



Pierre Bourdieu as a Post-cultural Theorist

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ABSTRACT

Pierre Bourdieu is without a doubt one of the main figures in the sociological study of culture today. Yet, for a theorist so central to the subject matter of cultural studies, it is clear that there is no coherent account of Bourdieu's stance in relation to the 'concept of culture' among current commentators. More importantly, in the sister-discipline of anthropology, Bourdieu's is thought of as a central figure precisely because he helped move contemporary anthropological theory *away* from the centrality of the culture concept. This paper reviews this peculiar double reception of Bourdieu's anthropological and sociological work, closely examining these unacknowledged strands of Bourdieu's thinking on culture. The basic argument is that the anthropological reception of Bourdieu's work is more faithful to the outlines of his late-career intellectual development while the sociological portrayal – Bourdieu as a Saussurean culture theorist with a 'Weberian power twist' – is fundamentally misleading. I close by outlining how Bourdieu's work points towards a yet-to-be developed 'post-cultural' stance – one that takes cognition, experience and the body seriously – in the sociological study of culture.

KEY WORDS

anthropology / Bourdieu / cognition / culture / perception / power / structuralism

Introduction

Pierre Bourdieu is without a doubt one of the dominant figures in the study of culture today (Pileggi and Patton, 2003). Or at least that is the way in which his work is usually framed and summarized for academic consumption. Edles (2002: 224) introduces Bourdieu as '*the* most influential cultural theorist in the world today'. A statement that is echoed by a number of analysts including Robbins (2000), Swartz (1997) and Fowler (1997, 2000). Yet, for

somebody who is considered one of the most influential contemporary figures in cultural analysis, it becomes clear fairly quickly that there exists a wide range of views and statements as to what exactly Bourdieu's conception of culture was. Some statements appear to suggest that Bourdieu held on to an unusually extensive (and possibly incoherent) sets of definitions of the culture concept while other analysts suggest that Bourdieu had a fairly specific notion of what culture was.

On the wildly extensive side we find commentators such as Zeuner (2003: 179) who suggests that

Bourdieu understood culture to be everything which is intuitively understood, self-evident and unspoken, and which it is difficult to objectify. It is everything one has learnt at one's mother's knee, in the pre-verbal stage. It cannot be explicitly formulated. He also emphasized the need to regress culture to the anthropological concept of culture. Finally, we . . . [find] the idea of a common set of master patterns, which are presented in educational works and to some extent in anthropological works . . . Bourdieu spoke of these oppositions as cognitive structures, as basic systems for understanding, or as classificatory systems. Bourdieu considered such a set of common patterns a social mythology. We thus see three key concepts to illuminate Bourdieu's perception of culture...and these are: the intuitively understood, the anthropological and the mythological . . . At the same time, Bourdieu recognized that culture can be objectified. It can exist as works, books, articles, theories, concepts, etc.

Zeuner goes on to add that Bourdieu thought of culture as large-scale 'social mythologies' but also as implicit 'intuitively understood' and hard to verbally formulate patterns of practice, belief and classification.

Swartz (1997: 8) interprets Bourdieu's approach to culture through a Weberian lens, arguing that

in his approach to culture, Bourdieu develops a political economy of practices and symbolic power that includes a theory of symbolic interests, a theory of capital, and a theory of symbolic violence and symbolic capital. His theory of symbolic interests reconceptualizes the relations between the symbolic and material aspects of social life by extending the idea of economic interests to the realm of culture. There are symbolic interests just as there are material interests. He conceptualizes culture as a form of capital with specific laws of accumulation, exchange and exercise.

From this perspective, if Bourdieu's 'theory of practices extends the idea of interest to culture, then his theory of symbolic power extends culture to the realm of interest with the claim that all forms of power require legitimation' (p. 89). Here Bourdieu is (correctly) portrayed as drawing on a wide range of influences and theoretical traditions (in addition to Weber) in building his own approach to the culture concept (e.g. Sapir-Whorf, Cassirer, Durkheim, etc.) of culture, allowing him to conceive of 'symbolic systems as "structuring structures"' (p. 83). That is, as 'a means for ordering and understanding the social world. In this sense, different modes of knowledge, such as language, myth, art, religion, and science, represent different ways of apprehending

the world. They therefore exercise a cognitive function'. Swartz adds however that Bourdieu *also* conceives of culture in a

Levi-Straussian' sense, closer to that inherited from structuralism. For Bourdieu, 'symbolic systems are also 'structured structures' whose internal logic can be grasped by structural analysis as developed by Saussure for language and Levi-Strauss for myth. Symbolic systems are 'codes' that channel deep structural meanings shared by all members of a culture...Symbolic systems exercise therefore a communication and social integration function' as well as serving the a *social domination* function.

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In contrast to this interpretation, in which Bourdieu is seen as having a wide-ranging concept of culture, other analysts such as Broady (1991) suggests that Bourdieu's concept of culture went from being vague and overly general (in the sense inherited from mid-20th century Franco-American anthropology) to being more specific and precise, essentially moving back to the classical, Arnoldian definition of culture as 'high culture'. Following a related line of argument, Grenfell (2004: 89) suggests that Bourdieu's relationship to 'culture' is ambiguous, with the term 'culture' having been deployed by Bourdieu in at least two senses: 'first, there is culture as language, traditions, characteristics of beliefs. This aspect of culture is central to his view of education suggesting that learning and teaching amount to the acquisition of culturally recognized knowledge which has currency in 'buying' social prestige'. In *addition* 'the term culture can be used with explicit reference to aesthetics'.

Alexander (2003) interprets Bourdieu's anthropological work on cultural analysis as evincing Geertzian abilities for 'thick description,' which demonstrate that he has 'the musicality to recognize and decode cultural texts' but finds that his general approach in his more 'sociological' work contains an element of reductionism that relegates it to the status of a 'weak program'. Swidler (1995: 29) summarizing the *same* text as Alexander (*Logic of Practice*) proposes that Bourdieu 'conceives of culture not as a set of rules, but as deeply internalized habits, styles, and skills (the "habitus") that allow human beings to continually produce innovative actions that are nonetheless meaningful to others around them. For Bourdieu, active human beings continually recreate culture'.

