Genetic Structuralism, Psychological Sociology and Pragmatic Social Actor Theory
Proposals for a Convergence of French Sociologies

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For or Against Pierre Bourdieu

PIERRE BOURDIEU died in Paris on 23 January 2002. He left some 40 book-length essays and over 200 articles. Unpublished texts are being brought out, and much more is to come. Even before his death, sociology textbooks presented his genetic structuralism (which he sometimes also called structuralist constructivism in opposition to Bloor's or Latour's relativist constructivism [Bourdieu, 2001: 41]) as 'one of the most significant [sociologies] to appear in France after the war' (Corcuff, 1995: 41–2). Despite the fact that textbooks and sociology courses cannot avoid mentioning Bourdieu, and that the public at large is in general favourably inclined towards him, the scientific community is increasingly divided.

On the one hand, his faithful French-speaking followers maintain that his theory is a genuine 'symbolic revolution, a new way to perceive the social world' (Pinto, 1998: 224). This revolution has also spread beyond French-speaking areas and, in the UK, some consider Bourdieu's system to be 'the most comprehensive and sophisticated available at present' (Fowler, 1997). On the other hand, we have those he used to call his most 'fervent enemies'. J. Verdès-Leroux, one of his earliest followers, contends today that Pierre Bourdieu's sociology is merely an 'ideological discourse' and a 'scientific

mythology' which develops a 'vindictive vision of the social world' (1998: 237–8). Jeffrey C. Alexander thinks that Bourdieu's texts are too impoverished and deterministic. He concludes that 'his portrait of modern society can provide neither the theoretical nor the empirical resources for understanding, much less appreciating the pluralist and democratic dimensions of contemporary societies' (1995: 131).

In the final analysis, critiques of Bourdieu's genetic structuralism first emerged among French advocates of rational action theory. According to Boudon, for example, Bourdieu oversimplifies social mechanisms. With a concept such as habitus 'explanatory black boxes factors could easily be produced', these black boxes determining all our actions (1998: 175).[1] This is a recurrent theme among Bourdieu's critics. In particular, the journal *Esprit* was engaged in a long polemic with him. The contributing authors agreed unanimously to reject 'his determinist sociology which continuously reduced the subject's margin of liberty and locked him into a given position and pre-determined function under the weight of social structure' (Mongin and Roman 1998: 181; see also Maigret, 2002). Similarly, other early followers, such as Verdès-Leroux, believe that it was necessary for Bourdieu to see habitus functioning as a black box. This allowed him to 'explain with one single, definitive word why social groups, and the individuals who constitute them, reproduced identical behaviours' (Grignon, 1996: 96).

Bourdieu often responded to these criticisms. For example, in *Pascalian Meditations* he reminded us that habitus is not 'this monolithic principle (through which the past determines future actions)' and in several instances he 'drew attention to the existence of cleaved, torn habitus bearing the mark of the contradictions which produced them' (1997: 78). But he was not always heard.

Start with Pierre Bourdieu to Move Away from Him

Fortunately, all critical comments are not as negative as those of Verdes-Leroux and Alexander. For some time now, various authors have charted new pathways. Since it is not possible to comment on each of these, we will focus on two such pathways – the pragmatic social actor theory of L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot, and the psychological sociology of B. Lahire – noting however that all these alternative approaches are linked by their idiosyncratic relationship to Bourdieu's work, without nonetheless being critical of it. Following in their footsteps, I believe that:

> . . . absolute detestation or outright rejection are pointless. But sterile shows of support or praise are not much healthier than sterile questioning. In my opinion, true scientific respect towards a work (and its author) is expressed in rigorous discussion and evaluation and not in the endless repetition of concepts, established arguments, etc. (Lahire, 2001a: 17–18)

This project may seem ambitious, for discussing Bourdieu's theses entails a discussion of all those influences which allowed him to develop them.

> One finds in them multiple interpretative schemes drawn from the international heritage of research in social and human sciences. [. . .] An outright condemnation and rejection of his entire work amounts to the unintentional rejection of intellectual schemes or habits he drew from a large number of works by authors such as J. Austin, G. Bachelard, E. Benveniste, N. Chomsky, E. Durkheim, N. Elias, S. Freud, J. Piaget, E. Husserl, E. Kant, G. W. Leibniz, C. Lévi-Strauss, M. Mauss, K. Marx, M. Merleau-Ponty, J.-P. Sartre, M. Weber, L. Wittgenstein, etc. (2001: 10–11).

