories to be universal.<sup>33</sup> In *this* sense Durkheim's thought was, in being more culturalist and historicist, more 'Hegelian' than Kantian. But *equally* importantly, Durkheim ignored Kant's crucial distinction between structurally different *forms* of representation. For Kant, the categories were concepts that were so basic to cognition that they were presupposed by all meaningful experience and therefore could not be acquired *from* experience. But Kant distinguished *concepts*, *qua* general representations applied in judgements, from 'intuitions', which were singular and immediate representations, providing particular experiential contents *to which* concepts were applied. In



Kant's taxonomy, space and time were *a priori* (or 'pure') intuitions, not concepts, in contrast to categories such as 'causality'. Durkheim, however, counted space and time together with causality as among the 'categories'. In conflating Kant's intuition-concept distinction in this way, Durkheim was here simply following his neo-Kantian contemporaries who had abandoned this distinction, by eliminating 'intuition' and identifying all representations as conceptual.

Like other post-Kantians in the decades following the appearance of Kant's critical philosophy, Hegel *too* had been critical of Kant's 'intuition-concept' distinction, but his transformation of Kant here had been very different to that of the late nineteenth-century neo-Kantian *elimination* of intuition. For Kant, the *a priori* synthetic truths of geometry and arithmetic were grounded in the form of pure intuition of space and time, but Hegel describes the space of geometry so conceived as "the existence in which the Concept [*Begriff*] inscribes its differences as in an empty lifeless element, in which they are just as inert and lifeless."<sup>34</sup> For Kant, what is peculiar about the structure of space and time *qua* form of intuition concerns their singularity and immediacy, but from Hegel's point of view, this Kantian approach to geometry "abstracts from the fact that it is *the Concept* which divides space into its dimensions and determines the connections between and within them."<sup>35</sup>

There is another way of thinking of the Kantian structures of space and time, however, as both exhibit ego-centric polar oppositions: I understand space as organised around me in terms of the three sets of polar opposites front-back, up-down, and left-right, and I similarly understand time as organised around me in terms of the opposition future and past. Moreover, in some late pre-critical writings *before* his postulation of the intuition-concept distinction, Kant had thought of spatial and temporal representations in just this way and characterised them in terms of the peculiar type of 'negation' existing between their concepts. This negation or opposition he called 'real' negation, and he contrasted it with the negation that resulted from the *denial* of a concept's applicability to an object, 'logical' negation.<sup>36</sup> That is, Kant *there* seemed to conceive of space in terms of the egocentric polarly opposed *concepts*.

In his account of the categories in the *Critique of Pure Reason* the same distinction between these two different senses of 'negation' is manifest in the

three judgement forms corresponding to the three categories of *quality*: 'affirmative', 'negative', and 'infinite',<sup>37</sup> and it is this *third* judgement form that gives the clue to the origin of Kant's concept of 'real' negation: the notion of the 'indefinite' form of judgement found in Aristotelian and medieval logic.<sup>38</sup> While in the tradition of propositional logic originating with the Stoics, 'negation' was an operation applying to a complete sentence or proposition, Aristotelian logic being a 'term' logic, employed two different forms of negation: one could *deny* rather than *affirm* some predicate of a subject—deny, rather than affirm, say, that Socrates is beautiful—or one could *negate* the term predicated of a subject with its *contrary*—affirm, say, that Socrates is *ugly*.<sup>39</sup>

Effectively, Hegel had adopted *this* taxonomy for representations, interpreting Kant's *real negation*, the negation of *infinite judgement*, as 'first' negation and which works within the opposed conceptual determinations of 'being logic'.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, 'logical negation' was expressed in determinate negations of the 'reflective' thought of what he called 'essence' logic. In short, Kant's 'intuition-concept' distinction became for Hegel a distinction *within* the order of concepts, effectively between two different but interacting conceptual systems. This in turn gave Hegel's account greater flexibility as these two differently structured conceptual systems could interact in complex ways allowing for historical change and development within representational systems. It is just these 'determinate negations' of Hegel's 'being-logic' that turn up in the classificatory systems structured by polar oppositions that Bourdieu inherited from Durkheim and Levi-Strauss and that he finds encodable in the *spatial* arrangements of the lived habitat.<sup>41</sup>