It is easy to see that current conceptions of what Bourdieu meant by culture exhibit a wide range and essentially cover the entire spectrum of possible conceptualizations of the culture concept, from 'Arnoldian' (culture as the 'best' that has been thought and known) to anthropological, from explicit to implicit, Weberian to Durkheimian. The problem with these accounts is not that they are necessarily wrong with respect to the range of subject matter that Bourdieu's work addressed, but that they overreach in suggesting that whatever they are talking about was Bourdieu's 'concept of culture'. One thing to notice is that none of these commentators can actually quote Bourdieu as providing his working definition of what culture is.

This paper addresses this puzzle. As we saw at the outset, Pierre Bourdieu is without a doubt considered one of the most influential figures in the study of

culture today with his influence being palpable across all fields dedicated to cultural analysis, from cultural and cognitive anthropology, cultural studies to cultural sociology. Yet, when scanning his theoretical and empirical writings, it becomes clear that Bourdieu's 'concept of culture' is either non-existent or bears little or no resemblance to definitions of culture that are usually deployed by most analysts in cultural sociology (e.g. Alexander, 2003; Friedland and Mohr, 2004; Jacobs and Spillman, 2005; Sewell, 2005). We will see that there is a good reason for this: essentially I will argue that Bourdieu belongs to a line of anthropological thinking that is best described as 'post-cultural' and as such any attempt to assimilate Bourdieu to the current line of sociological research that goes by the name of 'cultural sociology' will run into predictable difficulties. The upshot of this is that Bourdieu's own attempt to rethink the culture concept stands as a much needed (but so far not heeded) warning against and corrective to the rather uncritical appropriation of the culture concept that has been enacted in sociology of late.

Pierre Bourdieu in Post-cultural Anthropology

It is instructive to begin by juxtaposing Bourdieu's status as a 'cultural theorist' in cultural sociology with his current status in cognitive anthropology. In contrast to his reception in cultural sociology as a theorist of 'culture and power' armed with specific conceptualizations of culture useful for dealing with the perennial problem of the relationship between class, status and power, in anthropology Bourdieu (interpreted primarily through the lens of his seminal theoretical work; Bourdieu, 1977, 1990) is usually seen as the first *post-cultural* theorist. In this respect his significance as an intellectual figure is perceived to lie in having abandoned the traditional parameters of cultural explanation in anthropology. He did this by developing a radically different conceptualization what culture 'is' and of how 'culture works' (as well as how it is transmitted and acquired). This novel conceptualization went beyond some of the conceptual dilemmas inherited from the Durkheimian tradition and corrects some the excesses of the more contemporary legacy left behind by Clifford Geertz (1973) the latter figure having of course become the central influence in the sociological appropriation of the culture concept.

Bourdieu Against Culture

Maurice Bloch has offered a classic reinterpretation of the place of Pierre Bourdieu in the history of cultural analysis. According to Bloch (1986: 21–2) cultural theory in anthropology – from the reaction against the forced choice Kantian nativism and Humean empiricism in classical social theory on the part of Marx, Weber and Durkheim to the emergence of post-functionalist cultural anthropology in the second half of the 20th century – has been

marred by a distorted (and implausible) conceptualization of the relationship between cognition and culture.

Bloch refers to this classical legacy as ‘the anthropological theory of cognition’. This theory relies on three interlinked postulates which are seldom called into question, and which continue to be influential in cultural sociology today:

1. ‘Action and history are contained by cognition because cognition precedes action’. This is Kant’s famous retort against empiricism coupled with Durkheim’s influential revision of the Kantian legacy in his argument for the collective sources of what was for Kant an *a priori* system of representations that *made sense* of raw experience. The Durkheimian variation of the argument categorically states that (authoritative, trans-situational) cognition cannot be constructed from individual experience and action as had been argued by Hume.
2. ‘Cognition-ideology’ represents the natural relation between people in order to legitimate inequality’. This is the joining of thesis (1) with the Western-Marxist connection between collective representations and the legitimation of systems of power and exploitation.
3. ‘Ideology-collective representation is the most general matrix organizing cognition’. This joins theses (1) and (2), and provides an explanation for the endurance of collective systems of thought and their reproduction over time.

Bloch offers a convincing argument that this theory of cognition has serious problems of logical and empirical adequacy. The most important of which is the overwhelming evidence against (1). Beginning with the Piagetian revolution in developmental psychology, it is clear now that action in the world precedes cognition and that cognitive-schemes are built up and generated through action-schemes at the individual level (see Lizardo (2004) for a more in-depth discussion). Individuals do not internalize ‘systems’ of categories but must *reconstruct* them through experience and action during a developmental process (Toren, 1999).

Of most importance for the present argument is that the only ‘anthropologist’ who has been able to ‘move the discussion forward’ beyond the anthropological theory of cognition is Bourdieu (1977). Bourdieu’s ‘starting point is the rejection of the over-systematization and homogenization of cultural constructions on the part of anthropologists’. Bourdieu rejects these explanatory schemes ‘in part because, for the individual, culture is not a hard logical grid nor a complex system of rules but an amalgam of senses and emotions’ (Bloch, 1986: 30–1). Because culture is not conceived as an overly systematized, balanced and coherent whole Bourdieu is able to side-step the part-whole problem and the issue of internalization of entire ‘conceptual schemes’. Culture is reconceptualized instead as a somewhat loosely structured ‘amalgam’ of sensorimotor schemes, perceptual symbols and affectively charged techniques. From this perspective, cultural assimilation can be understood in a much straightforward manner.

Bourdieu, however, does not simply reject the anthropological view of culture in favor of a one-sided psychological view. Instead, 'Bourdieu accepts the psychological view of cognition as built up from interaction' but insists that our conceptualization of how individuals become skillful members of a culture must be consistent with a psychological (bottom-up) account of learning and conceptual development. Bourdieu answers the cultural specificity problem by proposing that 'the environment in which the child grows up is itself culturally and therefore historically organized. For Bourdieu, therefore, the specific culture, or ideology as he calls it *is acquired individually through interaction*' (Bloch, 1986: 31).

The primary example of this novel mode of cultural explanation is still Bourdieu's (1990: 271–83) early study of the Berber house. In this account, the novel integration of psychological and anthropological models of cognition can be appreciated in full force. The key point to keep in mind is that for Bourdieu 'a child brought up in a Berber house by Berber parents picks up Berber notions, just because the material nature of the house, as well as the behavior of the people with he interacts [itself constrained by the material nature of the house], contains in itself the specific history of the Berbers'. It is therefore, 'the [material] environment is not neutral but is itself culturally constructed'.

