

The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays, edited by **Simon Susen and Bryan S. Turner**. New York, NY: Anthem Press, 2011. 470 pp. \$130.00 Hardback. ISBN 9780857287687.

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This collection of critical essays attempts to map out the influential “legacy” of the work of Pierre Bourdieu. As with many edited collections, the book is marred by the uneven quality and depth of the contributions. Another issue concerns the temporal spread of chapters, with some of the contributions written as far back as 1993, making some of the chapters a bit dated given the fast pace of development of Bourdieu scholarship. Thematically, the editors (informally) organized the collection into three broad parts. I will discuss each of the main three parts in turn.

The first part, dealing with relation of Bourdieu and the classics, leaves a lot to be desired. Inauspiciously, the most profitable chapter is an interview with Pierre Bourdieu (conducted three years before his death) on his intellectual relationship with the figure of Max Weber. Joas and Knobl do an excellent job of situating

Bourdieu's work against the intellectual context of its emergence. In characteristically clear and even-handed fashion, they also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Bourdieu's approach to the theory of action, his vexed relationship with the Levi-Straussian legacy, his controversial use of the concept of interests and allied "economistic" explanatory strategies, as well as the extent and scope of his influence. Wacquant's chapter on the Durkheim/Bourdieu relationship retains its vibrancy (even after almost two decades) but admittedly was not really designed as a rigorous study of the intellectual connection between these two figures, remaining at a largely schematic level. By far the worst entries are those dealing with the Bourdieu/Marx connection. Bridget Fowler offers a largely speculative account, full of unfounded generalizations—" e.g. Bourdieu is one of the great heirs of the Western Marxist tradition"—and vague imputations authorial intent (based on nothing but mindreading it seems), most of which are comically refuted by Bourdieu's own words (in the interview) chapter. Bruno Kasenti's overlong, almost unreadable entry (from a translation from one of the editors) attempts to incorporate Bourdieu into a neo-Marxian philosophical anthropology. This is a great example of the very theoreticist theory that Bourdieu rejected.

The second part is no less uneven; but there are two highlights. The Bourdieu/Elias chapter does a great job of showing the intellectual parallels between these two thinkers, including a concern with the study of concrete life-orders, an

understanding of the habitual nature of action and an acceptance of ultimate relation configuration of fields. The Bourdieu/Honneth chapter, does an excellent job of showing **that while** Honneth recoils (in the published work that explicitly takes on Bourdieu) from what he perceives **to be** the “utilitarian” foundations of Bourdieu’s theory of action, he helps himself to the critical sociology in order to theorize the formal and informal bases of micro-political mobilization in the contemporary context. The rest is much less encouraging. The Bourdieu/Nietzsche chapter either repeats what we have learned before **reaching** (the obvious) conclusion that whatever relationship exists between these two thinkers is only superficial or mediated by other thinkers (e.g. Weber, Elias). Susen’s chapter on the **Bourdieu/Adorno** relationship reads like a simple (and somewhat simplistic) **review** of the positions of these two theorists on the issue of mass culture and the culture industry, but fails to generate any sort of critical synthesis between the **two (that** Susen fails to cite the work of David Gartman in this context is even more puzzling).

Part three is by far the weakest overall section of the book, **getting** off to a terrible start in Bryan Turner’s chapter on “Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion.” This (rather overlong) entry is filled with indefensible, almost risible, claims (e.g. Bourdieu as some sort of Althusserian “dominant ideology theorist”) and contradictory statements (Bourdieu’s writings on religion as both worthless and useful). Bruno Frere’s chapter on the other hand attempts to provide a

“phenomenological reading” of the concept of habitus. This chapter begins auspiciously with a very useful and revealing overview of the work of Bernard Lahire and Philippe Corcuff two rather unheralded epigones of the Bourdieu legacy. Unfortunately, the chapter closes with a misguided attempt to fit the (realist) concept of habitus into an irrealist ontology. Thus, we are entreated to such nonsense as “habitus can be defined as sociological fiction” (p. 259) and “there is no point in trying to localize the psyche; it can be regarded as a magma of social determinisms” (p. 263). Hans-Herbert Kogler’s chapter on the relationship between Bourdieu and structuralism is equally flawed. Here the reader is served with the same stale treatment of Bourdieu as a sociological determinist; in this case the determinism in question concerns Bourdieu’s account of the constitution of linguistic competence via habitus. According to Kogler, while this account is partially correct it simply leaves no room for linguistically mediated self-reflexivity. He then attempts to “fix” this flaw in Bourdieu’s account by wading through a rather dense (and not quite coherent) amalgam of Habermasian transcendentalism, Meadian social psychology, and Saussurianism. In the end, the issues have been obscured rather than clarified.

There are a couple of high-quality entries in this last section. Derek Robbins’ characteristically takes us back to the intellectual-historical context of the French academy in the 1950s to shed light on the complex relationship between both

Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron and Raymond Aron. This chapter corroborates something that Bourdieu himself speaks of in the interview chapter. Aron's Max Weber was most certainly not Bourdieu's Max Weber; in that respect Bourdieu rather than being introduced to Weber by Aron, was a thoroughly self-taught Weberian. Yves Syntomer follows with a rather short, but stimulating, take on Bourdieu's somewhat problematic take on the role of intellectuals in the modern world by constructively taking on Bourdieu's pronouncement on the "corporatism of the universal" and the *realpolitik* of reason. The book closes with an interesting (but rather overwrought) attempt by Lisa Adkins to use Bourdieu's post-phenomenological take on the temporality of practice to make (genetic) sense of the shifting time-scales of money and trade in post-Fordist capitalism.

In all, while this book contains some useful material, it ultimately falls short of making a durable contribution to Bourdieu scholarship or to our understanding of the scope and nature of the Bourdieu's work. In many respects, Bourdieu scholarship has simply moved light years from the modal chapter in this collection (with the exceptions outlined above). As such, anybody interested in getting a more sophisticated understanding of Bourdieu's intellectual legacy will have to keep waiting.