Bourdieu's earliest ethnographic work had been concerned with the significance of the structuring of domestic spaces in the Berber culture of North Africa, and he commonly commented on the parallelism between *habitus* and *habitat* in such pre-modern cultures.<sup>42</sup> That is, in pre-modern relatively undifferentiated societies one finds a type of rough isomorphism between the structures of Durkheimian social categories on the one hand and the organisation of *physical space* on the other. For his part, Hegel in the *Philosophy of History* had commented on the principle of 'beautiful individuality' structuring the world of the Greek polis. As Kant had regarded beauty as brought about by the 'harmony' of the spatio-temporal unities of the imagination and the conceptual unities of the understanding, that is, the harmony of the 'faculties' that Hegel

regarded as the immediate and reflective functions of cognition, Hegel's idea seems to point to a similar feature of pre-modern societies. It was this harmony that made the members of such community feel 'at home' in the world, but the same harmony was, he thought, disrupted and destroyed by the introduction of 'reflection':

Anaxagoras himself had taught that Thought itself was the absolute Essence of the World. And it was in *Socrates*, that at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, the principle of subjectivity—of the absolute inherent independence of thought—attained free expression. . . . The Greeks had a *customary* morality; but Socrates undertook to teach them what moral virtues, duties, etc. were. The moral man is not he who merely wills and does that which is right—not the merely innocent man—but he who has the consciousness of what he is doing. . . . The rise of the inner world of Subjectivity was the rupture with the existing Reality. Though Socrates himself continued to perform his duties as a citizen, it was not the actual State and its religion, but the world of Thought that was his true home.<sup>43</sup>

Socratic thought, which inquires into *reasons* underlying all claims, draws thought contents into a differently structured realm of relations, and utilises the resources of 'essence' logic. On Hegel's account, it was not until the *modern* world, with the development the market-based relations of civil society, that stable social practices and institutions emerged that were capable of sustaining this 'abstractly universal' form of subjectivity pre-figured in the character of the reflective, questioning Socrates, and integrating it into social life. Civil society had differentiated out of the immediately family-based practices and institutions that structured the pre-modern world, resulting in two opposed forms of modern *Sittlichkeit*, the modern private family, on the one hand, with its immediate, affect-involving social bonds, and the mediated relations holding between abstractly individuated individuals recognised as bearers of universal rights on the other. For Hegel, these two opposed modes of ethical life, or *Sittlichkeit*, operated as contexts for distinct cognitive and moral styles, again marked by immediacy and mediation or reflection respectively.<sup>44</sup> In turn these two forms of *Sittlichkeit* and the cognitive styles accompanying them were meant to be integrated (*aufgehoben*) by a process of mediation in the unifying institutions of the *state*.

Although it did not come to find adequate *institutional* support for millennia, Hegel had effectively regarded the development of reflective thought as an invention of the Greeks, and his account here is close to Bourdieu's appeal to the '*skholè*'. The development of the practice of Socratic asking after grounds was clearly closely related that of *dialectic*, and Hegel relates reflective forms of thought back to the argumentative practices of the *Sophists*.<sup>45</sup> Thus we might think of the practice of dialectic as a Bourdieuan "scholastic language game" in which each player tries to catch out their opponent in contradictions, each game requiring the players to keep track of what Robert Brandom refers to as the "inferential commitments" of their opponents.<sup>46</sup> In turn, the development of *logic* starting with Aristotle can be regarded as the attempt to find the underlying universal patterns within such inferential relations. This type of reflective turn made possible by the Bourdieuan *skholè* opened the possibility for unprecedented degrees of critical reflection upon the existing structures of belief and practice—effectively creating the possibility of 'enlightened' public life that later started to emerge in eighteenth-century Europe. Beliefs and practices that had played a *functional* role in the reproduction of everyday life could now be made to answer the question of their *justification*, and to the logic of *practice* was now added an opposed logic of propositional coherence.