Nevertheless, 'the process by which this interactional absorption of the historically specific comes about is not really examined in detail, we seem all the same here to have a framework for overcoming the old opposition between the individual and cultural cognition' and Bloch goes on to note (accurately in my view) that what Bourdieu has in fact done is 'to significantly qualify the psychological theory of cognition but on the whole he has accepted it' (1986: 31). Bloch finds this solution to be fruitful, but still thinks that Bourdieu does not quite succeed in completely reconciling the anthropological and psychological views. He goes on to note the shortcomings in Bourdieu's approach that prevent him from doing that.

It is not my goal here to evaluate Bloch's critique of Bourdieu. The key thing that I want to draw attention to is how radically different is Bourdieu's position in the line of intellectual development of 20th-century cultural anthropology (which is the main source of theoretical inspiration of contemporary cultural sociology). Here, in contrast to Bourdieu's presumed standing as a foremost theorist of culture, his legacy is shown to be largely *antithetical* to those traditions of thinking in which culture is thought of in the 'usual' anthropological way (as ideological totalities that are internalized by individuals).

Bourdieu is instead seen as reviving a line of thinking on cultural transmission and cultural acquisition that had been suppressed at least since the rejection of the empiricist (and pragmatist) theory of cognition by the classical theorists, in particular Durkheim. Bourdieu can in this way be thought of as a 'post-cultural' cultural theorist in calling into question the received wisdom as to 'how culture works' in the production of knowledgeable actors and in the reproduction and transformation of systems of power and inequality.

What makes Bourdieu's account qualitatively different is that in contrast to the usual mechanism of cultural acquisition proffered in the standard

anthropological account (and which can be found alive and well in contemporary cultural sociology (e.g. Alexander, 2003; Zerubavel, 1999), one which required the individual to ‘swallow the cognitive scheme whole’ Bourdieu’s theory of cultural acquisition is essentially ‘constructivist’ and ‘genetic’ in Piaget’s sense.¹

Bourdieu Against Geertz

Another interpretation of Bourdieu as a post-cultural (or at least a post-Geertzian) theorist is offered by cognitive anthropologists Strauss and Quinn (1997). They see Bourdieu as a welcome alternative to both Geertzian symbolic anthropology and post-modernist and post-structuralist approaches to cultural analysis. For Strauss and Quinn what makes Bourdieu’s theoretical starting-point in *Outline* particularly attractive is his focus on the *embodied incorporation* of public culture (not to be confused with the older Parsonian (Parsons, 1964) notion of the pseudo-Freudian internalization of Kantian conceptual schemes). This is in stark contrast to the methodological anti-mentalism and anti-psychologism of Geertz (1973) who – like Durkheim before him – forbids the cultural anthropologist from attempting to peer inside the head (and in a sense theoretically deal with the body) of the actor. Geertz instead enjoins the analyst to limit herself to the ‘thick description’ of external, inter-subjectively verifiable public culture, without offering an account of how this culture figures in generating practice.

Strauss and Quinn present Bourdieu as the ‘anti-Geertz’. In contrast to some interpretations of Bourdieu’s work in cultural sociology (e.g. Alexander, 2003) which see some of Bourdieu’s analyses of Kabyle ritual as coterminous with Geertzian ‘thick description’ Strauss and Quinn see Bourdieu – consistent with Bloch’s (1986) earlier analysis – as a theorist of how actors are deeply modified through sustained experience in a given social and material environment. For Strauss and Quinn, ‘one of the most important parts of *Outline* is Bourdieu’s discussion of the way a person’s habitus is structured by his or her experiences’. Like Bloch, they draw on Bourdieu’s discussion of the Kabyle house as exemplary in this respect. In their view, apprenticeship and familiarization into a given set of cultural practices is best illustrated by his example of the way Kabyle children can learn from the arrangement of objects and space in the typical Kabyle house, the child is not taught a rule: ‘Always put the loom on the wall facing the east’ or ‘Light and heat are male’ but instead he or she *assimilates* a general pattern: looms and other culturally valued objects are usually found in the part of the house that faces east and the objects men typically use are almost always found in the brightest, warmest parts of the house.

Beyond Culture: Bourdieu as a Theorist of Perception

In an essay entitled ‘Culture, Perception and Cognition’, the social anthropologist Tim Ingold (2000) interprets Bourdieu’s work as signaling the same type of

break with 'business as usual' in anthropological theory as suggested by Bloch (1986) and Strauss and Quinn (1997). According to Ingold, British social anthropology was marked from the beginning by a reluctance to deal seriously with psychological phenomena (such as perception and cognition). This tendency was inherited from their particularly narrow appropriation of the Durkheimian tradition, which methodologically 'forbade' the analyst from employing psychological factors in the explanation of social phenomena. Such phenomena as sensations were thought of as 'individual' and 'ephemeral'. The proper subject matter of social anthropology consists of public, shared 'collective representations' not individual perceptions; a belief that persisted throughout the functionalist period.

Even when anthropological analyses of 'perception' got off the ground in the 1960s and 1970s (in the work of such figures as Mary Douglas and Edmund Leach), the Durkheimian influence (and proscription against taking an overly 'psychological' view of cognition) was still palpable. These analysts simply reiterated the Kantian dogma (foundational of the anthropological theory of cognition as we saw above) that the world of sense perception consists of a buzzing, formless flux, which needs to be shaped and given structure and organization by the cognitive grid of (linguistic) categories constitutive of the culture. While this alleged perceptual flux was conceptualized as continuous and without natural boundaries, the categories of the culture 'cut' this raw, continuous experiential flux – in the very same way that Saussurean signifiers 'cut' the continuous stream of sound-images – into more manageable experiential 'chunks'.

As we have also seen, this view of culture as an externally imposed cognitive grid endorses and legitimizes a wholesale antimentalism, which sees the job of the cultural analyst as simply one of describing the systematic features (and the possible structure of) this cultural mechanism (e.g. Leach, 1964). This position essentially converges in all relevant respects with Geertz's (Wittgensteinian) version of anti-psychologism which departs from a very different set of conceptual issues inherited from the American tradition of 'cultural anthropology' but which ends up reaching essentially identical conclusions. Culture ends up being thought of as a 'a *corpus* of intergenerationally transmissible knowledge, as distinct from the ways in which it is put to use in practical contexts of perception and action' (Ingold, 2000: 160, emphasis added).