It is unfortunate that, once established, this rich synthesis is presently utilized by many like a rigid reading grid of the world, which was meant to apply to an increasingly wide range of fields (religion, education, politics, journalism, economy, art, the intellectual world, etc.) without taking into account the fact that a correct understanding of some situations requires the application of other paradigms. As they hardly considered the evolution of sociology beyond their journal, *Les Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, Bourdieu's followers may have fallen into the trap of 'a routinisation of the production, of the repeated and repetitive application of established processes', a trap they used to denounce themselves (Bourdieu, 1992: 352). They use their key concepts repeatedly, when it may have been necessary to refine and qualify them further. In his commentary, Alexander states that Bourdieu's model is designed to be repeated and reproduced on demand: 'practice is habitualized, habits are economized, and both practice and habitus give way to conceptions of unconscious strategizing oriented to structures of domination that almost always take on a class form' (Alexander, 1995: 161). And this holds true at any time and in every social group. We should therefore clarify the meaning of some aspects of Bourdieu's theories and develop them in a critical way. For 'a self-closure with an automatic application to various fields of investigation, without challenging the foundations or allowing debate, means only one thing: fossilization' (Mounier, 2001: 214). I think that 'if one has to start thinking from Pierre Bourdieu, one also has to think away from him' (Favereau, 2001: 307). We would like to demonstrate that Bourdieu's model contains resources that he himself did not exploit and that his disciples forgot about, leading to a weakening of its impact.

This is the thesis we can develop from this intention: Bourdieu's sociology could transcend its limitations by taking into account the wide fields explored by those authors whom he quotes to build his own theories, yet which he hauntingly disregards. His thinking should to be diversified and new research areas should be opened.

There is a literature showing the influence of psychoanalysis and Wittgenstein on Bourdieu's work (for Freud and psychoanalysis, see Dubois, 2000; Fourny, 2000; for Wittgenstein see Bourdieu himself, 1994a; Chauviré, 1995; Pinto, 1998; Shusterman, 1999). Two other currents, which have emerged in French sociology in the last few years, and were developed by L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot, on the one hand, and B. Lahire, on the

other, have also been influenced by Wittgenstein and Freud, although they have not stated this explicitly. Thus Boltanski has drawn on Wittgenstein to develop a sociology which gives primacy to the social actor's interpretation of his or her situation through lay theorizing, while Lahire's work clearly pays a debt to Freud with his psychological sociology. It would therefore be interesting, in the first instance, to tease out how Wittgenstein and Freud, respectively, have influenced these two systems to demonstrate that they can indeed be used to generate new sociological currents, other than Bourdieu's own. This would then allow us to explore how they could be used to fill any gaps in Bourdieu's work, thus giving the latter renewed relevance and staunching its stagnating tendencies. But, ultimately, this analysis aims to show how Wittgenstein's and Freud's theoretical influences can lead the way towards a theoretical synthesis between Bourdieu's critical sociology, Boltanski's social actor theory and Lahire's psychological sociology. Currently, these three currents operate independently of each other, without any kind of dialogue. And yet, far from being incompatible, these sociologies offer opportunities for exploring how they might complement each other and for mutual enrichment.

In sum then, this article proposes that, rooted as they are in a common theoretical ancestry embodied in Wittgenstein and Freud, these three sociologies can be coaxed out of their isolation and into cross-fertilization.

Trail I: From Freud to a Psychological Sociology

Bourdieu's objective is to reveal the unconscious mechanisms through which social and collective elements exist in each individual. He defines habitus as an individual's set of dispositions, tendencies, orientations and actions that originate from his or her social group. They permeate each person's behaviour and everyday life without their being aware of it. Habitus is indeed an unconscious without its mentalist and psychological yoke. Bourdieu borrows Freud's unconscious and interprets it through the habitus. The unconscious no longer points exclusively to a representation which exists in the mind but is unknown (and which may [. . .] be detected in the psyche and made consciously known *a posteriori* by the psychoanalyst). It is the set of society's influences over our bodily behaviour which operates without our knowledge (Freud, 1968; Bourdieu, 1997: 169). The habitus displaces the unconscious of the psyche to the socialized activity of the body. Bourdieu was relentless in his attempts to get rid of psychoanalysis and psychology in order to focus on the unconscious social conditions of human actions: the habitus, that is the set of matrices holding in each individual's body the product of past experiences (Lahire, 2001b: 124). What we are not aware of, or rather what makes up our unconscious, is in fact our incorporated social past, embodied in us in the form of dispositions.