### III. Spheres of *Sittlichkeit* as Cognitive Contexts

As spheres of modern *Sittlichkeit*, the family and civil society are educative realms within which agents' culturally transmitted 'second natures' are acquired. For Hegel, as for Durkheim, social relations require that agents recognise each other in terms of the social categories articulating society. And just as Durkheim distinguished between the 'mechanical' and 'organic' forms of social cohesion distinguishing traditional from modern societies,<sup>47</sup> Hegel utilised the idea of differently structure realms of recognitive interaction to account for *qualitative differences* between these 'educative' processes and in their products—the types of knowing and acting subjects produced. Hegel's suggestions in the *Philosophy of Right* as to the difference in cognitive styles, although brief, are consistent with his systematic approach to cognitive function in both the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Logic*. The family is the context in which agents are inducted into the processes of immediate cognition. It is a realm continuous with pre-modern society, a realm into which the Durkheim

world of ‘mechanical solidarity’ has shrunk. Modern civil society, in contrast, is that in which they are inducted into the practices of reflective cognition.

Within the context of the family, education (*Bildung*) raises the child out of the singularity of its immediately given—here natural—state into an immediate and concrete realm of objective spirit structured by its recognitive interactions. Here substantial unity prevails over subjective differences, and the educative process is focused on the transmission of an immediate and substantial content: parents, says Hegel, constitute (*ausmachen*) the universal and essential elements of things for their children,<sup>48</sup> and the ethical is to be given to the children “in the form of feeling” and “without opposition.”<sup>49</sup> We might say that by being born into a family the child becomes the inheritor of certain common ways of making sense of and living in the world—some set of criteria, transmitted by the parents by both word and, crucially, deed, for governing the child’s behaviour towards those things.

In discussing ‘feeling’ as that which mediates the relations within the family Hegel clearly regards it as the vehicle of a type of ‘intentional’ orientation to the world in which the subject’s orientation towards things and others has a non-reflective and immediate character. Such an intentional analysis of feeling brings out the element of implicit conceptuality involved in the determination of that intentional content—one loves one’s father *as* a father, one’s sister *as* a sister, and so on. Such categories are clearly not simply descriptive but also ‘action-guiding’: there are definite conventionally encoded ways to treat fathers, sisters and so on. And added to the generally asymmetrical bipolarity of these categories (wife-husband, sister-brother, mother-daughter, and so on) is their egocentricity: *my* father exists for me immediately *just as* ‘father’—not *a* father (an instance of an abstract universal who also *happens* to be mine). While clearly there is an element of conceptuality involved (my father behaves and is behaved towards *as* a father) it does not, Hegel says, ‘subsume’ the individual as mere instance of that category. This is the world of the articulated particularity of Durkheimian categories of ‘primitive classification’ and Kantian ‘real opposition’—the world articulated by Hegel’s ‘being-logic’, and it is the world to which the modern public world, ‘civil-society’, stands opposed.

Civil society, says Hegel, provides a second context for the education of individuals from out of the “immediacy” and “natural simplicity” characterising

the identity received in the family,<sup>50</sup> and Bourdieu too notes how the “acquisition of the specific dispositions demanded by a field” depends on the how “new entrants bring in dispositions previously constituted within a socially situated family group.”<sup>51</sup> Essentially this form of education means that their theoretical and practical intentionality is developed in the direction of an ‘objective’ movement away from the local, perspectival and immediately evaluative culture and thought. Because agents here have to take into consideration a range of others who do *not* share their perspectives, satisfaction of their own ends will be achieved “only in so far as they themselves determine their knowledge, volition, and action in a universal way and make themselves *members* in this articulated sequence.”<sup>52</sup> This is the world of formal equality and material disparity. Here, structural inequalities of power can become invisible because the ubiquity of parallel *habitus* and *habitat* has been broken.