In Ingold's narrative, it is once again Pierre Bourdieu who breaks with the premises of this view of culture shared by both British Social and American Cultural anthropology (a concept of culture that it bears to say, is currently hegemonic in cultural sociology). Bourdieu sees cultural knowledge not as 'being imported by the mind into contexts of experience'. Instead, this cultural knowledge

is itself generated within these contexts in the course of people's involvement with others in the practical business of life. Through such involvement, people acquire the specific dispositions and sensibilities that lead them to orient themselves in relation to their environment and to attend to its features in the particular ways that they do. (Ingold, 2000: 162)

Ingold understands Bourdieu's theory of practice in a manner that is less 'mentalist' or 'psychological' than Bloch but the interpretative result is the same. Rather than being a theory of 'culture' as traditional defined in anthropology (and thus as currently defined in cultural sociology) – e.g. culture as a system of symbolic representations—Bourdieu is instead a theorist of '...the kind of practice mastery that we associate with skill – a mastery that we carry in our bodies and that is refractory to formulation in terms of any system of mental rules and representations' (Ingold, 2000: 162).

Bourdieu's Break with Structuralist 'Intellectualism'

The above discussion still leaves open the question as to the origins of the cacophony of views regarding Bourdieu's 'definitions' or approaches to cultural analysis. As we saw above, analysts in sociology and cultural studies read Bourdieu's approach to culture as closer to structuralism, with a Saussurean concern for 'codes' as these are implemented in concrete social structures by privileged actors in order to generate 'symbolic power'. These analysts draw mainly on Bourdieu's more 'sociological' works, in particular the studies on art perception, cultural taste and the educational system to make their case (e.g. *Reproduction, Distinction, Homo Academicus*, etc.).

The reading of Bourdieu in contemporary cognitive anthropology is largely antithetical to this analysis. Current anthropological appropriators of Bourdieu's legacy see Bourdieu as operating with a conception of 'culture' which is largely 'anti-culturalist' and which is in many ways opposed to the traditional view of culture as a symbolic realm, composed of a set of elements which acquire identity by being a part of a system of differential relations or binary oppositions (e.g. a view of culture advocated by contemporary proponents of the 'strong program' such as Alexander (2003)).

The notion of Bourdieu as a 'post-cultural' theorist receives its strongest backing from a close reading of what is arguably Bourdieu's most difficult text (at least for sociologists): *The Logic of Practice* (previously *Outline*). In cultural sociology and cultural studies, Bourdieu's reception as a foremost 'cultural theorist' has been more deeply shaped by the reception accorded not to Bourdieu's analysis of Kabyle culture, but by his dissection of the bases of institutional order in differentiated societies, in particular his studies of the educational establishment and aesthetic production and consumption fields.

I argue in the remaining that there is good reason for the existence of this ambiguous state of affairs. The main issue concerns the rather piecemeal and fragmented way in which Bourdieu's work has been incorporated into English speaking sociology (Swartz, 1997) and cultural studies, a situation about which he complained about more than once throughout his career (e.g. Bourdieu, 1993a). This has led to a situation where both proponents of the view of Bourdieu as a theorist of 'culture and power' (e.g. Bourdieu as a Saussurean structuralist with a neo-Weberian twist) and those anthropologists who claim Bourdieu as a post-cultural theorist, who helped to begin to move anthropology

(and by extension cultural sociology and cultural studies) away from the misleading ‘anthropological theory of cognition’ and the attendant notion of culture as a symbolically integrated whole.

Bourdieu’s (Non)concept of ‘Culture’

Did Bourdieu have a ‘concept of culture’? If by a culture concept we mean a substantive definition or list of characteristics regarding the fundamental characteristics of culture to be applied *ex ante* by the analyst to some delimited range of empirical phenomena (e.g. Alexander, 2003; Sewell, 2005) then the answer is no. In fact in an early essay entitled ‘three forms of theoretical knowledge,’ Bourdieu (1973) engaged in an extensive – but so far under-appreciated – critique of these types of theoretical approaches to culture.

Bourdieu’s own rejection of the traditional culture concept is directly tied to his larger critique of the structuralist linguistics paradigm that dominated anthropology during the 1960s. For Bourdieu, the conceptual issues surrounding the construction of an adequate notion of ‘culture’ in anthropology are inseparable from the relationship that the idea of ‘culture’ has to the notion of *practice*. The reason for this is that all ‘holistic’ models of culture in anthropology which conceive of culture as a systematic, coherent system implicitly suggest that actors *execute practices* consistent with the tenets of this cultural system. As a pre-eminent illustration of this problem Bourdieu uses the example of the relationship between Language as *system* and Language as *speech act* in structural linguistics and structuralist anthropology. He sees the source of the difficulty in integrating these two aspects of linguistic phenomena as capable of being traced to the related inability of proponents of this distinction to truly digest all of the facets that relate to so-called ‘execution’.

The vicissitudes that follow the analytic construction of a ‘concept of culture’ are analogous to those that can be detected in structural linguistics in the creation of language as an objective system that appears to precede speech. By analytically separating ‘culture’ as a coherent system available to analytic inspection, the residual notion of ‘conduct as execution’ of these abstract cultural codes naturally follows. Furthermore, this leads to the separation of two categories of conduct, one that is culturally motivated or determined (because it is the execution of these cultural codes) and one composed of ‘extra-cultural’ behavior. For Bourdieu, ‘the extreme confusion of debates on the relationship between “culture” . . . and conduct usually arises out of the fact that the constructed meaning of conduct and its implied theory of practice lead a kind of clandestine existence inside the discourse of both the defender and the opponents of cultural anthropology’ (1973: 58). This leads the opponents of this notion of culture and the defenders of such notions as ‘culture as system’ to ‘set over a naïve realism against the realism of the ideas which turn “culture” into a transcendent and autonomous reality, which obeys only its own internal laws’ (1973: 58–9).

Because of this, placing such analytic constructions as ‘culture’ on the same epistemic and ontic level as observable conduct can create nothing but obfuscation. Any attempt to construct culture as an ‘objective’ whole is bound to ‘reify abstractions, by *treating objects constructed by science* [and by implication the scientist] . . . as autonomous realities, endowed with social efficacy, capable of acting as subjects responsible for historical actions or as a power capable of constraining practices’ (Bourdieu, 1973: 60). From this perspective, ‘culture’ is an analytical abstraction produced by the scientific observer, and not an ontological reality located in the world. The opposite attitude can only lead to what he refers to as ‘the realism of ideas,’ an indefensible and unproductive starting point for analysis.