But what are these dispositions, these matrices? Some agree on the fact that Bourdieu does not provide any empirical descriptions of these elements. Lahire shows that Bourdieu ignored that in the 1970s and 1980s Freudian (and Piagetian; see Bronckart and Schurmans, 2001) psychology

defined such terms as disposition, mental reproduction of social structures, etc. Not taking these writings into account prevented Bourdieu from answering the following questions: how is it possible for various socializing experiences to inhabit the same body? How do they intervene later in an individual's life? etc. Bourdieu never details what he means by 'the dispositions of an individual'. 'We do not have an example of a social construction of incorporation or transmission of these dispositions. We have no indication as to the way they can be built or the way they operate' (Lahire, 2001b: 129).

Lahire's main work, *L'Homme pluriel* (1998), tries to demonstrate that the only way to solve these problems is to confront Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus with the facts, while taking into account their psychological dimension. He asks:

> . . . would it be useful to continue speaking about disposition if one realized that this term is more useful for theoretical argument than to understand and explain social practices? Is this not merely what M. de Certeau did not hesitate to call 'mystical reality', that is an additional level between practice and structure to ensure theoretical coherence? (1998: 63)

If sociologists were unable to understand how 'the multiple types of dispositions, schemes, etc. of habitus are psychologically constructed through social experience, these terms would constitute an additional *asylum ignorantiae* in the history of sociological concepts' (1998: 201).

Accordingly, the following questions would remain unaddressed: would dispositions fade away progressively or would they disappear through a lack of actualization? Is it possible to destroy them through counter-socialization when they become consciously known? Questions which, as it stands, Bourdieu's sociology is unable to resolve by itself.

This is the reason why we need to go beyond the ritual invocation of the incorporated past. Lahire's psychological sociology, also covertly inspired by Freud, should show how we incorporate a whole series of habits and how we experience their actualization. 'We will probably discover a diversity of ways in which the habitus is incarnated and realized: Habits may be internalized and updated through constraint or obligation; it can happen through passion, desire or envy, or even unconscious routine' (2001b: 133). Psychology could also help sociology to study the question why some of our dispositions operate and are updated in some social contexts and not in others. Bourdieu does not allow us to understand how an individual lives in a plurality of social worlds nor his own internal plurality: which dispositions does he/she invest in the various universes he has to explore? Bourdieu thinks that the dispositions of an individual's habitus are designed only to adapt to the sphere they come from.

According to Lahire, the more social contexts an individual experiences, the more heterogeneous and un-unified his or her set of dispositions, habits and learnings will be. It will vary depending on the social context in

which he or she is evolving. This is the reason why some dispositions may disappear. Lahire is currently developing this method in order to grasp the plurality of the individual, something that was done neither by Bourdieu nor by his followers. It allows the comparison of practices in various social universes. Lahire believes that it is necessary to unfold the social reality within the individual, which is never as smooth and uniform as Bourdieu might lead us to believe. A lot may be expected from projects such as the one elaborated by Bronckart and Schurmans (a psychologist and a sociologist) in which they propose to associate every level of the habitus's manifestations with the matching psychological conceptual construction: elementary language and psyche, inter-psyche, mental models and psychological archaeology. They recommend a new utilization of an author who, in his time, has inspired Bourdieu's model and for whom he should have shown more concern: Freud. And on this point, I am willing, with Jacques Dubois (2000: 101), to wager that this does not imply a methodological aporia, but simply that the potential of the explanatory model has not yet been fully reached. One way or another, in the future, it will have to [. . .] integrate psychoanalytical elements into its analysis.'

Trail II: About Wittgenstein. Common Language and Intellectual Language

Let us now turn to Bourdieu's favourite author, Wittgenstein, to whom he gives pride of place in his own sociology. Bourdieu never contradicts him and often has recourse to his work to lend weight to his critique of others. However, as we will now show, he has paid less attention to the usefulness of the aspects of Wittgenstein's latter works, which give primacy to actors' competences and which Bourdieu never considered, let alone incorporated into his own corpus of work.