Modern civil society is the material condition for the existence of science. While simple qualitative perception grasps the singular thing as an immediate instantiation of some familiar universal, in the type of judgement that exists within the new discursive space of justification, the object is determined in terms of some ‘underlying’, essential and initially non-apparent universal. Such properties are *dispositional* ones that require the mediation of a third object for their manifestation. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel describes how the *arableness* of land is expressed only in the context of our planting of crops,<sup>53</sup> while in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* he gives as an example the property of *being curative* predicated of certain plants.<sup>54</sup> It is this same appeal to some mediating third objects which likewise is what characterises the structure of the sorts of recognitive interactions at the heart of the realm of civil society—the mutually equilibrating commodities of free market exchange.

With its distinctive outlook, then, it is not surprising that modern civil society should give rise to a scientific account of its own functioning—Adam Smith’s science of political economy, “one of the sciences which have originated in the modern age” and for which the modern age supplies the “foundation” or “ground” [*Boden*].<sup>55</sup> Hegel is in no way dismissive of such empirical social science, noting that political economy’s capacity to discover the ‘necessity at work’ in the field of economically interacting individuals ‘does credit to thought’. What he objects to is its *hypostatisation* beyond the reflective form of modern life found in civil society, to other spheres such as the family and

the state itself. Hegel's attitude to Smith thus effectively anticipates that of Bourdieu to Lévi-Strauss, and Hegel's epistemic contextualising of science within civil society anticipates Bourdieu's idea of a 'reflexive sociology'.

#### IV. Bourdieu *Contra* Hegel

Bourdieu's move beyond the neo-Kantianism of structuralism involved a Hegel-like appeal to the historical conditions of the *skholè* allowing the constitution of the social scientist's own field as a true object of scientific inquiry. It is this that allows the social scientist to be reflectively critical of her own tendency to universalise her own reflective form of subjectivity, and this would appear to give a further decidedly Hegelian twist to Bourdieu's peculiarly inflected Kantianism. Kantian transcendental self-consciousness, one might say, needs to become *historical* self-consciousness, and yet Bourdieu resists the familiar historical relativism that often appears here. Social science, along with other sciences, is not just another 'discourse' that has arisen—it is a form of *rationality*. Historical consciousness cannot, then, be seen to terminate in what Hegel would regard as a formally universal point of view which locates its own society as *just one more* instance of society abstractly conceived, thereby relativising and so de-normativising its claims to knowledge. In our historical consciousness we must somehow *return*, from out of our 'reflected' point of view, *to ourselves*. But such a 'return to self out of otherness' is a familiar Hegelian image of what is called for. What then is it that separates Bourdieu's outlook from that of Hegel?

The most obvious reply here is the one that follows from Bourdieu's claim that Durkheim, Mauss and Lévi-Strauss, in instituting the science of the field of mythology, thereby broke with mythological thought itself. Lévi-Strauss, it will be remembered, takes this mythological mode of thought as an object "instead of setting it to work, as native mythologists always do, in order to provide a mythological solution to mythological problems."<sup>56</sup> Hegel thought of philosophy as consisting of the scientific (conceptual) treatment of *the same* content that was otherwise given in mythology—religion. From Bourdieu's perspective, then, Hegel's philosophy will look like a 'setting to work' of myth *rather than* a breaking with it—a diagnosis that largely repeats that of Marx for whom Hegel's philosophy, like all philosophy, was really an *instance* of religious thought rather than a scientific break with it.