Method Versus Substance in Structuralism: The Evolution of Bourdieu’s Stance

I submit that keeping in mind Bourdieu’s own *selective* appropriation and reconstruction of the Levi-Straussian legacy, may help us to better understand his approach to cultural analysis, as well as the reason why certain commentators on his work believe that he held on to a conception of culture that was ‘structuralist’ in substance, when it is more accurate to say that he made pragmatic use of structuralist tools for the *representation* of cultural materials, as well as for the analysis and objectification of cultural fields as ‘constructed’ scientific objects (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

There is however, one small problem with this line of argument: it is not difficult to find textual evidence of Bourdieu using a model of the actor in relation to objectified cultural orders that is not only structuralist in a ‘methodological’ way, but that can also be considered to be *substantively* structuralist. This is most clear in an early paper on the social bases of aesthetic appreciation written in the late 1960s, entitled ‘Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception’ (1968; reprinted in Bourdieu (1993b); the English translation appeared in the same year as the French original). This is a paper-length version of the chapter that formed the theoretical core of the early study of museums co-authored with Alain Darbel with the assistance of Dominique Schnapper (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991) and published in French in 1966 (but not translated into English until 1991!). We can also still detect some remnants of this theoretical position in *Distinction*, although here Bourdieu had begun to move away from the initial structuralist model of cultural appropriation put forth in the 1968 paper.

We will see below that Bourdieu actually ends up rejecting (or at least radically revising his allegiance to) the substantive bases of this model in its entirety later on (Bourdieu, 1996a). This rejection has not been noted in recent commentary on Bourdieu’s work, probably because it is published in a rather non-standard later work, and as we will see it was motivated by a late-career encounter with a rather odd theoretical source of inspiration (art historian Michael Baxandall’s work).²

Encoding/Decoding

What is the substantively ‘structuralist’ model that Bourdieu had trouble shedding? It is in essence, an early, rudimentary version of the ‘encoding-decoding’ model of cultural consumption that would be more explicitly formulated within the context of the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies by Stuart Hall (1980). But one that is even more rigid than Hall’s famous formulation in postulating very little room for negotiating ‘oppositional’ readings of the work. This is the ‘structuralist’ model that was inspired by Bourdieu’s encounter with Panofsky’s work on gothic architecture (a work that also inspired his turn to the Aristotelian notion of *habitus* which would do the work of beginning to sever Bourdieu’s connection with substantive structuralism).

The key premise of the model is that ‘any [cultural] deciphering operation requires a more or less complex code which has been more or less completely mastered’. According to Bourdieu (1993b), the appropriation of a given ‘cultural work’ on the part of a ‘consumer’ always entails ‘an act of deciphering’. Thus, and ‘adequate ‘comprehension’ of a work of art only occurs ‘in the special case in which the cultural code which makes the act of deciphering possible is immediately and completely mastered by the observer (in the form of cultivated ability or inclination) and merges with the cultural code which has rendered the work perceived possible’ (p. 215). The work of art is meaningful, and may disclose different ‘significations at different levels according to the deciphering grid applied to it’ (p. 218).

In Bourdieu’s early rendering, it is precisely because educated members of late 20th-century western societies have already mastered the essence of the (pictorial, aural, literary, etc.) codes that producers ‘encode’ into their cultural works that we can account for the social conditions of possibility that ‘make it possible to experience the work art’ as (institutionally defined) ‘art’ (and not as something else). Educated persons are thought of as *unconsciously obeying* (a mechanism clearly adapted from Levi-Strauss and which Bourdieu rejected and criticized in *The Logic of Practice* and in the 1973 paper on the ‘Three Forms of Theoretical Knowledge’ as we saw above) ‘the rules which govern a particular representation of space when they decipher a picture constructed according to these rules’ (Bourdieu, 1993b: 216). Therefore, there is simply ‘no perception which does not involve [the deployment of] an unconscious code’. Bourdieu thus uses this straightforward extension of the Levi-Straussian theory of culture into the realm of aesthetic experience to deny the thesis that art perception is ‘spontaneous’ in the very same way that Levi-Strauss would deny the ‘spontaneity’ of myth.

It is thus (partially) correct to conclude that Bourdieu did subscribe to some of the tenets of an ‘structuralist’ model of arts consumption (see for instance, the discussion of the relationship between mastery of codes and aesthetic competence in Bourdieu (1984)), whereby ‘the arts lover’s pleasure, presupposes an act of cognition, a *decoding* operation, which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement, a *cultural code*’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 3, emphasis added).

This model couples a cognitivist conceptualization of the content of a cultural work as ‘information’ with a semiological model of the work of appropriation as a form of ‘reading’ or ‘translation’ of that information using a socially prescribed code (e.g. Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991: 38–9).

It is clear that at this juncture, Bourdieu’s conceptualization of the ‘cultural system’ – to use Geertz’s somewhat problematic phrase – is certainly ‘structuralist’ in the substantive sense. Perception is made possible by placing cultural works in ‘their place’ in a differential network of relations, which Bourdieu explicitly refers to as the ‘art code’ (1993b: 223). Bourdieu even adapts Jakobson’s influential notion of ‘distinctive features’ from phonology (a notion that Levi-Strauss had been championing since at least the 1940s for the understanding of kinship and myth), to suggest that artistic perception requires at least some implicit command of the entire system of differential relations that give a work of art its identity. Cultural works, do not have any ‘essential’ meaning in themselves, but only in relation to other works: ‘the perception of the work art in a truly aesthetic manner, that is as a signifier which signifies nothing other than itself, does not consist of considering ‘without connecting it with anything other than itself . . . but rather of noting its *distinctive stylistic features* by relating it to the ensemble of works forming the class to which it belongs’ (Bourdieu, 1993b: 222).

Because Bourdieu would go on to extend this ‘encoding-decoding’ model to other early studies on the educational system (e.g. those co-authored with Jean Claude Passeron), it stands to reason that the impression of Bourdieu as having a conceptualization of culture that was at least partially structuralist in the original Levi-Straussian sense that has taken hold and continues to dominate the contemporary reception of Bourdieu’s work. In fact, this impression is not only supported by the evidence, but the even stronger suggestion that Bourdieu was making use not only of a Levi-Straussian ‘notion’ of culture but even of a Levi-Straussian *model* of the way that culture ‘works’ to generate perception and action can be easily defended.