Bourdieu used Wittgenstein to develop his critical vocabulary. With this critical vocabulary, he criticizes 'prenotions' and the prejudices deriving from the spontaneous sociology of the uninitiated. He argues that:

> . . . ordinary language which goes unnoticed contains in its vocabulary and syntax common words which the sociologist cannot help but use. When the prenotions (prejudices) take on the appearance of scholarly developments, they sneak into 'intellectual' discourse without losing their credibility. (Bourdieu et al., 1973: 37)

According to Bourdieu, Wittgenstein's analyses lead us to doubt the idea 'that the facts *must* conform to certain pictures embedded in our language'. In contrast, he believes that these images are necessarily illusory because they originate in a mythological and a non-scientific analysis of the social world performed by lay people. And he thinks that there is an 'epistemological break' between lay knowledge and scientific interpretation (Bourdieu et al., 1973: 95). Accordingly, people are enclosed in their daily action and express their knowledge thereof thanks to the common vocabulary of

spontaneous sociology. The role of the sociologist is to perform a break with this naïve knowledge. 'He must impose unto himself a constant fight against blinding evidences which give too easily the illusion of immediate know-ledge' (1973: 27). We note in passing that Bourdieu's position also contra-dicts phenomenology and ethnomethodology, whose advocates, with their emphasis on presence-in-the-world, did not see the need for an epistemo-logical break (Bourdieu, 1994b: 125; 1997: 175).

I think that Bourdieu does violence to Wittgenstein's thinking regard-ing the identification of the sources of illusions conveyed in our language: In Wittgenstein's mind, mythology does not originate in the social agents' common language, but rather in intellectual language itself (which is the same as the philosophical language). It is held that intellectual language is 'a terrain safe to tread on. In reality it is a treacherous swamp. As soon as we revert to the standpoint of common sense this general uncertainty dis-appears' (Wittgenstein, 1972: 45). In Stanley Cavell's words, we find in Wittgenstein 'a fervent quest for the ordinary and the familiar' (Chauviré, 2000: 42). It protects us from the fascination of abstract representations which put a distance between us and reality. This does not mean that there are no false representations in common language: Wittgenstein writes that common language 'continuously integrates scholarly concepts even when they are vague or inexact'. It is as if philosophy were the element which threatens to introduce errors into common language. Why is that? It is because philosophy is the opposite of what it should be: 'a critical thinking which banishes explanations, constructions of hypotheses and only shows the phenomena of the language without trying to explain'. If philosophy remained faithful to its role, it would express 'what everyone agrees upon, what we all know but do not see because of its excessive familiarity'. As a matter of fact 'philosophy cannot start from common sense because the business of philosophy is to rid one of those puzzles which do not arise for common sense' (Wittgenstein, 1979: 108).[2] It is arguably:

> . . . philosophy's task to analyse ordinary concepts and to give us a more trans-parent perspective on them. But it should not try to replace or transform our common practical concepts with rationally reconstructed artificial concepts which satisfy the demands of theoretical discourse. (Schusterman, 1995: 605)

To sum up, Wittgenstein fears that common language is contaminated with intellectual (philosophical) contradictions. As far as Bourdieu is concerned, he defines the task of critical and sociological science as that of the intellectual who refuses to accept 'the undisputable evidence of the common meaning' (1973: 78). It is always necessary to go under or behind the false evidence conveyed in the discourse of the uninitiated in order to establish the true meaning of social facts. However J. Bouveresse defines Wittgenstein's thinking as the 'exact opposite of a philosophy of the deep'. The element which he thinks is characteristic of 'the philosophical method is precisely the fact that there is nothing hidden to be discovered, that

generally everything can be accessed at the surface' (1991: 20). Bourdieu, by contrast, wants to go under this deceptive surface of the common language, which should always be the object of sociological suspicion (1997: 212).[3] The common meaning should not be trusted. Sociology has to succeed where philosophy failed by guarding itself against prenotions, 'schematic and summary representations' deriving from ordinary language (1973: 28, 36).