Regarded *as* mythology philosophy would thereby do the work of all mythologies “of grounding in reason the arbitrary divisions of the social world, and especially of the division of labour, and thus of providing a logical or cosmological solution to the problem of the classification of humans.”<sup>57</sup> Hegel, then, is surely the exemplification of that “philosopher-king who, by assigning them an essence, claims to enjoin them to be and to do what it behooves them by dint of such definition.”<sup>58</sup> We might think, for example, of Hegel’s generation, from out of the resources of his *logic*, of the various social divisions proper to the modern state. What Bourdieu calls for is a study of the historical and social conditions underlying the epistemological breaks allowing the irruptions of reason, but while Hegel appears to historicise philosophy, what we get is philosophy *rather than* history, that is, a mythology of thought rather than *thought* about thought:

Philosophy is identified with its history not in order to reduce it to the historical history of philosophy, less to history as such, but so as to annex history to philosophy, making the course of history an immense course in philosophy . . . The philosophical history of philosophy is a re-appropriation that is performed in and through a selective, unificatory awakening of consciousness which supersedes and conserves the principles of all the philosophies of the past. As an *Erinnerung* it is a theoretical redemption, a theodicy, which saves the past by integrating it into the ultimate and therefore eternal present of absolute knowledge.<sup>59</sup>

Read in this way, history as “the process of development and the realization of Spirit” is, as Hegel states at the conclusion of his lectures on the *Philosophy of History*, “the true *Theodicea*,”<sup>60</sup> because it is an account of God’s self-actualisation. Hegel’s *dehistoricisation* of history is thus a consequence of the globally enframing *subjectivism* of his approach: all of Hegel’s social and psychological insights (which Bourdieu clearly appreciates *as* insights) are ultimately contextualised, he thinks, within a theocentric metaphysical monism telling the story of the development of a cosmic self-consciousness distributed over the consciousnesses of individuals and groups regarded as its vehicle. On this view of Hegel’s philosophy, the categorial structures studied by Durkheim and Lévi-Strauss or those more reflective structures found in the fields of science constituted after Bachelardian breaks, are not *merely* the categories within which the experiences and judgements of particular embodied



subjects are shaped, they are the categories for the thought processes of a divine “thought thinking itself.”<sup>61</sup> Thus Bourdieu notes of Hegel that “the necessary sequence of philosophies, which is that of Mind developing according to its own law, has primacy over the secondary relationship between the various philosophies and the societies from which they arose.”<sup>62</sup>

Recently, however, readings of Hegel have become available which refuse the traditional understanding presupposed here.<sup>63</sup> While diverse, such readings share a common commitment to a view of Hegel as a *post*-Kantian. That is, they see Hegel as a thinker who radicalised Kant’s own critique of ‘dogmatic metaphysics’ but moving Kantianism beyond a set of residual ‘dogmatically metaphysical’, and so essentially mythological, ‘binaries’ constituting its field—in particular, Kant’s distinction between ‘appearance’ and ‘thing-in-itself’. My suggestion here is that the shape of Hegelianism so understood does indeed bear remarkable similarities to Bourdieu’s own way beyond the limitations of neo-Kantianism.

On this non-metaphysical, post-Kantian reading of Hegel, the categorical structures found in non-differentiated pre-modern societies on the one hand, and modern societies on the other, should not be thought of as stages in the development of some single subject—neither the God of traditional ‘right-Hegelian’ theological interpretation, nor the universalised human subject of ‘left-Hegelian’ anthropological or ‘humanist’ interpretation. From the perspective of a non-metaphysical conception of spirit, what is ‘actualised’ in history is the complex of recognitively mediated conditions adequate to human freedom. While all social existence is for Hegel founded on recognitive relations, not all forms of society allow freedom to the same extent. The Greek enlightenment introduced the type of reflective orientation to life allowing the progressive rationalisation of social existence, but it was only with the differentiation from the immediate structures of social life of the reflective and reciprocal forms of recognition of modern social institutions that such rationalising processes could be universalised. But it is not as if the abstractly universalised aspect of human subjectivity developed in modernity represents the flowering of some human ‘essence’.