Nevertheless, I will argue that thinking of Bourdieu as having retained a ‘structuralist’ conceptualization of the culture concept is mistaken. I will show that Bourdieu realized the incompatibility of the structuralist model with his larger ‘practice-theory’ based project which departed from his ethnological studies of Kabyle culture first reported and systematized in *Outline* and later revised one last time in *The Logic of Practice*. This is precisely the line of work that has had such a deep impact in ‘post-cultural’ anthropology, but which appears to not have made a dent in Bourdieu’s reception in sociology and cultural studies.

From Panofsky to Baxandall

The Practice-based Model of Aesthetic Socialization

It is important to note that even in the 1968 ‘Outline’ essay, Bourdieu had already begun to develop an alternative account of the relationship between the

individual and the cultural object, which did not rely on the problematic (from the point of view of the theory of cognition and socialization that would be developed in *Outline* and refined in *The Logic of Practice*) ‘encoding-decoding’ model, derived from Levi-Straussian structuralism offered in the first part of the paper (e.g. Bourdieu, 1993b).

This alternative account, in fact represents one of Bourdieu’s *first* attempts to cash-in the insights of the Piagetian – or ‘psychological’ – theory of cultural acquisition that was beginning to emerge from his ‘anthropological’ fieldwork, in order to explain dynamics of cultural socialization and cultural hierarchy in ‘differentiated’ societies. I submit that the third part of the ‘Outline’ essay (Bourdieu, 1993b) is in conceptual tension with the first two parts. This tension would later come to be recognized by Bourdieu (1996a) in a later (and unfortunately final) restatement of his position.

But before we get to later development, it would be instructive to review Bourdieu’s early application of his psychological theory of cultural acquisition to the case of the development of ‘cultural competence’ in differentiated societies.

According to Bourdieu (1993b: 227), agents unconsciously internalize ‘the rules that govern the production’ of cultural works by repeated exposure and perceptions of ‘works of a certain style’. Agents may internalize these structural principles even without having the ability to explicitly verbalize these principles. They can do this without ‘awareness nor knowledge of the laws obeyed’ by the cultural production domain in question. This implies that ‘the unconscious mastery of the instruments of appropriation which are the basis of familiarity with cultural works is acquired by slow familiarization, a long succession of “little perceptions”’ (p. 228). In the same way, connoisseurship cannot be acquired through explicit instruction or through conscious, rule-based learning and imitation. Instead, the development of this competence, ‘presupposes the prolonged contact between disciple and initiate . . . art-lovers can . . . internalize the principles and rules of its construction without there ever being brought to their consciousness and formulated as such’ (p. 228).

This ‘practice-theory’ model of the origins of aesthetic competence is more consistent with the treatment of ‘diffuse’ and unconscious pedagogy developed in *The Logic of Practice* (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990) than the rather clunky ‘encoding-decoding’ model with which Bourdieu begins the essay, and which we have seen constitutes the core contribution of Bourdieu to ‘post-cultural’ cognitive anthropology. This model of aesthetic (and general) socialization remains intact, in *Distinction* where Bourdieu uses it to account for the bodily (and thus tacit, unconscious, pre-linguistic) bases of artistic appreciation and aesthetic competence (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984).

The Social Genesis of the Eye

While implicit and unremarked upon in the last section of the ‘Outline’ essay, it is not until the publication of *The Rules of Art* that Bourdieu explicitly deals

with the tension between the early ‘encoding/decoding’ model and the emergent ‘practical socialization’ formulation, which was being developed as he worked on his ethnological material from Kabyle ritual. This occurs in a key (but heretofore rather ignored) essay, entitled ‘The Social Genesis of the Eye’ (Bourdieu, 1996a) which is a revision and restatement of the previous considerations of the same issues in the 1968 ‘Outline’ paper. The theoretical significance of this essay for our purposes, is that Bourdieu makes sure to note without any ambiguity how the encounter with Baxandall’s (1988) study of Renaissance art, allowed him to rethink his earlier ‘decoding’ model of the process of aesthetic appropriation.

Simply because it is such the rare occasion in which Bourdieu retrospectively acknowledges shifts in his thinking, or is explicit about influences in his theoretical development (much less do both at the same time!), and also because it is rare for any thinkers to give glimpses into that obscure realm that constitutes ‘the logic of discovery’ and formulation of certain theoretical propositions, I believe that the use of a full, lengthy quotation in what follows is justified:

The book by Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, appeared to me at first as an exemplary realization of what a sociology of artistic perception ought to be, and also as an opportunity *to get rid of the traces of intellectualism which might have remained in the exposition I had made some years earlier of the fundamental principles of a science of artistic perception* [a reference to the 1968 ‘Outline’ essay]. Describing the comprehension of a work of art as an act of *decoding*, I suggested that the science of the work of art had the goal of reconstructing the classification (or of principles of division) which is crystallized in an ensemble of *words* permitting us to name and perceive differences, codes, instruments of perception which vary in time and space, notably as a function of transformations in the material and symbolic instruments of production . . . That being said, even though my intention from the start was to try to make explicit the specific logic of sensory knowledge, *analyzing it more or less simultaneously with respect to very different empirical objects (such as Kabyle ritual), I had a great deal of difficulty in breaking with the intellectualist conception which – even in the iconological tradition founded by Panofsky, and especially in the semiological tradition, then at its peak* – tended to conceive the perception of the work of art as an act of decoding, or, as one liked to say, a ‘reading’ (through a typical illusion of the *lector* spontaneously inclined to what Austin called ‘the scholastic point of view’). This perspective . . . leads to treating language as a dead letter destined to be *decoded* (and not to be spoken or understood practically); more generally, it is the foundation of the hermeneutism [sic] which leads to conceiving any act of comprehension according to the model of *translation* and turns the perception of a cultural work, whatever it may be, into an intellectual act of decoding which presupposes the elucidation and the conscious application of rules of production an interpretation . . . *Michael Baxandall’s analysis...encouraged me to carry to its conclusion* – despite all of the social obstacles in the path of such a transgression of the social hierarchy of practices and objects – *the transfer to the domain of artistic perception of everything which my analyses of the ritual acts of Kabyle peasants or of the evaluative operations of professors and critics had taught me about the specific logic of practical sense, of which aesthetic sense is a particular case.* The science of the mode of

aesthetic knowledge finds its foundation in a theory of practice *as practice, meaning as an activity founded cognitive operations which mobilize a mode of knowing which is not that of theory and concept, without nevertheless being (as those who feel its specificity would often have it) a sort of ineffable participation in a known object.* (Bourdieu, 1996a: 314–15, emphasis added)