Wittgenstein's second argument departs from this requirement. He writes in *Philosophical Investigations* that it is difficult 'to see that we must stick to the subjects of our every-day thinking, and not go astray and imagine that we have to describe extreme subtleties, which in turn we are after all quite unable to describe with the means at our disposal' (1967: 46e -106). In his perspective, 'it was not of any possible interest to us to find out empiri-cally "that, contrary to our preconceived ideas, it is possible to think such-and-such" – whatever that may mean' (1967: 47e-109). Reflection should describe real everyday usage of the language rather than undermine it. Wittgenstein asked intellectuals whether this language was too materialis-tic or too crude. It may be so for Bourdieu, who sees it as generally rife with prejudices and illusions.

This raises the following question: would Bourdieu be opposed to Wittgenstein's hope to see the birth of 'a philosophy of the common meaning'? I believe this to be the case. Had he taken into account this aspect of Wittgenstein's work, Bourdieu might have opened a dialogue with pragmatic sociologists such as Latour, Bloor, Boltanski and Thévenot. Only with them is it possible to continue the development of Wittgenstein's project: to study primitive instances of common languages with the assump-tion that 'it is a fallacy to suppose these languages are incomplete' (1979: 101). These sociologies receive a priori the discourse of the actors as the result of a coherent interpretative effort. They take into account 'ordinary speaking subjects'. These subjects co-state the discourse that constantly intervenes in the construction of meaning. They are able to construct and deconstruct their practices. We are far from the discourse rife with illusions that Bourdieu talks about. For Boltanski and Thévenot, 'people, just like scientists, continuously suspect, ask questions and test the world in their everyday lives' (1991: 54).[4] In some situations 'the actors expose and unfold their actions verbally'. Using language, they attempt to generalize and put facts together. They use language in a manner which is similar to the scien-tific usage of language' (1991: 436).

This is the reason why they suggest a transition from a *critical soci-ology* (as espoused by Bourdieu) to a sociology of critical action, without nonetheless discarding the former (Boltanski, 1990: 50–51). The latter posits that social actors are able to manipulate the critical language with which they interpret their actions or practices. Within this paradigm, soci-ologists 'would abandon their belief that their interpretations carry more weight than those of social actors' and instead would attempt 'to clarify the words the actors use to justify their actions' (1990: 58). Accordingly

sociologists would no longer try to highlight the determinations which, because they are embodied in the social actors, would drive their behaviours, but understand how they themselves justify their behaviours.

Note that this sociology, which takes into account the actors' critical capacities, does not make up the whole of Boltanski's and Thévenot's work. It describes only one of the modes of action (*le régime de justification* or justification regime) that people use for living together. They identify three other modes of action which make up their theory of the four regimes of action: the conflict regime (*la dispute en violence*), the peace regime (*la paix en justesse*), the love agape regime (*l'amour agapé*). But they devote most of their attention to the justification regime and it is that which is mainly relevant to our present discussion.

In sum, a sociology of critical action would allow us fully to utilize Wittgenstein's contribution. Ultimately Wittgenstein's thought can be most usefully applied to these performative sociologies 'which elicit from social actors themselves the theory of their practices, working on the assumption that they have the required competencies to do so' (Callon, 1999: 76).

Scientific Truth vs Common Sense

What I have tried to establish in the preceding pages is that a different approach to the authors Bourdieu refers to (whether he later questions their positions or not) could make it possible to construct new tools for an analysis of the social context. At a time when any statement is assessed as a defence or an indictment of Pierre Bourdieu, it seems important to open up new avenues of research that would be at least partly consistent with the sociological paradigms that have been developed later. We cannot ignore the significance of such pioneering works as *L'Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* (*Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1972, trans. 1977) or *Le Sens pratique* (*The Logic of Practice*, 1980, trans. 1990). Notions such as habitus, symbolic capital and practice that he developed in them allowed new sociological approaches and gave philosophers richer conceptual tools to grasp people's social permeability (a permeability that is expressed in the 'body' as Merleau-Ponty used the word, an issue dealt with in another article). But whatever Bourdieu's theoretical achievements, neither can we ignore Latour's critique of French intellectuals. In their eyes, he wrote:

> . . . rationality can only be defined as an ongoing struggle against prescientific thinking, against epistemological obstacles, against the deceptive evidence of sense perception, against past science itself. This kind of continuous asceticism is what Bourdieu offered until recently just as Gaston Bachelard sixty years earlier or Georges Canguilhem thirty years ago. Although science cannot be defined, we *can* define the movement through which it keeps escaping the pernicious influence of ideology as well as all forms of social, local and contingent determinations. (Latour, 1995: 12)