Hegel recognised that these structures cannot be effectively lived in isolation from the more immediate forms of recognition, and so in his account of the

structure of the modern state he attempted to ‘mediate’ the reflective structures of civil society with the more immediate ones of the family. What the ‘principle of subjectivity’ allows is, rather, a continuing critical transformation of the elements shaping lived immediacy such as that pre-reflective life can become compatible with a social existence in which ‘all’ rather than ‘some’ or ‘one’ can be free. It is within these structures of modernity that a place emerges for the Bourdieuan ‘reflexive’ sociologist who provides empirical social existence with the conceptual rather than mythical description that makes possible what Frederick Neuhouser has referred to as an immanent yet *substantive* critical transformation of the institutions of modern society.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, this all only makes sense for Hegel against the background of the demand that history be interpreted philosophically as the realm in which the essence of *spirit*—philosophy’s successor notion to religion’s notion of god—is actualised. Without *that* Bourdieu, from Hegel’s point of view, could only resist the relativism that threatens post-structuralism with a dogmatic affirmation of the ‘rationality’ of science. The real difference between Bourdieu and Hegel would seem come down to the relation between historical and philosophical modes of explanation.<sup>65</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> See, for example G. Bachelard, *Épistémologie*; textes choisis par Dominique Lecourt, 2e éd. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1974, and G. Canguilhem, *Études d’Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences*, Paris, Vrin, 1979.
- <sup>2</sup> C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966, chap. 9.
- <sup>3</sup> C. Lévi-Strauss, “Réponses à quelques questions,” *Esprit*, no. 322, Nov. 1963, p. 663.
- <sup>4</sup> Durkheim is generally thought to have been most influenced by the neo-Kantianism of Charles Renouvier and Émile Boutroux. See S. Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1973, pp. 54-7. For an interpretation which stresses the neo-Kantian aspects of Bourdieu’s approach see the introduction to Derek Robbins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, London, Sage, 2000, vol. 1.
- <sup>5</sup> Bourdieu refers to his article on the Kabyle house written in 1963 (“The Berber House or the World Reversed,” *Social Science Information*, IX, vol. 2, 1970) as perhaps his last work written “as a blissful structuralist.” P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, p. 9.
- <sup>6</sup> Bourdieu’s approach shows features in common with the work of Foucault and

- other 'post-structuralists', but it is distinguished by maintaining the more positive orientation to science characteristic of the work of the earlier structuralists.
- 7 Translated as *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977.
  - 8 For example, in Robbins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, p. xiv.
  - 9 Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 37.
  - 10 *Ibid.*, p. 94.
  - 11 P. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000, p. 15.
  - 12 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
  - 13 E. Durkheim and M. Mauss, "Essai sur quelques formes Primitives de Classification," *L'Année Sociologique*, vol. 6, 1903, pp. 1-72.
  - 14 Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 94.
  - 15 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, ch. 5.
  - 16 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
  - 17 Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p. 5.
  - 18 Thus the degree of coherence demanded of those symbolic systems expressed in mythical products and required for practice need then be no greater than that of the practices they inform. "If ritual practices and representations are practically coherent, this is because they arise from the combinatorial functioning of a small number of generative schemes that are linked by relations of practical substitutability, this is, capable of producing results that are equivalent in terms of the 'logical' requirements of practice." Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 94.
  - 19 Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 86.
  - 20 *Ibid.*, p. 210.
  - 21 G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966.
  - 22 Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 210.
  - 23 For the significance of such polarities in the perpetuation of sexual inequality see P. Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. R. Nice, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2001.
  - 24 Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, pp. 87-88.
  - 25 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
  - 26 *Ibid.*, p. 68.
  - 27 *Ibid.*, p. 89.
  - 28 Thus, for example, Bourdieu speaks of bodily dispositions as "political mythology realized, em-bodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking. The opposition between

male and female is realized in posture, in the gestures and movements of the body, in the form of the opposition between the straight and the bent, between firmness, uprightness and directness (a man faces forward, looking and striking directly at his adversary), and restraint, reserve and flexibility." Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>29</sup> P. Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 147.