Here we can see that Bourdieu clearly rejects the early ‘encoding/decoding’ formulation as still retaining the analytically problematic traces of Levi-Straussian structuralism (an overall stance that he would come to jettison on epistemic and ontic grounds in the first chapter of *The Logic of Practice*) in favor of the practice-theoretical formulation developed to account for the ‘practical logic’ of Kabyle ritual, culture and ‘marital strategies’. Bourdieu thus moves from a model in which cultural appropriation is seen as primarily a ‘cold’ cognitive act of deciphering a semiotic code conceived in the traditional Saussurean sense (as *langue*), to one in which aesthetic appreciation is reconceived as the deployment of sensory, embodied, ‘analog’ schemes encoded as motor automatisms and accessed in their practical (implicit) state. Bourdieu also lets us know that the reworking of structuralist categories was made possible by the simultaneous juxtaposition of his work on Kabyle ritual and his studies of art consumption (two facets of Bourdieu’s work that as we have seen tend to be read separately by distinct groups of scholars across the social-scientific landscape, and which has caused the bulk of the interpretative confusion that surrounds Bourdieu’s stance toward ‘culture’).

The acknowledgment of the ‘difficulty’ that Bourdieu admittedly has in shaking off the last remnants of semiotic intellectualism is telling. We can thus conclude that just in the very same way in which the early encounter with Panofsky’s work on Gothic architecture led to Bourdieu’s incorporation of the ‘native construct’ of *habitus* into his toolkit of explanatory concepts (Bourdieu, 1985: 13), his later encounter with Baxandall’s influential concept of ‘the period eye’ – rendered by Bourdieu as the ‘Quattrocento eye’ (Bourdieu, 1996a: 315–19) – allows him to disabuse himself of the last remnants of the structuralist theory of action (referred to as ‘the semiological tradition’ in the 1996 paper on the period eye) and the ‘intellectualist’ conception of practice inherited from the theory of symbolic forms that continued to obfuscate his thinking on the appropriation and reception of symbolic goods in differentiated societies.³

As Bourdieu was clear to note in his later pronouncements on the subject, aesthetic experiences are essentially practical and emotive; they are not analytical or theoretical in the ‘scholastic’ sense suggested by traditional aesthetic theory (Dewey and the pragmatists being a key exception) or by his early encoding/decoding model. In fact, in a response to a review symposium in *Contemporary Sociology* (the official review journal of the American Sociological Association) of the belatedly translated *Love of Art*, and clearly conscious that this early work contained theoretical presuppositions that he had come to reject or radically revise, Bourdieu was anxious to clarify this point. He then noted that the perception of cultural works can best be thought of as ‘a practical execution of quasi-corporeal schemata that operate beneath the level of the

concept' (Bourdieu, 1992: 160). It is clear that this was a way for Bourdieu (1996a) to underscore his distancing from the remnants of the structuralist-inspired 'encoding-decoding' model of aesthetic appreciation that still survives in that early work.

Bourdieu admittedly remained trapped in the prison-house of structuralist language (and concepts) especially with it came to the conceptualization of aesthetic consumption as a sort of 'decoding' or 'deciphering' and in his postulation of cultural works as affixed to an external (Saussure-like) 'artistic code' which accounted for their ability to be comprehended and raised above the level of a mere 'experiential flux'. Baxandall's idea of the 'period' eye, allows Bourdieu to jettison this lingering structuralist conceptual baggage and to finally bring together (and make consistent) his analysis of cultural practices in differentiated societies with the theory of practice developed through this ethnological analysis of Kabyle ritual (reconciling Bourdieu the sociologist with Bourdieu the anthropologist).

The influence of Michael Baxandall's (1988) work on the period eye is as significant for the evolution of Bourdieu's later thought as was the earlier encounter with Panofsky. Baxandall's work on the 'period eye' is crucial in allowing Bourdieu to place a proper emphasis 'on particular social activities which engage and train the individual's cognitive apparatuses' and conceiving of the 'individual in culture . . . as the site of a compilation of socially relevant and active skills' (Langdale, 1998: 482). This is essentially a practice-theoretic model of aesthetic appreciation. Moving in this direction facilitated the realization that the innovative theory of enculturation and cognition formulated in the *Logic of Practice* had direct relevance for the way in which we should conceptualize the relationship between persons and material culture in differentiated societies, and could thus be readily adapted to do explanatory work in relation to the sociological studies of aesthetic socialization.

Most commentators are misled in this respect by an early essay on 'symbolic power' (Bourdieu, 1979) in which Bourdieu places his thinking on culture within the distinctively 'French' post-Durkheimian and post-Weberian tradition of the study of symbolic forms (e.g. Cassirer) and the historical study of collective scientific epistemologies (e.g. Canguilhem). But while it is true that these early influences are key in explaining the specific origins and trajectory of Bourdieu's thinking about culture, they are not helpful in understanding Bourdieu's ultimate end point on this matters, since, as he was clear to note, he struggled to *transcend* the obvious limitations of these inherited traditions, especially through his 'Oedipal' struggle in relation to Levi-Straussian structuralism. His 'late' encounter with Baxandall's concept of the period eye allowed Bourdieu to 'update' his studies of lay aesthetic appreciation (the primary empirical vehicle – along with his studies of the educational system – through which his thinking on culture had been developed) through the more sophisticated theoretical framework developed in his analysis of Kabyle ritual and thus to finally divest himself of the last conceptual links that tethered his substantive theory of practice, perception and cognition to Levi-Straussian

structuralism.⁴ Practice theory is (as had been noted earlier by Ortner (1984)) is therefore Bourdieu's 'post-structuralism'.

Conclusion: From Levi-Strauss to Pascal

In this paper I have argued that the interpretative cacophony (and outright confusion) that surrounds Bourdieu's (necessarily problematic) relationship to the concept of culture (e.g. Bourdieu, 1973) can be accounted for by the relative neglect of certain strategic patterns of evolution in his thinking, especially as they pertain to the cross-fertilization between the anthropological work on practice and the sociological studies of aesthetic socialization. This shift of emphasis can be best characterized as a radicalization of the psychological theory of cultural acquisition developed in the study of Kabyle society and ritual (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990) and the gradual realization of the importance of a *sociology of perception* (Bourdieu, 1996a, 2000, Bourdieu and Delsaut, 1981) in the later work over the earlier emphasis on a sociology of high-level cognition ('systems of thought') (e.g. Bourdieu, 1967).