The majority of commentators will argue that Bourdieu's thinking evolved over time. While scientific criticism could be relevant at the

beginning of the 1970s when applied to, say, *Le Métier de sociologue* (*The Craft of Sociology*, 1973, trans. 1991), it no longer applies after *La Misère du monde* (*The Weight of the World*, 1993, trans. 1999). Here Bourdieu is said to develop a kind of discourse that would radically differ from the 'usual scientific production' (Mounier, 2001: 225). This book is supposed to correspond to a break in Bourdieu's work insofar as it presents the first symptom of a determination to 'account more markedly for the agents' subjectivity' (2001: 8). Yet we consider that the break is not as meaningful as a genuine softening of his approach would demand. While Bourdieu is indeed concerned with the agents' discourse, he hardly grants them any reflexive capacities. He claims that we still have to 'explode the screen of common words' which inevitably creep into their speech (1993: 1403); that we have to watch out for ideological distortions when those agents attempt any self-analysis. In short, we have to keep 'actively exposing the tacit prejudices [or pre-constructs] inherent in common sense' (1993: 1413). Even in *Science de la science et réflexivité* Bourdieu still asserts that 'science must see the truth' and 'objectify the transcendental unconscious that the subject unwittingly invests in her or his acts of knowledge' and actions (2001: 173, 155). However much his thinking may have evolved (and we certainly do not deny that it did), he still adhered to Bachelard's definition of science and to the structuralist demand that the social unconscious that is supposed to determine biographical and reflexive illusions in social agents be submitted to critical analysis.

On this positivist issue Bourdieu considers that only a sociological approach that rigorously conforms to the demands of science can show the real significance of the social agents' subjective discourse. Yet while he systematically reduces the notion of 'truth' to that of scientific truth and even claims that 'sociology is indeed a science just as physics is, he never bothers to provide any hint as to what he calls "science" or truth' (Pinto, 1998: 112), apart from the fact that both are bulwarks against what he sees as mythological illusions of lay discourse. In this demystifying logic, sociology, like the hard sciences, must represent 'a historical locus where trans-historical truths occur' (Bourdieu, 2001: 136). At this stage of our questioning two conclusions can be sketched. First, it seems difficult to maintain that sociological theses (including Bourdieu's) are true in a trans-historical way, however pertinent they may be when located in space and time. Next we fail to perceive why the scientific nature of sociology should lie exclusively in a rigorous disillusionment process applied to the social world (considering that demystification seems to be the key tenet through which Bourdieu defines what a 'scientific sociology' should be).

Testing Cross-fertilization

While we in no way dismiss the significance of a work that is rich in many intellectual breakthroughs, we suggest two possible ways of going beyond such apparent dead ends.

The first one would consist in developing a psychological sociology.

Admittedly it would be difficult to claim a status similar to that of the hard sciences for this discipline, which in fact would even markedly differ from them, considering that it would integrate recent developments in psychoanalysis, of which Popper says that it is not a science insofar as 'it simply does not have potential falsifiers' (1974: 1004). On the other hand, psychology or Freudian psychoanalysis can help us to try and reduce the opacity in some of Bourdieu's undefined concepts such as 'incorporation', 'disposition', 'reproduction', 'matrices', etc. Their genesis within structuralism made such definitions superfluous since any mention of them systematically led to an evocation of their status as 'scientific' concepts, thus as a priori valid predicates. A psychological sociology would reverse the reasoning. As they lose their status as scientific constituents in the accepted terminological template of sociology, such concepts are questioned and defined anew so as to be used in various empirical research projects in the full knowledge of what they imply.

In this perspective we can circumvent two excessive attitudes to habitus and its matrices. The first, as we have seen, consists in accepting uncritically as such these matrices that are supposed to inscribe the results of past experiences in the very body of the subject, thus directing if not conditioning any future experience. With this attitude we would be among those many sociologists who carry out sociology without even needing to give those matrices a name and a more precise description, since they operate on a transcendental level, just like the categories in Kant's *Verstand*. The second approach also critiques the inability to test out matrices empirically, precisely because Bourdieu does not describe them, nor does he give them any substance: that is, he does not tell us what they actually refer to. According to this approach, matrices are dismissed as fictitious and confined to the status of 'black boxes' that sociology has to get rid of (Boudon, 1998), instead of being accepted as conditions that enable future experiences (embodied in the habitus at a higher theoretical level). As we try to unfold the psychological (and thus subjective) functioning of the habitus, we can open these black boxes, which have so far remained stubbornly locked, whether they were taken for granted or summarily dismissed.