<sup>32</sup> Durkheim, "Essai sur quelques formes Primitives de Classification," p. i.

<sup>33</sup> This aspect of Durkheim's divergence from Kant is explored in W. Schmaus, *Rethinking Durkheim and His Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<sup>34</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977, § 45.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> In particular, in the 1763 paper, "Attempt to introduce the concept of negative magnitudes into philosophy," in *Immanuel Kant, Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*, trans. & eds. D. Walford & R. Meerbote, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 203-241.

<sup>37</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. & eds. P. Guyer & A. W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, A70/B95. The category corresponding to infinite judgement is 'limitation'.

<sup>38</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, trans. H. P. Cooke, in *The Loeb Classical Library: Aristotle 1*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1938, chap. 7.

<sup>39</sup> These, of course, are not equivalent. *Denying* Socrates is beautiful does not imply that he is ugly—he may be neither. For an invaluable comprehensive review of the nature and fate of Aristotle's account of negation see Laurence R. Horn, *A Natural History of Negation*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, especially chapters 1 & 2. Thus Horn points out that for Aristotle "there is strictly speaking no external, propositional negation as such, but two syntactically and semantically distinct types of internal negation," *ibid.*, p. 21. Much of my general orientation towards the changing role of negation in the history of logic here owes much to his analysis.

<sup>40</sup> In the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel describes the 'first' negation as that in which "only the determinacy" of the universal predicate is negated: "'The rose is *not* red' implies that it does have some colour—obviously some other colour, which when identified would be just another positive judgement" (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*,

- trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Sutching & H. S. Harris, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1991, § 173).
- 41 The member of the Durkheim school who most explicitly pursued the issue of *spatial* polarity in primitive classification systems was Robert Hertz in his classic paper on the role of right-left polarity, "*Le Prééminence de la main Droite: Étude sur la Polarité Religieuse*," *Revue Philosophique*, vol. 68, 1909.
- 42 See, for example, the quote above at footnote 31.
- 43 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, New York, Dover, 1956, p. 269.
- 44 I develop this point is developed in *Hegel's Hermeneutics*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1996, chap. 9.
- 45 Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 268.
- 46 R. B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1994.
- 47 Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. G. Simpson. New York, The Free Press, 1933. Durkheim's use of the metaphors of 'mechanical' and 'organic' should not be confused with the rather different (and in some ways, reversed) uses to which they were put by romantic social theorists in Hegel's time, and on which Hegel drew.
- 48 G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1991, § 174 *Zusatz*.
- 49 *Ibid.*, § 175.
- 50 *Ibid.*, § 187 *Anmerkung*.
- 51 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 164.
- 52 Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 187, translation modified.
- 53 *Ibid.*, §61 *Zusatz*.
- 54 *Ibid.*, §174, *Zusatz*.
- 55 *Ibid.*, § 189 *Anmerkung*.
- 56 Bourdieu, *Logic of Practice*, p. 5.
- 57 Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, p. 180.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 46.
- 60 Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 457.
- 61 Hegel appeals to Aristotelian figure of "thought thinking itself" (from *Metaphysics*, book 12) at the conclusion to his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*.
- 62 Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, p. 46.
- 63 See especially the important works of Robert Pippin (*Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989 and *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Terry Pinkard (*German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism*, Cambridge,

Cambridge University Press, 2002). I have argued for a similarly post-Kantian reading in *Hegel's Hermeneutics*.

<sup>64</sup> F. Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000.

<sup>65</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at a seminar on "Hegel and Social Critique" at the *Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy* (ASCP) annual conference, December 2004, at Macquarie University, Sydney. I wish to thank other participants at the session, and in particular, Jay Bernstein, John Grumley, and Simon Lumsden for helpful feedback, as I do also an anonymous referee for *Critical Horizons*.

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