My analysis suggests that the view of Bourdieu as a 'theorist of culture' leaves a lot to be desired. First, it is clear that any interpretation of Bourdieu as a 'cultural theorist', must at the very least disambiguate three primary connotations of this claim: 1) the weaker proposition that Bourdieu was a social theorist for whom 'culture' – defined in the traditional (e.g. non-anthropological) manner – in the form of a set of (differentially appropriated) symbolic goods originating from fields of cultural production in differentiated societies constituted a key *subject matter of investigation*; 2) the somewhat stronger claim Bourdieu was a 'cultural theorist' in the substantive sense of having a specific 'concept of culture' deployed as a theoretical tool to account for patterns of practice; and 3) even more strongly (and narrowly) that this concept of culture was 'semiotic' (more or less in the sense derived from Saussure and Levi-Strauss) with a 'power twist'; in other words, similar to the one recently formulated and (partially) defended by Sewell (2005) and Alexander (2003) but with a sensitivity for the role of cultural codes in defining systems of (class-marked) power and privilege (e.g. Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990).

Claim (1) is defensible but must be understood in the context of Bourdieu's evolution away from structuralist models of cultural socialization toward a 'psychological' theory of cultural acquisition and a practice-based theory of perception. Claim (2) is more problematic. It is clear that given: (a) Bourdieu's thoroughgoing rejection of the analytic need for a 'culture concept' (Bourdieu, 1973); (b) his demonstration that the use of an anthropological culture concept leads to unresolvable antinomies in our understanding and conceptualization of practice (Bourdieu, 1973, 1990); and (c) his selective (re)appropriation of structuralism and as pragmatic and heuristic 'method for the construction of sociological objects' (Bourdieu 1990: 11; Bourdieu 1996a), then the notion of Bourdieu as having a 'theory of culture' in the usual sense in which this

understood in cultural sociology and post-functionalist anthropological theory cannot be defended. This means that the contemporary appropriation of Bourdieu in cognitive anthropology – Bourdieu as a *post-cultural* theorist – is more appropriate. Finally, if this is correct, it naturally follows that claim (3) is absolutely misleading, although it can be given (spurious) support by partial citations from certain facets of Bourdieu's early work that were explicitly repudiated in later statements.⁵

A more nuanced attention to the evolution of Bourdieu's thinking from the still 'quasi-structuralist' period of the late 1960s (when the studies of art and the educational system first began to appear) to his later more unambiguous 'practice-theoretical' period after the publication of *Le Sens Pratique* in 1980 shows that Bourdieu renounced early semiological models of the individual/cultural object linkage in favor of one that was more compatible with the (innovative) theory of the social structuring of perception, enculturation and cognition developed in his later work (and stated one final time in Bourdieu (2000)). As I have shown here, Bourdieu explicitly admitted such an evolution in his thinking, especially in the extent to which he (tacitly or not so tacitly) accepted certain problematic substantive formulations of cultural reception from structuralism, and how his 'difficult' attempt to shed them led him closer to a 'cognitive sociology' of perception and appreciation based on a more thoroughgoing practice-theoretical framework.

I would argue that Bourdieu's 'late' encounter with Baxandall's (1988) notion of the 'period eye' (developed in the second chapter of *Painting and Experience*) is of equal import to Bourdieu's early encounter with Panofsky's notion of implicit mental habits inculcated by the scholastic institution in his explanation of the connection between Aristotelian philosophy and Gothic architecture (thus allowing him to make the substantive connection between systems of education and systems of thought). In his later reworking of his key essay 'Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception' Bourdieu reconciles the theory of perception and cognition developed in *The Logic of Practice* with the analysis of the emergence of a system of collective valuation, perception and appreciation of cultural works in differentiated societies.

This shows that the current 'double' status of Bourdieu as both a 'post-cultural' (in anthropology) and a 'cultural' theorist (in sociology and cultural studies) is thoroughly artificial; the cognitive anthropologists are correct: Bourdieu is a post-cultural (practice) theorist. As the emphasis on the dialectic of mental structures and social structures that becomes apparent in his later work attests (Bourdieu, 1996b). Here the 'semiological' conceptualization of culture as a system of elements connected by arbitrary relations of significance is reduced to a minimum in favor of culture as a system of action and perception that is acquired in a tacit state through tacit mechanisms (Wacquant, 2004). Thus, while it might be technically correct to refer to Bourdieu as a dominant presence in cultural theory today, this presence needs to be recognized for what it is, since Bourdieu's work offers one of the most powerful (if not yet fully digested in cultural sociology) critique of the 'culture' concept in social theory.

Notes

1. On this score, see Bloch (1986), Lizardo (2004) and Toren (1999).
2. It is important to note that this early paper also contains basic theoretical positions that Bourdieu would never abandon. These include the basic binary conceptualization regarding class differences in cultural taste – for example, the ‘functionalist’ taste of the working class, versus the ‘removed’ and ‘disinterested’ taste of the more educated classes is already present in the 1968 paper in its entirety in pretty close to the form in which it appears in *Distinction* (1984). We also find, in its general outline Bourdieu’s conceptualization of educational institutions as the primary sites (along with the middle-class household) in which the specific familiarity with the cultural codes necessary to appropriate works of art are first *explicitly* imparted, reinforced and institutionally legitimated (Bourdieu, 1984).
3. In this earlier reflection on the ‘Genesis of the Concepts of *Habitus* and Field’, Bourdieu famously noted that by that turning to the idea of *habitus* he wanted to ‘react against structuralism and its odd philosophy of action which, [was] implicit in the Levi-Straussian notion of the unconscious’. He did this by ‘removing Panofsky from the neo-Kantian philosophy of “symbolic forms”, in which he had remained imprisoned’ (p. 13).
4. ‘Late’ is of course relative. Bourdieu had begun to consider Baxandall as a source of inspiration for his practice-theoretical reconsideration of the early model of aesthetic reception as early as a co-authored paper with Yvonne Delsaut entitled ‘For a Sociology of Perception’ (‘Pour une sociologie de la perception’) (1981) and published in a special issue of *Actes*, to which Baxandall also contributed an article.
5. I agree with the general thrust of Swartz’s (1997: 16) claim that ‘Bourdieu acquires his intellectual framework early in his career and does not substantially alter it subsequently’ (see also Silber, 2009). As such, the present effort has not been an attempt to establish the existence of ‘two Bourdieus’.

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