The second way we suggest here consists in going beyond the restriction Bourdieu imposes on sociology insofar as science for him is only a tool to eradicate the mythological illusions to be found in lay discourse. We have tried to show that Bourdieu, who sets himself up as a follower of Wittgenstein, should perhaps have followed his master's lead more closely. As he devalues the critical potential in the subjects' relationship to those rules that determine their behaviour (Favereau, 2001: 293), he denies their justifying discourse any validity and thus negates one of Wittgenstein's key principles, namely that we ought to maintain a common-sense perspective. On the other hand, in the sociology developed by Boltanski and Thévenot, a subject's singularity 'is not reduced to an illusion, contrary to what happens with Pierre Bourdieu' (Corcuff, 2001: 112). The way in which a subject perceives her or his own authenticity as it emerges from social interactions

retroactively modifies the latter and must be grasped by the sociologist, who cannot but credit the validity of their discourse.

We see that these two alternative approaches, one using Freud and psychological sociology, the other Wittgenstein and Boltanski and Thévenot's pragmatic sociology, can eventually blend into one. As they recognize the validity of agents' self-justifying discourse and lay theorizing, Boltanski and Thévenot hint at what a sociology that would attempt a psychological approach to the social dispositions in everybody might be.

> In this sociology of regime-determined action (and justification), every agent is given a plural mental and corporeal repertory, which makes several modes of engagement in, and adjustment to, action possible. The components in this repertory are not perceived as dispositions, in the potentially deterministic sense in which Pierre Bourdieu uses the word, but as skills and capacities, to be used or not in a given action depending on the encountered situation. (Corcuff, 2001: 115)

In order to identify the kind of regime in which the agent acts, we have to take the agents' discourse into account when they locate their behaviour in a given justification register. For each given regime in which an agent acts, some (socially incorporated) dispositions may be activated or cancelled depending on whether they correspond to the kind of behaviour that is appropriate. Some dispositions turn out to be more appropriate than others in such or such social context. In other words, I will use some rather than others depending on the specific context in which I currently find myself. I have several sets of habits and skills. They vary according to the social context and the action regime in which I have to act. In order to understand what these dispositions are, how I acquired them, and in what way I implement them involves the agent's justifying discourse (Boltanski and Thévenot). This takes us back to common speech (Wittgenstein) and to a psychological definition of the various kinds of incorporated dispositions, so to a contemporary psychological approach inspired by Freud which Bourdieu completely left out.

We hope that this pragmatic approach can legitimize the suggested cross-fertilization of various schools of thought (Bourdieu's structuralism, Freud and sociology, Wittgenstein and his philosophy of language and the sociology of pragmatic justification) – away from the comforting parallel with the hard sciences. Numerous advances can arise from this kind of hybridization. It can help us 'find theories that will work' and make facts readable (James, 1978: 104). The main concern is, to echo James, that 'we don't lie back upon them, we move forward, and, on occasion, make nature over again by their aid' (1978: 32).

Notes

1. Bourdieu most accurately defines his habitus concept in *Le Sens pratique*. This concept is 'a system of durable dispositions (as general and organizing principles of practices and representations) which are objectively adapted to their goal without supposing a conscious design of goals and a complete mastery of the necessary methods to achieve them' (1980: 88).

2. 'When we ask on what occasions people use a word, what they say about it, what they are right to substitute for it, and in reply try to describe its use, we do so only insofar as it seems helpful in getting rid of certain philosophical troubles' (Wittgenstein, 1979: 97).

3. It should be noted that my reading diverges from that of Schusterman, who argues that Bourdieu shares with Wittgenstein the same 'appreciation of the ordinary' (1995: 605).

4. Boltanski and Thévenot's conceptions are relatively close to ethnomethodology because the problem is to interrogate the break between scientific sociology and non-scientific or lay sociology. On this, see Garfinkel (1967: vii).

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